

POST AND DECOLONIAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONTESTATIONS OF THE LIBERAL SCRIPT

Workshop Report



INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The idea for this workshop emerged in the context of discussions within the Theory Network and the wider SCRIPTS community on how to define and analyse the liberal script and its contestations while practicing “double reflexivity”¹ – roughly meaning practicing productive dialogue between “mainstream” scholars on the one hand, and “critical” scholars on the other. In the course of these debates, the idea emerged to have a workshop on “double reflexivity”, which soon evolved to the inspiration of organizing a workshop on “post- and decolonial perspectives on contestations of the liberal script”. Members of the Theory Network wanted to avoid discussions that would remain at an abstract epistemological and/or methodological level and, instead, hoped to receive input that would allow us to engage in, rather than just talk about “double reflexivity”.

A focus on post- and decolonial perspectives seemed like an almost obvious choice to probe and provoke the Cluster’s core research questions. These are:

1. What is the “nature” of contemporary contestations of the liberal script? Do they actually target the liberal script, offer alternative scripts or only present varieties of existing liberal ideas?
2. What are the causes of these contestations?
3. And what are the consequences of (presumably intensified) contestations of the liberal script for politics, societies, individuals, and the challenges the world is facing in the 21st century?

Unlike “mainstream” approaches that describe and focus on core liberal ideas to define and analyse the liberal script and its contestations, post- and decolonial approaches tend to centre “actually existing liberalism” (Sabaratnam think piece) and draw attention to liberal qualities and characteristics that are not part of liberal self-descriptions.

This report gives an overview of the workshop, beginning with the call for think pieces that was sent out to selected guests and to the wider SCRIPTS community; then a list of speakers with links to their homepages; and finally, the workshop program, also including chairs and discussants, plus a brief summary of key topics and questions raised during each panel.

[1] Tanja A. Börzel and Michael Zürn (2020): Contestations of the Liberal Script: A Research Program. SCRIPTS Working Paper No 1., https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/publications/Publications-PDF/SCRIPTS-WP1_final.pdf.

CALL FOR THINK PIECES

Scholars working from post- and decolonial perspectives have long sought to problematize liberalism and have questioned and drawn attention to exclusions and contradictions in liberalism's proclaimed emancipatory effects and orientations. These arguments have been made across disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, including in history, anthropology, international law, political theory, literary and cultural studies, sociology and political science/international relations. Moreover, post- and decolonial contributions do not usually adhere to disciplinary boundaries but push across, combine and challenge disciplinary traditions and approaches.

Transcending disciplinary divides and practicing reflexivity in studying contestations of the liberal script are core ambitions at the SCRIPTS Cluster. This workshop brings together SCRIPTS scholars and guests interested in developing and discussing post- and decolonial perspectives in the context of the cluster's core research interests. The intention is to problematize and complicate what it means to do research on contestations of the liberal script. In order to facilitate our discussions, the workshop will be organized around three guiding questions that are directly related to the SCRIPTS research program.



GUIDING QUESTIONS

What does the liberal script look like/what has it looked like from post- and decolonial perspectives?

We are all familiar with pertinent works in political theory and philosophy that aim to distill the true meaning of liberalism by exploring liberal thought – usually meaning ideas developed by selected scholars who are widely recognized as liberal thinkers. We are interested in post- and decolonial perspectives that have critiqued and unsettled such analyses of liberal thought, for example, by offering different ways of reading and interpreting liberal thought or by approaching the meaning of liberalism via engagement with real-world practices and projects in the name of liberalism. Such projects have often been directed at those identified as (potential) non- or illiberals and have aimed at disciplining, bettering and/or reforming them, e.g. through education, international peacebuilding, development cooperation, etc.

Which pertinent histories and knowledge archives have been uncovered by post- and decolonial scholarship?

Contemporary imaginaries of liberalism are often tied to specific historical events (such as the French Revolution or The Universal Declaration of Human Rights) and to a set of scholars who have become regarded as important liberals, such as John Locke and John Rawls. We are interested in alternative or complementary histories and knowledge archives pertaining to liberal ideas and practices that have been or are being uncovered by post- and decolonial scholarship; and in the intersectional power relations – along the lines of race, class, gender and religion – that continue to eclipse non-Western history and thought from liberalism. In addition, we would like to learn about alternatives to and contestations of liberalism emerging from non-Western/non-White knowledge archives.

How can we approach contestations of the liberal script through post-and decolonial lenses?

This is perhaps the trickiest question of all. A core research interest of the SCRIPTS cluster is to identify and understand/explain contestations to (certain elements of) the liberal script. We realize that this research interest may run the risk of reproducing practices of othering and excluding that are often at the centre of post- and decolonial critique. We would like to discuss what post- and decolonial approaches to studying contestations of the liberal script might look like. What kind of research strategies and knowledge archives would they entail?



SPEAKERS

Adom Getachew – University of Chicago

<https://political-science.uchicago.edu/directory/adom-getachew>

Álvaro Morcillo Laiz – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/people/Morcillo-Laiz/index.html>

Ana Werkstetter Caravaca – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/birt/bgts/bgts_people/phd-students/Werkstetter-Caravaca/index.html

Anaheed Al-Hardan – American University of Beirut

<https://www.aub.edu.lb/fas/soam/soan/Pages/Anaheed-ALHardan.aspx>

Anne Menzel – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/people/menzel/index.html>

Deval Desai – University of Edinburgh

<https://www.law.ed.ac.uk/people/dr-deval-desai>

Friederike Kuntz – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/people/kuntz/index.html>

Izadora Xavier do Monte – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/birt/IRC-Fellows/junior-fellows/Monte/index.html>

Jared Holley – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/birt/IRC-Fellows/junior-fellows/Holley/index.html>

Julian Go – University of Chicago

<https://sociology.uchicago.edu/directory/julian-go>

Julie Gibbings – University of Edinburgh

https://www.ed.ac.uk/history-classics-archaeology/about-us/staff-profiles/profile_academic.php?search=2&uun=jgibbing

Manuela Boatcă – University of Freiburg

<https://www.soziologie.uni-freiburg.de/personen/manuela-boatca>

Meera Sabaratnam – SOAS University of London

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/staff/staff86523.php>

Schirin Amir-Moazami – Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS

<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/islamwiss/Mitarbeiterinnen/professorinnen/Amir-Moazami/index.html>

Shalini Randeria – Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna

<https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/academic-departments/faculty/shalini-randeria>



WORKSHOP PROGRAM AND SUMMARY OF KEY TOPICS & QUESTIONS

The workshop program was not strictly developed around the three questions outlined above. Rather, we kept these questions in mind while exploring the think pieces we received. One key finding emerging from the think pieces is that many of them address all three questions: e.g. describing aspects of the liberal script by drawing on non-Western/non-White knowledge archives and while pondering, re-formulating, or normatively embracing the notion of contestations to the liberal script. We sought to organize contributions around shared interests and roughly along the questions initially posed. In the process, we also revised and added to these initial questions.

The workshop was held on three days (September 8-10). Each day was assigned a focus theme to be explored in thematically related panels.

Day 1: The liberal script viewed through post-/decolonial lenses

Day 2: Challenging liberal/Eurocentric worldviews through decolonized knowledge production

Day 3: Contestations and anti-colonial solidarity



WORKSHOP DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

Focus theme: The liberal script viewed through post-/decolonial lenses

Most of the think pieces we received direct attention at violence, exclusions, exploitation, and expropriation committed in “actually existing liberalism” (Sabaratnam think piece) or even in the name of liberalism. These are considered part and parcel of liberalism and liberal empire – not unintended consequences, accidents, or inevitable sacrifices on the way to a greater good. To use an imaginary developed by Jeanne Morefield (2014): While liberal intellectuals/scholars tend to deflect attention away from violence, exclusions, exploitation, and expropriation in the name of liberalism, arguing that they do not really belong, post- and decolonial intellectuals/scholars insist that this is a false separation.²

PANEL 1: IN THE NAME OF CIVILIZATION AND RATIONALITY

Chair: Johanna Heß (Freie Universität Berlin/ SCRIPTS)

- “Dualist liberalism, settler colonialism and the disappearance of the ‘international’” Meera Sabaratnam (SOAS London)
- “Civilization as Governmentality: The League of Nations’ Mandate System and Liberal Internationalism” Friederike Kuntz (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)
- “Persuasion or Domination in Global Society? Rationality, Statutes and Carriers in a Late Colonial Empire” Álvaro Morcillo Laiz (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Discussant: Tobias Berger (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Summary

This panel introduced a theme that we frequently returned to and discussed throughout the work-shop, namely actually-existing liberalism’s “dualism,” which manifests in the finding/experience that it always entails freedom for some, unfreedom for others; inclusion for some, exclusion (or highly unequal inclusions) for others, etc. Sabaratnam’s think piece powerfully introduced this theme with a focus on dominant conceptions of “the international” that normalize asymmetrical and non-reciprocal relations between peoples and entities. Dualism also featured prominently in Kuntz’s paper about the mandate system, which involved different forms of government for the “uncivilized” and the “civilized” (Kuntz argued that the latter deserves more scholarly attention). Morcillo Laiz’s paper drew on Max Weber’s sociology in order to illuminate processes of irrationalization through colonial administration, which were planned and experienced as rationalization by metropolitan elites and recognized professionals in their employment.

The Q&A and discussion brought up many interesting questions and issues, one of which is especially noteworthy because variations of it kept coming up in later panels and discussions. It concerned the relative purity or taintedness of knowledge and it was brought up in relation to Morcillo Laiz’s and Sabaratnam’s papers. Two complementary yet distinct points were raised with regard to Morcillo Laiz’s paper: it was argued that the paper needed to show more clearly what exactly Weber’s sociology contributed to understanding colonial power (beyond the conception of administration as domination, which is not specific to colonialism); and the question was raised whether Weber’s nationalist and racist worldviews disqualified his sociology as a basis for thinking and studying colonialism. Given her diagnosis of dualism, Sabaratnam was asked whether anti-colonial critique necessarily had to be non-liberal. She answered that she did not think so and, more importantly, that she did not think that this was the most important question to ask about worldviews seeking to provide alternatives to the current international order. For example, it was more important to think about whether they might help envision a less violent order.

[2] Jeanne Morefield (2014) *Empires Without Imperialism: Anglo-American Decline and the Politics of Deflection*. Oxford University Press.

WORKSHOP DAY 1: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

PANEL 2 EXCLUSION, SURVIVAL AND THE QUESTION OF PROPER HUMANITY

Chair: Robbie Shilliam (John Hopkins University)

- “Garveyism between the empire of neglect and the new imperialism of the late nineteenth century” Adom Getachew (University of Chicago)
- “Brexit and the (Dis)United Kingdom: A View from Forgotten Europes” Manuela Boatcă (University of Freiburg)

Discussant: Sebastian Conrad (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Summary

Both Getachew's and Boatcă's papers did not so much speak to the theme of “exclusion” (in the panel title), instead they highlighted and described unequal and hierarchical forms of inclusion into liberal projects: namely early 20th century British liberal empire (Getachew) and the contemporary European Union (Boatcă). Getachew's paper situated the emergence of what came to be called Garveyism in a combination of political emancipation and economic neglect experienced by workers in the West Indies whose livelihoods became extremely precarious due to trade liberalization and falling world market prices for agricultural products. After the abolition of the slave trade and their incorporation as subjects into the British empire, they found that formal political emancipation meant little in the face of economic marginalization and neglect. Garveyism provided an alternative vision and organization of political community that promised and sought to organize solidarity among, and take care of Black people wherever they found themselves in the Caribbean and beyond. Getachew emphasized that thinking about this historical moment and Garveyism is timely, as we are experiencing similar disconnects between political rights and economic neglect in contemporary neoliberalism. Returning to the theme of purity/taintedness, one of the questions addressed to Getachew was whether Garveyism's universalism was not also dual and exclusionary. Getachew answered that it might well entail exclusions and that she was going to explore this.

Boatcă's paper (which was already published: <https://discoversociety.org/2021/06/08/disunited-kingdom-the-view-from-the-other-europes/>) drew attention to Europe's colonial present by center-ing the Brexit experiences of British overseas territories in the Caribbean, the Atlantic, the Indian, and the Pacific oceans. The effects of Brexit on these territories and their inhabitants have not been addressed in post-Brexit regulations and negotiations. Asked whether she knew of any contestations of the liberal script coming from affected people, Boatcă replied that the island of Anguilla's long struggle to remain a British colony should be understood as a clear contestation of the liberal script. It has been a rejection of self-determination in favour of (expected though not necessarily forthcoming) protection as a result of belonging to the UK.

WORKSHOP DAY 2: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Focus theme: Challenging liberal/Eurocentric worldviews through decolonized knowledge production

It is no secret that post-/decolonial perspectives and ideas such as decolonizing curricula and knowledge production more broadly are currently en vogue – in the sense that they have been receiving much more attention and recognition in the late 2010s and 2020s than in earlier years and decades. However, as Leon Moosavi (2020) pointed out in a recent piece, intellectual decolonization is no simple cause to come on board to.³ Finding or identifying non-Western/non-White knowledge and using it to challenge, rework, and/or unlearn colonial worldviews is complicated and also has potential pitfalls.

PANEL 3: POSITIONALITY, COMPARISON, AND UNLEARNING

Chair: Daniel Drewski (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

- “Reversing the gaze: Methodological reflections on studying India and Italy as ‘cunning states’” Deval Desai (University of Edinburgh) and Shalini Randeria (Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva and Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna)
- “Positionality, (un-)learning, and critique. Or: How to make sense of enthusiasm for neoliberal “girl empowerment” messages in Sierra Leone?” Anne Menzel (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)
- “American Empire, Liberalism’s Boundaries, & the Standpoint of Postcolonial Thought” Julian Go (University of Chicago)

Discussant: Philipp Dann (Humboldt Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Summary

The panel combined three papers that illustrated and discussed methodological and epistemological questions, challenges, and pathways for doing post- and decolonial research. The paper by Desai and Randeria presented notes on an early stage research project that intends to study certain fiscal practices of the administrative state in Italy and India through a concept that was empirically developed with a focus on the Indian state but also drawing on European sociology (the “cunning state” by Randeria). In addition to the empirical study, the project sets out to reflect on and clarify assumptions and strategies involved in a South-North comparison that compares entities and practices (the state in Europe and India) with highly entangled histories and whose ways of knowing them are rooted in Eurocentric thought. Next, Menzel’s paper reflected on how positionality plays out in efforts to (un)learn from marginalized people – especially if and when these people seem to say or do things that are not already regarded as “progressive”. Her case is the enthusiasm for neoliberal “girls empowerment” in Sierra Leone, a donor-funded development strategy that has been taken up by feminist activists and that apparently tends to be appreciated by girls and young women in Sierra Leone (the “target population”) – even though Western scholars have criticized it as neoliberal responsabilization of vulnerable populations. Finally, Julian Go’s paper begins by characterizing the origins of a post- or decolonial standpoint (he said he sees no difference between the two), namely its situatedness in the colonial space and engagement with dominant knowledges (including liberalism) imposed upon that space. He then employs a postcolonial standpoint rooted in the experience of Isabel Gonzalez, a Puerto Rican woman seeking US citizenship in the early 20th century, to describe the liberal script as a boundary-drawing project.

One important question in the discussion (which also related to the previous two panels) was whether liberalism necessarily/inherently involves exclusion and whether there can ever be any kind of order that does not also involve exclusion. In other words: is it something within liberalism that makes it exclusionary or is exclusion just an ontological necessity?

[3] Leon Moosavi (2020) “The decolonial bandwagon and the dangers of intellectual decolonisation”, *International Review of Sociology*, 30:2, 332-354.

WORKSHOP DAY 2: THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

PANEL 4: RESISTING “PURITY” – EMBRACING ENTANGLEMENTS

Chair: Tobias Rupprecht (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

- “Liberal Scripts, Historical Time, and Indigenous Politics” Julie Gibbings (University of Edinburgh)
- “The ‘Brazilian way’ of peacekeeping: narratives of postcolonial success, liberal practices of coloniality” Izadora Xavier do Monte (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Discussant: Alex Paulin-Booth (Humboldt Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Summary

With this panel, the workshop officially turned to perspectives on the purity/taintedness of knowledge in post- and decolonial scholarship that had already been raised in previous panels. In her paper on (contestations of) liberal temporality in 19th and 20th century Guatemala, Gibbings argued that indigenous people employed liberalism to their own ends, which constituted forms of resistance and creativity that would be overlooked by scholars searching for “purely indigenous” knowledge archives. Xavier do Monte’s paper discussed the Brazilian approach to peacekeeping with a focus on Brazil’s large engagement in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Haiti. Her paper emphasized that just because an approach is developed and pushed by a state that tends to be categorized as belonging to the Global South, it is not necessarily postcolonial. Neither is the everyday practice of peacekeeping “from the South” necessarily less racist. Rather than presenting an alternative to Northern/Western UN peacebuilding, the Brazilian approach presented a variant of civilizational and racist practices that nurtured the “coloniality of power”.⁴

In the discussion do Monte was encouraged to probe the question of the comparative study of peacekeeping: do other UN troops from elsewhere in the global south similarly draw on national identity (and even national stereotypes) to develop distinctive modes of peacekeeping? This opened the way for debating further the extent to which liberalism comes in different national and regional varieties, being moulded to fit to autochthonous ideologies and practices. Gibbings urged us to remember the striking diversity of Latin American countries. She went on to discuss the relationship between liberalism, nation building, and nationalism in Guatemala: here, the early 19th century saw the rapid development of nation building only to have this reversed later as citizenship rights were deemed to have gone ‘too far’. Huge numbers of indigenous people were subsequently conscripted into forced labour. In this sense, it seemed that liberalism and nationalism were engaged in similar boundary-drawing exercises.

[4] Aníbal Quijano (2000): Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America, in: *International Sociology*, 15:2, 215–232.

WORKSHOP DAY 3: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Focus theme: : Contestations and anti-colonial solidarity

Approaching contestations of the liberal script from post-/decolonial perspectives entails a number of possible shifts in perspective, including an active search for knowledge and worldviews that enable solidarity and shared struggle against violence and repression in the name of liberalism/liberal empire. Contesting the liberal script then loses its connotation as a threat and, instead, becomes associated with hopes for liberation and flourishing. In addition, “changing the terms of the conversation” (Mignolo cited in Amir-Moazami’s think piece) about contestations can also mean to problematize actions by the (nominally) liberal “counterpart”. This creates new questions, such as: Why is there a liberal need or desire to view certain movements or collectives as threats or contestations and treat them accordingly?

PANEL 5: CHANGING THE TERMS OF CONVERSATION ABOUT CONTESTATIONS

Chair: Andrea Miranda Avilés (Freie Universität Berlin, SCRIPTS)

- “Shifting the Focus: Liberal Recursions of Minority Management in Contemporary Europe” Schirin Amir-Moazami (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)
- “‘Only women are human and only humans can be feminists’ – decolonial, anti-patriarchal contestation of the liberal script” Ana Werkstetter Caravaca (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Discussant: Johannes Gerschewski (Berlin Social Science Center/SCRIPTS)

Summary

The panel began with Amir-Moazami’s paper that focused not on contestations but on liberal efforts at “integrating” those who have widely come to be understood as presenting a challenge or even a threat to liberal society in Germany, namely Muslims. She argued that it is worth resisting the question of how integration measures are to be improved and, instead, explore what it is that makes integration so appealing and necessary in the eyes of liberals/defenders of liberal society. Amir-Moazami then drew attention to a longer history or genealogy of integration that she described as a liberal continuation/translation of earlier projects of assimilation and conditional recognition vis-à-vis Jews. Much like these earlier projects, contemporary integration serves a wider purpose of stabilizing an existing order riven with internal contradictions and conflicts.

Werkstetter Caravaca’s think piece then returned to a theme that had already been raised in earlier panels (e.g. panels 2 and 3), namely the question of whether any kind of order required an ‘outside’ and thus, exclusion. Drawing (among other ideas) on the idea of the “coloniality of gender” (Lugones 2016) and on the manifesto of the AFROntera collective in Mexico that positions itself against liberal feminism and its focus on women’s rights as human rights, Werkstetter Caravaca introduced a notion of pluriversality rather than universality. This notion is precisely about imagining and building a community that embraces difference and extends care and solidarity even to those who are not recognizable as humans according to gendered civilizational standards because, in pluriversality, such standards will have lost their meaning. Werkstetter Caravaca also emphasized in the discussion that this is an emancipatory vision that is still vague because our current circumstances make it extremely difficult to imagine it more concretely.

WORKSHOP DAY 3: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

PANEL 6: RECOVERING SOURCES FOR DECOLONIAL SOLIDARITY

Chair: Keith Prushankin (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

- “Recovering Anticolonial Solidarity: history, theory, practice” Jared Holley (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)
- “The Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization: Anti-Colonial Material and Ideational Possibilities” Anaheed Al-Hardan (American University of Beirut)

Discussant: Yara Sa’di-Ibraheem (Freie Universität Berlin/SCRIPTS)

Summary

This final panel combined two papers that set out to recover knowledge for and ideas about anti-colonial solidarity. Holley’s paper briefly introduced his current project which focuses on the question whether and what kind of solidarity might be possible between the Global North and South. To answer this question, he draws on marginalized work by late 19th century Haitian philosopher Anténor Firmin in order to identify and interrogate the limits of contemporary notions of solidarity. He argued that the history of anti-colonial solidarity can also illuminate some of the “limits” or telling choices inherent in a research program set on studying contestations of the liberal script, such as prioritizing concerns over the fate of liberalism in our contemporary world.

Al-Hardan’s paper presented the post-World War II era of African-Asian transnational anti-colonial solidarity as a counter-knowledge archive, not for researching contestations of the liberal script but for actually contesting the liberal script. She focused in particular on ideas, discourses and networks of anti-colonial writers, thinkers and activists that emerged from the first African-Asian People’s Solidarity Conference in 1958. Al-Hardan emphasized that doing historical research can sometimes distract us from the violent colonial present, which it should not. Instead, recovered anti-colonial solidarity should inform diagnoses of the present and open up alternatives for the future.

In the discussion, we once again returned to the theme of purity/taintedness. Regarding Al-Hardan’s paper, we discussed whether it was possible to separate ideas about anti-colonial solidarity from newly independent state’s Cold War realpolitik. Al-Hardan argued that it is certainly necessary to approach the archive with a critical mind-set but that there is no reason why it should be dismissed altogether. Another and somewhat related question was whether solidarity between the Global North and South was only anti-colonial if it came from the right kind of people, e.g. not from right-wing movements, parties, politicians etc. some of whom also have a history of criticizing development aid as colonial. Holley answered that, in his view, accepting solidarity from fascists would certainly constitute an error of judgement. Also, it was questionable whether what they offered could actually count as solidarity.



WORKSHOP DAY 3: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

FINAL PLENARY: WRAP-UP AND OUTLOOK

In wrapping-up, we recounted key themes and questions discussed throughout the workshop, such as the question of how to deal with the purity/taintedness of knowledge that we had first considered with regard to Weber's sociology and finally in relation to knowledge archives emerging from the African-Asian People's Solidarity Conference. Another key question was whether liberalism was necessarily dual, involving freedom and unfreedom, inclusion and exclusion – and whether this was specific to liberalism or a necessary feature of any kind of order. Both questions will continue to concern us.

Before we closed, Sabaratnam raised the final question of whether and how our discussion at the workshop will influence future debates and research at the SCRIPTS Cluster. It certainly was an inspiring start to conversations that will have to be continued.

