**Miriam Lang, Mary Ann Manahan & Breno Bringel (Eds.). 2024. *The geopolitics of green colonialism: Global justice and ecosocial transitions.* Pluto Press. ISBN 9780745349343. Paperback £24.99**

**Reviewed by Carlos Tornel. Email:** tornelc "at" gmail.com

As the crisis of imagination that once made it difficult to envision the end of capitalism fades, the rise of an extended conception of capitalism—highlighting its reliance on extractivism, colonialism, and patriarchy—has become more prevalent, focusing in part on the challenges posed by 'decarbonization.' *The geopolitics of green colonialism* examines resistance to capitalism's reconfiguration in the face of its self-inflicted climate crisis and energy transition. In this edited volume, Miriam Lang, May Ann Manahan, Breno Bringel and their colleagues explore how capitalism has shifted toward a consensus built on transitioning from fossil fuels to low-carbon or "renewable" energy systems. However, this transition, the authors argue, requires a radical simplification of nature, abstracting it into a new currency or "carbon metric" that enables capitalism to continue uninterrupted. This process, termed "accumulation by defossilization," represents a profound geopolitical reconfiguration, intensifying resource and energy extraction from the Global South to the North while generating new "green" pressures. This includes turning Southern ecosystems into carbon sinks to offset Northern emissions and creating green sacrifice zones where waste and extraction from the energy transition disproportionately accumulate.

The book critiques this "green" turn in capitalism, arguing that green colonialism has become central to contemporary capitalism. It fosters an "imperial reason" that reframes land grabs as a humanitarian or sustainability concern under the guise of addressing the climate crisis. This logic reinterprets colonial practices, justifying land expropriation or "green grabbing" as a form of "saving" or "improving" vulnerable areas. The book provides a wide-ranging critique of the challenges posed by the conceptual frameworks and structural mechanisms sustaining green colonialism, offering an in-depth analysis of capitalism's structural mechanisms and proposing alternative political horizons to challenge the status quo. Divided into three sections, the book begins with an exploration of the corporate-driven energy transition and its impacts on the Global South. Kristina Dietz highlights the growing demand for minerals to fuel the energy transition, which is creating new sacrifice zones—regions deemed expendable for the abstract "greater good" of decarbonization. This mineral rush drives extractivism, especially in Latin America, reinforcing unequal material, energy, and power relations. Maristella Svampa critiques corporate environmentalism, which often advances false solutions to environmental challenges and obstructs efforts to democratize energy use and technology. Her analysis of lithium extraction in Latin America underscores the transformation of certain regions into *green* sacrifice zones while revealing the reconfiguration of geopolitical and socio-ecological dynamics.

Hamza Hamouchene expands on this critique by addressing green colonialism's impact in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). He critiques the failures of international climate negotiations, which perpetuate colonial dynamics under the guise of renewable energy development. Green colonialism, as Hamouchene defines it, extends colonial plunder and dispossession into the renewable energy era, dehumanizing marginalized groups while maintaining exploitative practices. John Feffer and Edgardo Lander build on this by illustrating how Green New Deal-style transitions in the Global North and countries like China fuel new waves of green colonialism. These approaches sustain an 'imperial mode of living' while deepening global socio-ecological crises. Ivonne Yáñez and Camila Moreno further critique green capitalism by adapting David Harvey's concept of "accumulation by dispossession" into "accumulation by decarbonization." They examine market mechanisms, green transitions, and the emergence of digital assets, exposing how corporate narratives and technical jargon dominate energy transition discourses. Their chapter also highlights grassroots alternatives advocating for just and equitable energy transitions.

The second section, focusing on interdependencies and entanglements, examines the systemic inequalities perpetuated by green colonialism. Christian Döringer critiques the North's net appropriation of wealth from the South, concealed under the pretense of free trade and market pricing. This unequal exchange underscores the material-energy dependency imposed on the South by the North. Lang, Alberto Acosta, and Esperanza Martínez investigate debt as a tool for perpetuating colonial legacies of extraction. They propose reframing ecological debt by positioning the Global South as creditors and rejecting offsetting practices that sustain exploitative dynamics. Their call for organized debt non-payment challenges the legitimacy of financial

instruments that deepen global inequalities. Ulrich Brand and Lang address the contentious role of the state in socioecological transformations, conceptualizing it as a historically specific and variegated structure tied to capitalist domination. However, they also highlight the state's potential as a porous space where domination intersects with emancipatory struggles. This tension is further explored by Nimmo Bassey, who critiques the colonial mindset driving resource plunder and displacement across Africa, often enabled by government complicity. Despite these challenges, Bassey emphasizes the importance of grassroots resistance, which defends territories against extractivist incursions. Rachmi Hertanti explores the geopolitical implications of critical raw materials and their supply chains, revealing how these dynamics reinforce global inequalities. Similarly, Manahan critiques multistakeholderism and corporate-driven environmental governance, advocating for an alternative form of multilateralism based on solidarity and mutual aid rather than top-down, corporate-centric models.

The third section shifts focus to diverse pathways toward achieving a livable and dignified future. Tatiana Roa Avendaño and Pablo Bertinat advocate for alternative ownership and management models, emphasizing the state's role in fostering community energy initiatives grounded in social movements. They argue that energy transitions must extend beyond decarbonization to include "decommodifying, democratizing, defossilizing, deconcentrating, decentralizing, and depatriarchalizing" (p. 174). Zo Randriamaro presents an eco-feminist perspective from Africa, drawing on Ubuntu philosophy to propose a Pan-African approach centered on micro- and meso-level alternatives to privatization and financialization. This perspective situates women's roles and struggles at the heart of resistance movements against green colonialism. Bengi Akbulut applies a feminist lens to degrowth discourse, calling for its decolonization by redefining work as a measure and a means to achieve justice, autonomy, and democracy. Similarly, Luis González Reyes addresses the material challenges of an ecosocial transition, emphasizing the need for localized and diverse economies that integrate perspectives from environmentalism, feminism, and international cooperation. He highlights the urgency, depth, and breadth required for transformative shifts, advocating for economies that respect planetary boundaries while prioritizing social justice. Farida Akhter contributes insights from Nayakrishi Andolon, a Bangladeshi agricultural movement promoting seed preservation, biodiversity regeneration, and a community-centered relationship with nature. María Campo and Arturo Escobar examine the role of design in counterhegemonic transitions, focusing on three Colombian groups to advocate for a synthesis of decarbonization, food sovereignty, and post-extractivism. Drawing on lived experiences and struggles of land-based communities, their chapter underscores the potential of design as a tool for shaping pluriversal futures. Finally, Bringel and Sabrina Fernandes propose an 'eco-territorial internationalism' that connects localized struggles through transnational networks and coalitions. Their vision emphasizes the importance of connecting movements across scales to build a global horizon of possibility while respecting and strengthening localized efforts.

The book addresses an impressive range of issues related to the expansion of green colonialism, employing diverse and often novel approaches to tackle complex and necessary conversations. A central premise is that ecosocial transformations—understood as a broader cultural, economic, political, and societal shift in humanity's relationship with nature (p. 12)—are impossible without global justice and a significant absolute reduction in energy and material consumption. These principles anchor the book's critique of the state's role in transition "governance," which the editors warn risks perpetuating hegemonic, corporate-led energy transitions unless reimagined through state-oriented reforms or prefigurative practices that prioritize localized autonomy. The book enriches this discussion by examining the material and energy demands of ecosocial transformation in both political and practical terms. By critically exploring degrowth in the Global South and how various geographies resist green and climate colonialism, the editors provide a nuanced analysis of these pressing issues. They highlight the growing dominance of a "green" capitalist consensus, which, they argue, obscures and undermines meaningful resistance and dialogue. The authors' bold engagement with these challenges makes this work a vital contribution to debates on ecosocial transformation, green colonialism, and the future of energy transitions.

In the context of the corporate-led energy transition and the emergence of eco-territorial internationalism as a response, a central challenge lies in the state's role in either facilitating or hindering these transformations. While Brand and Lang provide a nuanced critique of the state, the unresolved tension between eco-territorial internationalism and the state's complicity with capitalism remains significant. The experience of the Petro-Marquez government in Colombia exemplifies efforts to position the state as a "steward" of a popular or communitarian energy transition, offering a counterpoint to corporate-led approaches. Although the Colombian

case is compelling and deserves closer analysis (p. 12), it underscores a deeper challenge that aligns with long-standing anarchist critiques that argue the state does not simply "wither away," even when prefigurative praxis seeks to build autonomous movements from below. The tension between public efforts to "empower institutions" (p. 180) and the persistent influence of the market is fundamentally at odds with struggles for prefiguration and autonomy. In other words, the state, by enabling power to shift its guise without addressing its inherent alliance with capitalism and the international division of labor, perpetuates this contradiction. This highlights the enduring challenge of reconciling state-centered strategies with broader goals of autonomy and systemic transformation.

A second contentious point concerns the framing of energy as "a right," primarily discussed in Rao Avendaño and Bertinet's chapter. The authors provide a vital analysis of the state's role in transitioning to alternative forms of energy ownership and management, emphasizing that energy transitions are not solely about decarbonization but also about "decommodifying, democratizing, defossilizing, deconcentrating, decentralizing, and depatriarchalizing" (p. 174). Central to their argument is the interplay between the public, the popular, and the common, proposing energy as "a collective right consistent with the rights of Nature and recovering the public in terms of ownership and management" (p. 179). The authors argue that achieving such a transition requires state, legislative, and regulatory reforms to challenge privatization and liberalization while empowering institutions and actors operating outside capitalist market frameworks. However, while they effectively critique the commodification of energy, framing energy as "a right" assumes, perhaps uncritically, that the "right to energy" equates to a universal "need" for energy. As Ivan Illich (2009) warns, this framing risks reaffirming the modern premise of people as inherently "needy," thereby reinforcing institutional dependency and perpetuating some counterproductive dynamics of modernity. This critique raises important questions for political ecologists, including how energy is conceptualized, how the notion of "rights" relates to modern formulations of humanity, and how liberalism has historically framed these rights as individual rather than collective struggles. The chapter thus opens critical debates about whether the conceptualization of energy as a "right" can adequately support the broader emancipatory goals of political ecology or risks reinforcing the very structures it seeks to challenge.

Thirdly, the proliferation of terms like green extractivism, green colonialism, and green capitalism invites reflection on their interconnectedness. Bringel and Fernandez critique green extractivism for isolating decarbonization from the metabolism of nature, thereby normalizing the imperial mode of living. However, others like Chagnon *et al.* (2022) have emphasized extractivism's colonial mentality and its central role in capitalist accumulation, while Dunlap *et al.* (2024) argue that green extractivism exploits the climate crisis to create profit opportunities under the guise of sustainability and "carbon neutrality." While the authors rightly reject reducing everything to decarbonization, the conceptual link between green colonialism and green extractivism needs to be more tightly integrated. Discussing these terms together –rather than separating them– reveals the interconnected dynamics of socioecological exploitation and the coloniality of power, nature, and knowledge, enriching our understanding of capitalism's "green turn."

Finally, while the book offers a broad overview of green colonialism's many forms, one area that warrants further attention is the conceptualization of energy within energy transition discussions. As Larry Lohmann (2024) argues, understanding energy as inherently colonial reveals the imperial logic embedded in thermodynamics. By framing energy as a "thing," its impact on landscapes and timescapes is often obscured, reducing our challenge to the 'transition' rather than focusing on *energy itself*. While these critiques are not absent from the book, they serve as provocations, encouraging readers to adopt a broader perspective on green colonialism within capitalist structures.

In their compelling conclusion, Bringel and Fernandez identify several ways in which a new internationalism is being forged through an eco-territorial turn. They reject the green-new-deal mentality that has shaped much of the discourse on energy transitions, instead advocating for Doreen Massey's global sense of place. This perspective moves beyond the outdated binary of development in the South versus degrowth in the North, highlighting instead the potential of formal and informal networks—such as the Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South and the Global Tapestry of Alternatives[1]—as spaces and platforms for building alternative political imaginaries, while also facilitating alliances against shared enemies and false solutions. *The*

[1] While the authors reference these initiatives in their chapter, I wish to disclose, in the interest of transparency, that I am an active member of both networks.

*Geopolitics of green colonialism* is a must-read for those seeking a deeper understanding of capitalism's reliance on its "green" consensus. Its comprehensive critique of green colonialism, coupled with diverse perspectives from twenty-five contributors, makes it an invaluable resource for anyone engaging with ecosocial transformation, energy transitions, and global justice.

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Carlos Tornel is an independent researcher and a member of the Global Tapestry of Alternatives and the Ecosocial and Intercultural Pact of the South.