

Call for Proposals

Between the Universal and the Pluriversal in Times of Globalization

Online Workshop

Lateinamerika-Institut, Freie Universität Berlin, March 3-5, 2022

The terms “global” and “globalization” evoke imaginaries that have exercised tremendous power over the ways in which the world has been thought and organized since the late 1980s. With its apparent universal scope and progressive sequence leading to a more peaceful and democratic world, globalization for some time appeared to be an almost natural force. However, over the past decade, these ideas have lost much of their power. As criticism of globalization increased along with new calls for isolationism, we can observe a growing awareness that the creation of a global world was never a natural or one-way process. On the contrary, more and more studies relate this globalizing story about a singular world to the aims and interests of those who have propagated it (Kennedy 2016; Kamola 2019), showing the role that this particular kind of universalism has played in complex political, social and cultural negotiations.

In Latin American studies, two new approaches to the study of these negotiations are becoming visible. On the one hand, studies are emerging that show the contributions of Latin American actors to discussions about the formation of global institutions and regulations, as well as the ideas about inequality and development that have shaped the global order since the nineteenth century (Scarfi 2017; Thornton 2021). Exploring interactions between the global South and the North, these works study the formation of the global order; a process that sometimes has been characterized as a form of “world-making” (Bell 2013; Conrad 2016). On the other hand, in the field of anthropology, philosophy and sociology a so-called pluriversal thought has developed (Cadena/Blaser 2018; Escobar 2018; Reiter 2018). Although this position shares a constructivist perspective with the notion of “making worlds,” its fundamental basis is that the world exists in the plural, not in the singular. In fact, pluriversal thought opposes the destructive logic of universality postulated by the hegemonic Western notion of the “one-world-world” (Law 2015) and proposes a decolonial alternative that extends its branches in areas as different as political activism, academic praxis, and their associated ethical and utopian dimensions (Harding 2015). Such ideas are inspired by dialogues with representatives of indigenous communities, who have been enacting different worlds and fighting for their recognition (Blaser 2010). Its epistemological and ontological politics is both an object of study and a space-creating project in its own right, leading to a world in which many worlds can exist (Chandler and Reid 2019).

Both approaches, one universal and the other pluriversal, make important contributions to a crucial debate in our time: the making, remaking, and destruction of worlds. However, contradictions arise between them that provide valuable insights into the practical and theoretical problems we face in tackling this problem. With this call we want to invite contributions reflecting on the construction of worlds in general, and in the plural more specifically, as well as its consequences in the lived praxis and the different academic fields in which they are already discussed. This is an interdisciplinary endeavor in which Latin America, as the region that has generated many debates about and between

diverse worlds, deserves a central place. Contributions from all academic fields are welcome as they find points of connection with our proposition of tension between a powerful global world and many worlds still on the margins.

Submissions:

Please send proposals for a 20-minute presentation in Spanish, English or Portuguese to both organizers until **August 1st, 2021**. Proposals should include the following information:

- Name
- Institutional affiliation
- Email
- Title of the contribution
- Summary of 300 to 500 words
- List of 3 to 5 keywords

Organizers:

Dr. Nino Vallen (Freie Universität Berlin), nino.vallen@fu-berlin.de

Lara Hofner (Freie Universität Berlin), lara.hofner@fu-berlin.de