

# Coloniality and the State: Race, Nation and Dependency

Walter D Mignolo and  
Fábio Santino Bussmann

Duke University

## Abstract

It is of concern that, until now, Western and Southern theories have not been able to provide a full conceptual understanding of the complicity of the elites and states of former colonies outside the West with the political domination they suffer from their Western counterparts. Decolonial thought, by exploring global epistemic designs, can fully explain such political dependency, which, for Anibal Quijano, results from the local elites' goal to racially identify with their Western peers (self-humanization), obstructing local nationalization. We explore why the racially dehumanized local elites believe they can humanize themselves. Our claim is that this happens because of modernity's pretense that everyone can become civilized and, thereby, human, hiding the fact that hu(man)s are only heterosexual men that are simultaneously Western, white and Christian. Only by focusing on the enunciation of Western knowledge, instead of on its enunciated content, can we make that argument.

## Keywords

colonial/modern nation-states, decolonial political theory, dependent states, epistemic-political dependency, national dependent states

## Introduction

Quijano (1968, 2002, 2005) perceived dependency, which was debated in Latin America in the 1960s mainly as a socio-economic issue, in its epistemic-political dimension.<sup>1</sup> He introduced the concept of historical-structural dependency<sup>2</sup> to highlight the complicity, in Latin America, Africa and Asia, of local dominant groups and of the former colonial states they control with the political domination towards them of Western elites and countries. For Quijano (2005), this collusion has been in the interest of the non-Western ruling groups. They wish to self-humanize by racially identifying with their Western

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**Corresponding author:** Fábio Santino Bussmann. Email: [santinobussmann@gmail.com](mailto:santinobussmann@gmail.com)

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counterparts, to which end they have to disidentify with the local population. Such disidentification, in its turn, obstructs the formation of national interests and the one-nation, one-state project. This predicament allows global and local forces to cause massive and dramatic suffering, from dehumanization to hunger, to the populations of non-Western former colonies in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Such a state of affairs, of deep and long-lasting concern to those who live in and/or care about these regions and their peoples, now gains a fuller explanation through further elaborating the epistemic-political domain of Quijano's concept of dependency. The theoretical result of this endeavor is a cornerstone of decolonial political thought, which also has the potential to address other issues.

Our contribution is to show that the racially dehumanized local elite's belief that they can humanize themselves was inculcated in their minds by the rhetoric of modernity.<sup>3</sup> This rhetoric asserts that everyone can, and should, be civilized and, thereby, become human, and hides the racial and sexist/heteronormative criteria of who is, in fact, hu(man): only the simultaneously Christian, white, Western and heterosexual men. To grasp this deceiving essence of the rhetoric of modernity and to see epistemic-political dependency in former colonies outside the West as a symptom of it, a deep critique of global Western knowledge as a racially hierarchical, dehumanizing and totalitarian enunciative apparatus is necessary.<sup>4</sup> All Western political thought and theories rest on that knowledge.

For decolonial political thinking to delink from the coloniality of Western political theories, it is imperative to disobey and delink from the very epistemological foundations of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, simultaneously twisting and appropriating Western ideas for decolonial convenience. Decoloniality needs to build genealogies of knowledge rooted in thinkers whose bodily and geopolitically felt experiences are not located in European histories, memories, needs and praxis of living but histories experienced in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa and Asia during and after colonization. Concepts that are relevant in dealing with with European situations are irrelevant in dealing with the legacies of colonial histories. Paraphrasing Gordon and Gordon (2006: ix), we need to, and in fact do, build our own houses of thought, transcending the imperial status of the Western master's house of knowledge.

In Latin America, Mariátegui (2012 [1927]) has done so in his discussion of racism and colonialism without colonies. On this ground, Quijano (1992), incorporating his own lived experience and praxis of living in the Peruvian Andes, left behind the framework of dependency theory and formulated the concept of coloniality, which became foundational for decolonial theory. Other essential contributions to decolonial thinking, such as Césaire's (2000 [1955]) and Fanon's (2021 [1961]) respective ideas about the sickness of colonization and about sociogenesis, are acts of epistemological disobedience, coming from the body and the geopolitical living and sensing of the authors.<sup>5</sup>

It is important, on the other hand, to keep in mind that coloniality, as lived and sensed by the African diaspora and the memories of the Middle Passage, is not the same as that experienced by the population of European descent (mestizos, creoles and immigrants). Parallel to decolonial thinking emerging from the African diaspora is the case of *Chicana-lesbiana* Gloria Anzaldúa (2012 [1987]), who lived on the US/Mexican border and

concerned herself with the *mestiza consciousness* – alongside Du Bois's (2005 [1903]) double consciousness and Biko's (2002 [1978]) black consciousness.

As for ourselves, the authors of this article, we dig into our bodily and geopolitical lives, into our own colonial wounds, to understand coloniality as the underlying logic of epistemic-political dependency. Walter Mignolo is from an immigrant family in Argentina, racialized as an immigrant of Italian descent in his country of birth, as a Third World student in France and as a Hispanic in the US. Fábio Bussmann is considered white in Brazil but felt racialized as a Latino during his childhood in Germany and prolonged stays in the United States.

Having that distinct geo- and body-political epistemological quality, which is shared with the philosophy of liberation (Dussel, 1993), decoloniality has made a radical criticism of Western knowledge. In this sense, Quijano (1992: 18–20) already puts knowledge creation at the center of coloniality when he calls for epistemic reconstitution as decoloniality. Before that, Fanon had broken ground by perceiving an essential aspect of how Western knowledge-making is intermeshed with racism. He says: 'the Negro of the Antilles will be proportionally whiter – that is, he will come closer to being a real human being – in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language' (Fanon, 2008 [1952]: 11). 'Fanon's dictum applies to language, but also to the sphere of knowledge in general' (Mignolo, 2011: 127). Anyone will get closer to being human by mastering Western principles of knowledge-making (Mignolo, 2011: 127) but will inversely be less human if keeping a distance from these principles.

Going more deeply into the issue, we see the racist, sexist/heteronormative gaze of the Western imperial subject towards the Other, which is seen and sees himself as dehumanized, as expressed through the ideas of sociogenesis, double consciousness, black consciousness and *mestiza consciousness* (Mignolo, 2011: 114). Through this diminishment of the Other, Westerners have constituted the Western *locus* of enunciation, conveying a sense of epistemic totality in relation to which all knowledge of dehumanized non-Western people is described, judged and destituted (Mignolo, 2011; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018). Western-centrism (Eurocentrism included) refers, then, to the disciplinary apparatus of enunciation that, aiming at the totality of knowledge, became totalitarian. Focusing on the enunciation, where destitution and epistemic totalitarianism can be seen, instead of on the content of knowledge, where one is trapped in Western-centrism even when criticizing it,<sup>6</sup> has become the very politics of decolonial investigation (Mignolo, 2021).

Our conceptual contribution, as indicated, is firmly rooted in this politics of decolonial investigation, which, in turn, originates in the described particular genealogy of decoloniality. Decolonial thought, as we, the authors, practice it after Quijano, is, in fact, a theory in its own right, which shall not be confused and theoretically mixed with subaltern studies, postcolonialism and the epistemologies of the South.

After this introduction, we recall that coloniality is the darker side of Western modernity and show how it operates through a concept of the hu(man) that is a Trojan Horse of the rhetoric of modernity (Mignolo, 2015; Wynter, 2003). After that, we recall in detail Quijano's argument about historical-structural dependency, or epistemic-political dependency, and add our theoretical claim about the matter. We close by summarizing

our arguments and indicating that they pave the way for further reflection and research on decolonial political thought.

## Coloniality

Coloniality is, metaphorically, the unconscious of Western civilization or the darker side of Western modernity (Mignolo, 2011). The concept captures the hidden atrocities and sufferings that have walked side-by-side with the golden promises expressed in the rhetoric of modernity since the Renaissance and the European contact with a continent they called America, with people they called 'Indians' and with massive numbers of African human beings they called 'slaves'.

The full name of the concept of coloniality, as originally coined by Quijano (1992), is *patrón colonial/moderno de poder*. It was translated into English as colonial matrix of power (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 246). Like any power structure, the colonial matrix of power consists of the permanent co-presence of domination, exploitation and conflict. The control over domination and exploitation comes from the creation and management of knowledge, which, decolonially speaking, is a machine of world-making and world managing rather than the representation of an objectively existing reality (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 144, 146, 149, 150, 169). The concept of a tree is what makes it a tree (and not only living wood with leaves) because someone wants to call it a tree and distinguish it from other categories of plants. Who says what, from a particular place and for specific reasons, creates knowledge about the world and constitutes the regulations of knowing (the enunciation), where, much more than in the content of knowledge (or the enunciated), control and management lie (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 144, 149, 173). The colonial matrix of power, in this manner, functions in a very similar way to the world pictured in the film *The Matrix*: those who are in the matrix cannot win against, nor even see, who is behind it, and only the awareness that someone is programming the matrix makes it possible for them to really free themselves from it, or even dismantle it.

The making and managing of realities on a global scale and the consequent pretense of knowledge the colonial matrix of power projects onto the imaginary of the population (including ideas about the creators and managers of the colonial matrix of power themselves) takes place, as indicated, at the level of enunciation. Western enunciation is framed in imperial languages, currently most of all English, but also German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese (Mignolo, 2011: 111), and in legitimate knowledge-generating institutions, such as the university, the museum, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the media and the state (Mignolo, 2011: 141, 189).

Such enunciative apparatus, responsible for the fabrication and management of the colonial matrix of power, constitutes the latter's interiority, which is rooted presently in the West (Western Europe, the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Australia) (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 5). On the other hand, the *loci* where the enunciation of knowledge is deauthorized and destitute, from non-Western peoples and civilizations and their descendants, is the exteriority of the colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2007: 14), located most of all in the Rest: all regions of the world that are not the West (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 200), but present as well in Western countries, where

deauthorized and destitute people also reside as racialized and sexually abnormalized people, for instance, immigrants, autonomous indigenous societies, white women and women of color.<sup>7</sup> Exteriority doesn't have ontic existence; it is not something that exists, but is invented in order to secure the interiority of the colonial matrix of power. The people that are part of the Rest that is located inside the West are not in control of the enunciation apparatus of the colonial matrix of power and of global power but are, on the contrary, part of the population that endures it.

Deauthorization and destitution expel the racialized and sexually abnormalized (Anzaldúa, 2012 [1987]; Fanon, 2008 [1952], 2021 [1961]; Lugones, 2007; Quijano, 2005), or, in sum, dehumanized people (Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 153–74; Wynter, 2003) that are regarded as irrational, to the exteriority of the colonial matrix of power. Such a process simultaneously constitutes the matrix's interiority, populated by Western rational hu(man)s. This double movement has existed since the Renaissance and the encounter with the so-called New World. Since then, Europeans and Westerners in general began to destitute the multiple centers of knowledge, ways of knowing, and the subjectivities that knowing and knowledge manage.

The destitution has targeted not only existing knowledges but also principles of knowing: the enunciations that established the cosmologies of great societies in the Americas, Africa and Asia. Destitution therein has cleared the way for the constitution of a 'universal truth', 'the only valid one', which can only come out of certain Western (or, to a much lesser degree, westernized) institutions of knowledge and imperial languages (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 170, 194–5).

In that sense, the universality, or totality, of the colonial matrix of power is also totalitarian. The issue is not that Western knowledge aspires to a totalizing explanation. Every society on earth has generated total knowledge, or cosmologies, about the known world. (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 195) The decolonial critique of Western knowledge is not about the totality the content, of the enunciated, as, for instance, in 'fever is produced by the immune system of the body', but to the totalitarianism of the enunciation, as in 'this is true because it is enunciated by modern and Western subjects, institutions and in the imperial languages, and everything that has been said about the cause of fever from a non-modern and non-Western *locus* is superstitious, irrational and unscientific, and, thereby, not true knowledge'.

Western enunciation circumscribes large domains of existence at the level of the enunciated, divided into the realms of knowledge, of the concept of the hu(man), of the economy and of government, and, at the same time, draws attention to the content of such dimensions, as if they were separate from each other and mere conceptual representations of reality. Nevertheless, enunciation operates in all of them, simultaneously and in the logic of world making and managing, through destitution and constitution (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 150). For instance, knowledge and the concept of the hu(man) are intermeshed at the level of enunciation. In their totalitarian ways, the modern and Western constitution and destitution of knowledge operate, as shown, through the human/subhuman divide. Epistemic totalitarianism humanizes some and dehumanizes others, as discussed in detail below.

The hu(man) is constituted as the mirror of the Christian, white, male, heterosexual and Western enunciator himself, which runs parallel to the destitution, in the form of

dehumanization, of non-Christian, non-white, female and sexually abnormalized people, on the grounds of racism (which encompassed religion since its beginnings, with the purity of blood doctrine of the Spanish Inquisition) and sexism/heteronormativity (Anzaldúa, 2012 [1987]; Fanon, 2008 [1952], 2021 [1961]; Lugones, 2007; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 153–117; Quijano, 2005: 4; Wynter, 2003). The content of the concept of the human is seemingly neutral, just a word that describes and represents *Homo sapiens*. But, as said, knowledge does not describe, represent or name entities pertaining to a world that exists independently of it. Knowledge creates worlds. One of the creations of Western knowledge is the hu(man) and the subhuman (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 153–70; Wynter, 2003: 264).

Only when we move further away from the enunciated and closer to the enunciation can we better envision how the concept humanizes some and simultaneously dehumanizes others. The Western-centric enunciation of the hu(man) is based on the destitution of comparable concepts that have encompassed *Homo sapiens* in other languages, making Western totality about the concept totalitarian. ‘Human’ is not only centered around the Western idea of *Homo sapiens* but centric in the sense that it recognizes only Western subjects as the rightful global enunciators of the concept. Looking in the mirror, such enunciators see everyone who does not reflect the image of the Christian, white, Western, male and heterosexual hu(man) as lesser or non-human.

Dehumanization is one of the darker sides of Western modernity, but appears, however, as accidental and transitory. If this is the case, it is due to the rhetoric of modernity, which is constituted precisely by all sorts of narratives, oral and visual, that create the illusions and the promises of a brighter future for everyone (Mignolo and Walsh, 2018: 123). Promises for the future, such as salvation, civilization, progress, development, freedom, democracy, happiness, and human dignity, have been made for over 500 years, without ever being fully accomplished in the West and even less so in the Rest. Their fulfillment is not in the interests of the world makers/enunciators.

It is true, however, that there is conflict in the colonial matrix of power, as in any power pattern, coming not only from those who are ultimately dehumanized, destitute, dominated and exploited but also from those who are put in a much better, intermediary, position in the system. The latter, despite being the local executors of dehumanization, destitution, domination and exploitation, do not entirely escape such oppressions themselves.

Conflict, in any form, must be accommodated, in its acute moments, through the concession of part of the promises of the rhetoric of modernity to some of the rebellious groups, which prompts rearticulations of the colonial matrix of power itself from time to time, making it a historical power structure (Quijano, 2002: 4). What happens most of the time, nonetheless, is that the dynamic of conflict and concession takes place in the enunciated domains and not at the level of enunciation, where true power lies and from where the concessions made in the level of content can be made ineffective by creating new realities of domination and exploitation. The ineffective concessions, nevertheless, become part of the rhetoric of modernity as symbols that things are getting better for everybody with time. Such are the cases of the end of slavery, which was substituted by other forms of extreme exploitation, and the demise formal colonialism, rearticulated into epistemic-political dependency.

## Coloniality, Dependency and Modern(/Colonial) Nation-States

The colonial matrix of power has been a worldwide force that made modern(-patriarchal) nation-states in Europe and the West possible through the displacement of the absolute monarchies allied to the Church (Protestant or Catholic). In former European colonies in the Rest, nevertheless, the colonial matrix of power gave way only to colonial/modern(-patriarchal) nation-states, manifested first as dependent states and later on, in some places, as national-dependent states,<sup>8</sup> where, in both cases, a consolidated modern nation linked to the state is absent.

Modern and Western nations are, for Quijano (2005: 130), not only about an imagined community (Anderson, 1991 [1983]) among a people. Such nations are also about a concrete, even if limited, political and economic democratization in the form of the distribution of control over political institutions and productive resources (complemented by income distribution).

In the history of the modern West, countries became politically democratized progressively, from the end of monarchical absolutism in Western Europe to the advent of universal suffrage and liberal democracies. In the realm of the economy, the distribution of resources in the West meant, most of all, land reform and income distribution. The distribution of industrial productive resources and other big and very lucrative urban businesses never happened in Western countries since they are entangled with large corporations and committed to protecting the latter's profit.

Land reform and income distribution, nevertheless, gave the general population some independence from corporations and, therefore, material grounds on which to exercise and fight for their rights as citizens, not being satisfied with merely voting but also putting constant pressure on the political system. In fact, democracy in the political domain becomes more than a formality only with the distribution of productive resources (Quijano, 2014: 618) and, to some extent, of income.

The economic distribution is, however, strongly limited in Western history by the wealth concentration tendency of capitalism. This tendency diminishes democracy as the expression of the people's government. In democratic regimes, lobbying, hefty contributions to campaign financing, and media control by dominant economic groups strongly favor the elite's interests over the popular ones. Democracy is limited, in less obvious ways, not only by capitalism but also by the idea of individualism. The hegemonic version of democracy is liberal,<sup>9</sup> and liberal democracy means, in its enunciated content, that the will of the majority, as crucial as it is said to be, should not overstep the rights of the individuals pertaining to the minority. However, the enunciative interests behind the theories of liberal political principles (from the works of John Locke and Montesquieu to Robert Dahl's thought) is not to make democracies reflect the will of the majority while respecting the rights of all individuals of the opposition but, instead, to make the regime controllable by the elites.

So why were economic resources and political power distributed in the West towards more social equality and the interests of workers (or labor), even with the hegemony of capital and individualism (Quijano, 2014: 615–616) and the limits imposed by them? The elites were compelled to make such concessions, in the circumscribed political

domain of the state, to lessen the risk of social conflict and to develop internal markets for their products (Quijano, 2014: 616, 618, 621). To that end, they had to reduce domination and exploitation (including poverty) through liberal democracy and economic distributions. The state has been establishing this reality according to the will of the elites, who have been sharing, through the mentioned distributions, a portion of their interests with those of the wider population. In other words, a community of some shared self-interests has taken place, which is the concrete pillar on which national interests, modern nations and the patriarchal-modern nation-state rest in the West.

Besides the elites' interest in reducing social conflict and in supporting internal markets, decolonial thought uncovers an additional and very strong interest of dominant groups (a desire the colonial matrix of power inoculates in everybody), which is the prestige of being part of white (Quijano, 2005: 132–6), Christian and male/heterosexual humanity (Mignolo, 2006). The fulfillment of the dominant groups' interest in being hu(man) is a given in Western societies. Therein women are mostly excluded from political and economic decisions and the mentioned material and political concessions are made by the elites towards men of lower social strata but of equal Western, Christian, white (Quijano, 2005: 132–6) and heterosexual hu(man) status. Western elites, therefore, do not have to fear a lowering of their hu(man) status while elevating workers to equal citizens in the political and economic sense.

The human status of the elites of former colonies outside the West is not designed to be a given but to be attained through striving. Even while being superior to their countrymen in terms of money and power, the local dominant groups are not a corresponding reflection of the model of the hu(man). In Latin America, such elites are mestizos and, even if white, not properly Western, but Latinos; in Africa, the dominant elite is generally black or brown (North Africa); and in Asia, yellow, all according to the racist mentality of the colonial matrix of power.

In all such continents, the elites, being racialized but nonetheless Christian, male, and heterosexual, are lured by the promise of civilization, believing that if they civilize themselves according to modern and Western standards, they will become truly hu(man). Since they have the money to afford an education and lifestyle that supposedly will bring them closer to Western civilization, they believe they will be accepted into the West and, therefore, into a higher human status than that of their poorer countrymen who cannot afford to Westernize themselves. To build on Fanon's (2008 [1952]) metaphor, the dominant groups wish to put on and hold on to white masks.

The model of the hu(man), however, is the mirror of the enunciators of the colonial matrix of power, who are native Westerners and also white, Christian, male and heterosexual but not westernized Latin American, African and Asian elites, who are not even predominantly white. Local dominant groups did not see (or did not want to see) that their money and power did not put them in control of the enunciation of who is hu(man), management which continued to be in the hands of the mentioned Western enunciators.<sup>10</sup> It is true that such global elites have also preached Westernization but only as a never to be fulfilled promise that the dehumanized outsiders will become entirely Western and hu(man).

Not being aware of this, the interests of the local dominant groups in improving their racial/human status and prestige by means of Westernization have even superseded their

pursuit of economic interests (Quijano, 2005: 135). The concessions such elites would have to make to the population in order to reduce social conflict, allow the development of robust internal markets and, consequently, make rich richer these dominant groups these elites closer to their dehumanized countrymen (Quijano, 2005: 135). It would turn the lesser humans into citizens and, thereby, symbolically bring them closer to the local dominant elites diminishing the cultural distance that, in former colonies outside the West, makes the local dominant groups believe that they are superior hu(man)s compared to the rest of the population and equals with the global Western elites.

Therefore, making concessions to the population was unthinkable for local elites. As a consequence, land reform, income distribution and continuous political pressure over the political system by the population did not become a reality in colonies outside the West after their independence. Since such distributions or democratizations are, as seen, the concrete prerequisite of the nationalization of societies and states, it became impossible to consolidate a modern nation-state in these territories (Quijano, 2005: 134–5).<sup>11</sup>

Caught in their unreciprocated identification with Western elites, non-Western dominant groups saw their interests as the same as those of the latter (Quijano, 2005: 134–5) and different from those of their countrymen, to a greater or lesser degree. Since dependency, in the historical-structural sense, is ‘the basic correspondence between interests of dominant groups from both levels [the dominant and dominated societies] of the relationship’ (Quijano, 1968: 527–8),<sup>12</sup> the local elites became dependent, servants of the will of Western dominant groups/enunciators, without noticing (or being unwilling to see).

The newly independent states controlled by local dominant groups, even though formally recognized as national, autonomous and sovereign, were no such things. The disidentification of the interests of the elites from the will of the population in the former colonies, as seen, precluded nationalization; and the identification between such local ruling groups and global elites created dependency, turning colonial states into modern-dependent states (Quijano, 2002: 10), or, since they are controlled by heterosexual men, modern-patriarchal-dependent states.

To fully understand why such political units became dependent, it is necessary to further analyze the impact of the relations among dominant groups on the relationship between dependent countries and nation-states. The lack of shared interests between the dominators/exploiters and the dominated/exploited in dependent states means no national interest – i.e., the elite taking into account some of the interests of the rest of the population – can exist (Quijano, 2005: 135). In the Western world, however, countries are closer to the nation-state model: the elites make concessions and, therefore, have some common interests with the rest of the population, or, simply, national interests, even if these coexist with particular interests of the dominant and dominated groups.

So, looking at the inter-state system, we see Western states frequently acting as autonomous and sovereign units and using their power to favor their endogenous interests. On the other hand, in the same system, we see states that were colonies in the Rest and that, as powerful or powerless as they may be, lack self-interest and, thereby, are simply the instrument of interests of local elites. Since such dominant groups identify their interests with the global dominators/exploiters/enunciators, and since the latter have shared national interests with their population, the dependent states, controlled by local elites,

follow the national interests of the Western nation-states. This often means that the dependent local dominant groups work against the interests and lives of the population they control (Quijano, 2005: 135). At the other end, the modern nation-states, even while controlled by global elites, are, nonetheless, also at the service, to some extent, of the general national population.

If the possibility of a state having an endogenous self-interest, meaning national interest in secularized modern states, is a priori impossible in the international game, and a state, for any practical matter, follows interests originating elsewhere, then autonomy/sovereignty is absent in such a state, even if written down in official papers, and dependency is present. And this is precisely the case of states located in the Rest that became independent from Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries (Quijano, 2005: 134–5).

To understand the last category of modern/colonial nation-state presented here, the national-dependent state, or, to give it its full name, the modern-dependent-patriarchal nation-state, it is necessary to dig into a historical conflictive dynamic of the colonial matrix of power. The national-dependent state first arose in Latin America out of the dependent state in an acute moment of conflict: the 1929 worldwide economic crisis put the share of international profits between global and local dominant groups at stake. Then, the structural character of dependency, the correspondence between the interests of both elites (Quijano, 1968: 527–8), was momentarily shaken by the conflict between them, which is a possible structural dissention within dependency itself (Quijano, 1968: 528), accounting for its historical changes.

Before 1929, a large part of Latin American dependent elites relied comfortably on the profits of commodity exports, which, however, underwent an unprecedented fall with the worldwide crisis, bringing many such oligarchs to bankruptcy. In fact, the share of international profits of the local dominant groups decreased so much that their very existence as economic elites was at great risk, creating reason enough for them to seek a change in their international position, even if this put them at odds with their global masters.

But danger to the oligarchs did not only come from the crisis at the center of the global economy. Some of the ultimately exploited and dominated populations of the dependent states were fueling ever-growing social conflict to the brink of revolution, often under the banner of socialism, as in the Coluna Prestes in Brazil of the 1920s. It was becoming clear to the local dominant groups that not only were their businesses under the double pressure of the economic crisis and the uprising of workers but also that their very physical existence was at risk.

The response of the local dominant groups in Latin America was to make a slight change in their position, both in relation to the global elites and to the people of their countries. Populist regimes in the region, with leaders such as Juan Perón in Argentina, and Getúlio Vargas in Brazil, did precisely those two jobs. They made concessions to the workers and to the middle class of their countries by distributing income (Quijano, 2005: 135, 2014: 621) through labor rights and new positions in the state bureaucracy. However, the local elites did not proceed to the distribution of productive resources (Quijano, 2014: 621), except for Mexico, where land reform was implemented. Populism was also responsible for recomposing the profits of the elites by defending commodity prices, as Getúlio Vargas did with his coffee policy in Brazil, and by proceeding to an

industrialization process that created new business opportunities for the local elites and management positions for the middle classes, as in Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

The income distribution from the elites towards the rest of the population, promoted by populist regimes, also meant more effective political participation (Quijano, 2005: 133, 2013: 30, 2014: 621). More income meant some material ground – even if much more fragile than that deriving from the combination of the distribution of productive resources and income – for part of the population, mainly the middle class, to put some pressure on the political system.

In this scenario, more income and the consequent political citizenship were extended to the population, and thereby the building of a modern nation directly linked to the state was advanced, although it would not be as firmly established as in Western countries. Income distribution unaccompanied by land reform meant better salaries, but not material autonomy for the population in the face of the elites. The former remained, overall, the employees of dominant groups, which were in command of businesses, of the state and, therefore, in direct control of and able to politically manipulate the income of the population. Additionally, even the distribution solely of income did not reach the entire population, leaving many still in the utmost poverty. For these reasons, limited income distribution without land reform meant only a partial, incomplete and fragile material and political citizenship and, therefore, a fragile nationalization of only a portion of the population, never leading thus to a full and consolidated modern nation connected to the state.

On the other hand, another outcome of such a process was the rearticulation of the interests of part of the local dominant groups, which turned into nationalistic elites linked to populist leaders. They envisioned becoming global dominant groups (in money and power) by developing an autonomous industrial economy and by consolidating a truly autonomous and sovereign nation-state. These interests contradicted those of the global elites, another conflictive process of historical-structural dependency (Quijano, 2002: 11), and, more generally, of the colonial matrix of power itself.

Here, the enunciative apparatus of the colonial matrix of power, as expected, accommodated the changes through the rearticulation of its contents. In the domain of government, discursive terrain was opened for a massive strike of global elites and Western nation-states against local and nationalistic dominant groups. The Cold War discourse of the Red Menace, previously limited to self-declared communist regimes, was extended to the nationalistic elites of former colonies outside the West, painted now as socialist (a choice that only Cuba would really make). Thereby, Western elites and modern nation-states have worked to destabilize nationalistic regimes in the Rest. To that end, for instance, the United States' Central Intelligence Agency notoriously assisted, in the second half of the 20th century, military coups d'état in Latin America.

Foreign interventions counted on the collaboration of a portion of the local elites. They were lured by the promise of development through Western-style liberal modernization, a new element inserted into the rhetoric of modernity in the second half of the 20th century that would render the industrialization in former colonies outside the West dependent on the core economies of Western countries (Quijano, 2005: 135). This part of the local dominant groups also continued to believe that serving and associating with the

West was the same as serving their interest in becoming human. It was the rearticulation of epistemic-political dependency.

There was a split, thereby, in the former colonial states, into a newly nationalistic elite and a remodeled dependent dominant group, often in conflict with each other. That, added to the fragile nationalization of part of the population, brought about national-dependent states (Quijano, 2002: 10). Such political units, like all types of modern states, are patriarchal and currently present in all Latin American countries and throughout historical and conflictive processes of the colonial matrix of power, in parts of Africa and Asia<sup>13</sup> (Quijano, 2002: 10).

## **Final Words**

The general observation that comes from the points made above is that, although all modern/(colonial) nation-states are patriarchal, they do not have the same features around the globe. As seen, there are modern-patriarchal nation-states in the West. But, in the former European colonies located in the Rest, all countries have, at best, a less consolidated nation directly linked to the modern state and are more or less dependent on the will of Western nation-states.

Therefore, in the former colonies, nation-state formation was not and would never be the same as in the West. Internally, while peoples of Western nation-states also suffer from domination/exploitation, the national population has, in general, been granted land and income distribution and has some degree of effective political participation, benefiting, in sum, from robust (even if not full) material and political citizenship (with the very important exception of immigrants). In the former colonies of the Rest, on the other hand, where, at best, a partial distribution solely of income took place, leading to a fragile and halfway citizenship, the channel for global and local domination/exploitation is, to a greater or lesser extent, facilitated by dependency.

The above statements are only the beginnings of, and the foundations for, a broader decolonial political theory. Such a thought should, from here, be able to make the connections, only indirectly explored by us, between the consolidation and stability of liberal democracies and the rise of populism, and the different kinds of (colonial/) modern-patriarchal states (be they dependent, national-dependent or properly national).

Another emerging option is the study of nations more comprehensive than the one made here, also considering nations that are not connected, or meant to be linked, to a modern-patriarchal state, but are the expression of the re-existence of destitute and oppressed people at the exteriority of the colonial matrix of power. Important examples are the nations of still surviving natives in the Americas, Africa and Asia, of African descendants spread around the world, of Asian and Latin American immigrants, of women of color and sexually abnormalized people, and of Muslims that live in the West. This sort of nation is already evident in the plurinational states of Bolivia and Ecuador, in indigenous autonomous territories in the Americas and New Zealand, and in the case of the Zapatistas.

Autonomous nations arising alongside the state are often not communities of shared self-interests, as is the case with modern and Western nations, but operate beyond the desires of the individual egos by working towards harmony and balance among all the

living, as in the concept of '*buen vivir*', and in many other non-modern and non-Western communal ways of living.<sup>14</sup> These all require much further thought and practice in a world where individualism and competition are bringing immeasurable and unforeseeable suffering to life on a planet that is now, at the same time, in an environmental, health, economic and military crisis. All of that on top of the usual extreme poverty and general oppression.

In that scenario, we should not only pay attention to how (colonial/modern) states affect non-modern and non-Western nations, and the logic of communal government (and life) but also to how such alternative nations, in themselves, or combined into a global political society, impact the different (colonial/modern-patriarchal) nation-states. How can such an impact be deep enough to shake these states into abandoning patriarchy and, when necessary, dependency, and transitioning into matriarchal states? In such, male and female people of all genders, sexual orientations, skin colors, places of birth and religions would share the administration of a communal, instead of a national, dependent or national-dependent, way of government and life, in which care, respect, harmony, coexistence and cooperation among all the living are part of the daily feeling, emotioning and struggling.

## Notes

1. On the other hand, the issue of epistemic-political dependency is scarcely conceptualized, even by Wallerstein (2011a [1974], 2011b [1980], 2011c [1989]). The author is immersed in Western-centric thought, even when talking about the non-West. This also happens to non-Western authors (e.g. Viveiros de Castro, 1996), even if they are well-intentioned and liberatory. Marxist materialism keeps dependency theory (e.g. Cardoso and Faletto, 2004) from explaining dependency as much more than an epiphenomenon of economic interests of social classes (especially elites). Being grounded in cultural Marxism, Chatterjee (1986, 1993, 2008, 2010), a subaltern studies scholar, does not advance an understanding of dependency as opposed to nationalism. Engaging with Benedict Anderson and Jacques Lacan, the postcolonial discussion on postnational formations of Appadurai (1993) also fails to discuss any problematic of dependency.
2. The concept of historical-structural dependency present in Quijano's (2002, 2005) work is not directly taken out of dependency theory and its materialistic ontology. On the contrary, it is a subconcept of the idea of the colonial matrix of power that explains why former colonies located in the Rest become dependent according to the epistemic-political predispositions of their elites and not as a result of the economic dependency of these dominant groups. In fact, the economic dependency of the elites is also explained by their epistemic-political preferences (Quijano, 2005: 135).
3. We explain what the rhetoric of modernity is in the next section.
4. An early and important benchmark in the direction of the critique of the totalitarianism of Western knowledge was made in the West itself, from the perspective of the Jewish racialization and persecution experienced by Horkheimer and Adorno (2002 [1947]). The authors, although pointing out that racism and dehumanization are created in the culture and knowledge-making of (Western) modernity, do not show that Western knowledge creation is globally racialized and dehumanizing in itself.
5. These two authors are not seen as complements or corrections to prevailing poststructuralist or postmodern frameworks.

6. This is the case of subaltern and postcolonial approaches, which, being strongly influenced by Western knowledge itself, acknowledge and denounce its totalized, or universalized, presence in ex-colonies in the form of cultural diminishment and domination: orientalism (Said, 1991 [1978]); the marriage between reason and capital (Chatterjee, 1986); the stereotype of the southern woman (Mohanty, 1984); epistemic violence (Spivak, 1988); a linear-time historicism (Chakrabarty, 2007 [2000]); and racial dehumanization (Mbembe, 2017), among others. Such authors, nevertheless, do not come to the more radical understanding on which we ground our decolonial argument: Western concepts are racially hierarchical/dehumanizing already in their enunciative *locus* and, therefore, not only totalizing but totalitarian.
7. The geopolitics of epistemic-political dependency, which only originates in former colonies of racialized majorities, is understandable by using these definitions of the West and the Rest but would be made nonsensical by the geography of the Global North and South as constructed in the framework of the epistemologies of the South. This is because if one speaks of ex-colonies in the Global South, which includes the South of Europe (De Sousa Santos, 2016) and Australia (Connell, 2007), one is also talking about white majority countries, where epistemic-political dependency cannot occur.
8. The scope of states accounted for here are the nation-states of the West and the former European colonies that did not become part of the West itself by means of European and Eurocentric map drawing. These countries make up a the large majority of the states in the world.
9. An alternative to democracy in its liberal version has been populism.
10. Of course, there are some non-white, female, sexually abnormalized and/or non-Christian and non-Western people participating in the enunciative apparatus of the colonial matrix of power. This nevertheless does not change the contrary structural tendency, highlighted by decolonial thought and pointed out here, that these people have become destitute by western enunciation..
11. It is important to note here that Quijano is not stating that there were no nations in the Rest of the world, but only that there were no consolidated modern nation-states, although modern/ colonial nation-states, with their severe nationalization deficiencies, were being built.
12. This does not exclude 'eventual frictions [between both groups] about the share of benefits from the system' (Quijano, 1968: 528).
13. Here we are considering only the scope of former colonies in these continents.
14. Decolonially one would speak then of non-modern (and non-Western) nations and not of pre-modern or, even, as in Appadurai's (1993) case, of post-(modern) nations.

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**Walter D Mignolo** is William Hane Wannamaker Professor of Romance Studies and Professor of Literature in Trinity College of Arts and Sciences at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, USA. He is the author of *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (1995, 2003), *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (with Catherine E. Walsh, 2018) and of *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations* (2021).

**Fábio Santino Bussmann** is a visiting scholar at Duke University, with postdoctoral funding from the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development. He has a PhD in international relations from the State University of Rio de Janeiro. His main research interests are decolonial thought and International Relations, which he has also pursued as a visiting scholar at Duke University in the academic year of 2019–20.