

# Colonialism and Modern Social Theory: A Conversation between Gurminder K Bhambra, John Holmwood, Ipek Demir, Steve Kemp & Christian Morgner

Sponsored by the BSA Theory Study Group

10 November 2021 (3pm-4:30pm BST)  
Online

## About the Event

Modern society emerged in the context of European colonialism and empire. So, too, did a distinctively modern social theory, laying the basis for most social theorising ever since. Yet colonialism and empire are absent from the conceptual understandings of modern society, which are organized instead around ideas of nation state and capitalist economy.

In *Colonialism and Modern Social Theory*, Gurminder K Bhambra and John Holmwood address this absence by examining the role of colonialism in the development of modern society and the legacies it has bequeathed. Beginning with a consideration of the role of colonialism and empire in the formation of social theory from Hobbes to Hegel, they go on to focus on the work of Tocqueville, Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Du Bois.

In this conversation, the contributors discuss how sociological theory became organised around a conception of capitalist modernity (exemplified, perhaps, by Anthony Giddens' book *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, published 50 years ago) and how a different conception of colonial modernity might transform current debates in sociology.

- **Gurminder K Bhambra** is Professor of Postcolonial and Decolonial Studies at the University of Sussex
- **John Holmwood** is Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of Nottingham
- **Ipek Demir** is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Leeds
- **Steve Kemp** is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh
- **Christian Morgner** is Senior Lecturer in Cultural and Creative Industries at the University of Sheffield

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