

Introduction

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The dossier presented here, compiled by Antonio Fuentes Díaz, is the result of an invitation I extended during my work on the topic of conflicts in the years 2023 to 2024. I had originally asked Fuentes Díaz for a contribution, but what I received far exceeded that expectation – a powerful, conceptually dense, and deeply analytical wholesale of six contributions from Latin American academics, theoreticians, etc., exploring the violent restructuring of key socio-political concepts. These contributions traverse the complex terrain of state power, capitalism, and necropolitics while examining struggles for Indigenous peoples' rights, the systemic logic of extractivism, and the entangled dynamics of feminicide, criminal economies, and drug trafficking.

It is also important for us to emphasize the double and divergent meanings of femicide and feminicide used in the contributions. In Europe, femicide has often been treated primarily as an extreme form of gender-based violence, typically in the context of intimate partner violence. It is seen as an individual crime, often based on personal motives such as jealousy or control. In contrast, the Latin American concept of feminicide emphasizes that these murders are not just isolated or private acts, but that they are part of a broader system of structural and systemic gender-based violence. Feminicide points to the social conditions that allow such violence to go unpunished, such as misogyny, machismo, poverty, organized crime, and patriarchal norms that are entrenched in both the public and private spheres. Feminicide that has come into the theoretical, critical, and activist political vocabularies developed in Latin America, particularly in México in the 1990s, broadens and deepens the meaning of femicide and introduces critical political and structural dimensions that have a significant impact on how the issue is understood globally, including in Europe. For example, indigenous women, migrant women, and women living in impoverished areas are at higher risk and are often systematically neglected. It demands accountability from institutions

and makes the death of women a human rights issue and not just a criminal matter. Particularly noteworthy is the dossier's ability to show how these phenomena, often dismissed as pathologies of the Global South or anomalies far from Europe, actually prove to be structurally embedded in global formations of sovereignty, governance, and economic extraction. These processes do not remain peripheral but increasingly inform and reflect internal developments within Western nations, particularly how formal state structures and criminal systems interlock and reinforce each other to ensure the continuity of extractivist profit and systemic control.

I owe special thanks to my colleague Dr. Jovita Pristovšek, who was instrumental in formatting and preparing the texts according to *Anthropos*' publication requirements. I would also like to thank Dr. Tomaž Grušovnik and Alen Ježovnik for their unconditional support in publishing the proposed set of texts and for their confidence in the project, which paved the way for its acceptance. To all those involved in the publication of *Anthropos*, from English proofreading to the designer, I must express my heartfelt thanks.

Finally, this project received the full support of Dr. Nina Cvar, the newly appointed editor of *Anthropos*, whose vision coincided with the radical and theoretical core of the dossier.

This collection provides a foundational platform for what I call 'seminal texts of rigour' – contributions that span disciplines such as philosophy, social theory, political aesthetics, sociology, and the humanities more broadly. It creates a critical space for theoretical and political engagement in Slovenia, where such contributions often struggle to find publication.

The Structure of the Edited Thematic Issue

This edited thematic issue of *Anthropos* opens with Antonio Fuentes Díaz and Panagiotis Doulos' text, 'Economy of Death: The Grey Zone, Cannibal War Machine and Capitalist Accumulation in Latin America,' a fundamental analysis of México's socio-political landscape. Rather than simply describing state violence or coercion, the authors examine the intricate relationships between the global necrocapitalist system and the hybrid governance of the state. They argue that since the 1980s, Latin America has served as a testing ground for neoliberal deregulation facilitated by agreements such as GATT and NAFTA.

This context allowed for the convergence of state and criminal enterprises, leading to what the authors call 'hybrid governance' – a shared sovereignty in which the state relinquishes its monopoly on legitimate

coercion in favour of complicity with criminal organizations. The authors highlight the role of ‘criminal capital’ in shaping today’s political economies. This capital thrives on mechanisms of extortion and rent extraction, in which rent, whether through normalized tax systems or criminalized extraction, becomes a central axis of value production. In this framework, capital accumulation depends on the exploitation of resources and populations, creating an economy based on violence and systemic oppression. The authors suggest that this ‘criminal accumulation’ works by dissolving the boundaries between legal and illegal activities, creating ambiguous zones where lawlessness and profitability coexist. These grey zones foster ‘shared sovereignties’ in which state authority is intertwined with criminal organizations, enabling the extraction of resources, income, and even human lives through systematic violence. At the centre of this framework is the concept of the ‘cannibal war machine,’ a mechanism that uses violence not only as a tool of control, but as a method to generate profit and maintain power structures. This process fits seamlessly into the logic of neoliberal capitalism, in which the pursuit of value overrides ethical and legal restrictions. In its extreme form, ‘criminal capital’ embodies the nihilistic core of capitalist logic. It reduces human and material resources to commodities that are exploited in the relentless pursuit of profit.

By analysing these dynamics in the Mexican context, the article demonstrates that criminal machinations are not an aberration but a structural feature of global neoliberalism. It emphasizes the need to rethink the intersections of legality, sovereignty, and violence to understand contemporary systems of power and exploitation. This system reflects the crude logic of value – a stark reminder of how deeply global capitalism is interwoven with mechanisms of death and destruction. This text explores the interplay between extortion, criminal leadership, and contemporary capitalism in México, arguing that criminal activity is integral to contemporary forms of capital accumulation. In the Latin American context, this manifests itself in the ‘economy of death,’ in which value is extracted through the commodification of life and the perpetuation of conflict, embodied by the cannibalistic war machine of drug cartels and criminal groups.

Lia de Mattos Rocha, Monique Batista Carvalho, and Jonathan da Motta, in ‘Milicias, Factions, and Precariousness: Notes on Living Conditions in the City of Rio de Janeiro Outskirts’ examine the complex dynamics of territorial control by armed groups in Rio de Janeiro, partic-

ularly militias and criminal groups, focusing on the outskirts of the city, of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The text places criminal capital in stark contrast to the idealized notions of 'social capital' propagated in the 1990s, revealing the brutal reality that capital serves primarily to enrich those who control production and privatized public goods. The study identifies key variables such as the type of group that controls a particular territory, the degree of territorial dominance, the forms of presence of these groups, and their relations with the local population. Using this framework, the study shows the complicated ways in which armed groups shape daily life and influence patterns of sociability, mobility, and access to resources. The authors argue that these dynamics are not isolated phenomena, but structural features of urban life in Rio's periphery. The control exercised by militias and groups leads to chronic insecurity characterized by violence, fear, and lack of institutional support. This precarity perpetuates cycles of inequality and exclusion and further strengthens the power of armed groups in these areas.

The study examines four key dimensions: the type of armed group operating in each area, the extent and nature of territorial dominance, the nature of their spatial and institutional presence, and their mode of collaboration with the local population. The results show that these armed groups are not only violent actors, but also act as quasi-governmental entities that shape local sociability, regulate mobility, and mediate access to essential services in the absence of the state, or with its complicity. This *de facto* governance leads to a state of chronic insecurity in which residents live in a constant 'state of siege' characterized by surveillance, fear, and fluctuating regimes of order and coercion. By foregrounding the lived experiences of communities under armed control, the study contributes to critical debates about informal governance, urban violence and the interplay of legality and illegality in shaping life on the margins of the city. It calls for an urgent rethinking of public policy that aligns with the realities of those for whom the line between state and non-state power is increasingly blurred. Through this analytical lens, the paper elaborates on how these armed actors not only occupy space but actively shape the urban landscape by structuring everyday life, regulating freedom of movement, shaping the informal economy, and mediating access to basic resources such as water, electricity, housing, and even justice. Such contradictory roles blur the boundaries between crime, governance, and survival and embed the power of armed actors in the social and affective fabric of community life. The authors, therefore, argue that the urban peripheries

should not only be seen as places where the state is absent, but as spaces with multiple sovereignties where legality, illegality, and informality are constantly negotiated. The consequences of this fragmented sovereignty are profound: cycles of inequality are deepened, democratic accountability is eroded, and the urban poor are trapped in a web of conditional allegiances, enforced dependencies, and systemic neglect. Ultimately, this article sheds crucial light on the fact that armed territorial control is not a marginal issue, but a defining feature of contemporary urbanity in Rio de Janeiro. The conditions described – violence, fragmented authority, and the institutionalization of insecurity – resonate far beyond Brazil, offering a critical perspective on urban governance and social life in an age of neoliberal dispossession and securitized development.

Natalia De Marinis takes us ‘back’ to México in her contribution, ‘Creating a Testimony of the Unspeakable: Testimonial Injustice, Affects and Political Mobilization of Indigenous Women in México.’ This article critically examines how testimonial practices are shaped by intersecting structures of ethnicity, gender, and class that determine whose voices are heard, believed, and recognized. Drawing on extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the Zongolica region of the Gulf of México, the study focuses on the experiences of Indigenous women, whose accounts of violence are often dismissed, their credibility questioned, and their suffering made invisible. From the perspective of the injustice of testimony, the article examines the systematic silencing of these women and the epistemic violence that marginalizes their experiences from public view. At the same time, the article highlights the powerful strategies that Indigenous women and their communities have developed to reclaim their voice and agency. By developing alternative forms of witnessing rooted in affect, memory, and collective experience, they are not only resisting erasure but also creating pathways to truth-telling, solidarity, and justice.

Amid escalating violence in México since the beginning of the war on drug trafficking in 2007, victim testimonies have emerged as important tools to confront societal indifference, challenge state narratives, and promote commemoration and reparation practices. While such testimonies play a crucial role in resisting impunity and reclaiming agency, the process of constructing and legitimizing these narratives is anything but neutral. These counter-narratives challenge the hegemonic framework of victimhood and open up new possibilities for political mobilization in the face of militarization, criminality, and state neglect.

De Marinis conceptualizes the injustice of testimony not simply as the

denial of a speaker's credibility, but as a structural and affective condition that delegitimizes the ability of Indigenous women to speak about violence, dispossession, and trauma in a way that is recognized by hegemonic systems of knowledge and justice. These forms of silence are often naturalized by racialized, gendered, and colonial assumptions that portray Indigenous women as either passive victims or bearers of 'non-modern' knowledge that is unsuitable for political rationality or legal recognition. However, De Marinis does not view this condition merely as a site of loss, but explores how Indigenous women mobilize affects, memories, and embodied forms of storytelling to articulate political demands and contest their exclusion. These alternative forms of testimony become tools of action and resistance that forge communal solidarities and reconfigure the terrain of political struggle. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork and situated feminist epistemologies, De Marinis shows how testimonies – exchanged in community gatherings, rituals, or grassroots legal forums – function as sites of affective reparation and collective healing while destabilizing normative notions of truth, justice, and legitimacy. This process is not without tensions, as it must overcome the extractive gaze of institutions and the risk of re-traumatization. Nonetheless, these testimonies offer a form of 'speaking with' rather than just speaking for, emphasizing relationality and the creation of shared political horizons. De Marinis's essay represents a decolonial feminist critique that emphasizes the power of Indigenous women to reclaim the narrative space from which they were historically excluded. Their testimonies, situated at the intersection of pain and political action, challenge epistemic hierarchies and demand the right to be heard on their own terms, not just as objects of pity, but as active political subjects capable of changing the social and affective conditions of justice.

Brenda Focas and Alejandra Luneke, in their study, 'Crime, Women and Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs): Everyday Management of Insecurity in Santiago and Buenos Aires,' explore further the gendered dynamics of urban insecurity in Santiago, Chile, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, focusing on how young women navigate and manage everyday experiences of violence and fear through digital and embodied strategies. We shift the focus from México to the vast territory of Latin America. Beyond macro-level analyses of organized crime, the study foregrounds the micropolitics of insecurity, particularly street harassment and sexual violence, and its impact on women's mobility, access to public space, and social participation. The study also highlights the

role of information and communications technologies (ICT) as risk management tools and platforms for collective solidarity. From neighbourhood WhatsApp groups to social media alerts, these technologies mediate women's responses to urban violence and enable information sharing, emotional support, and grassroots monitoring. However, the authors warn that these digital practices can also reinforce fears and exclusionary dynamics, particularly in contexts where state protection is perceived as absent or unreliable. By situating these everyday practices within broader structures of territorial control, urban marginalization, and informal governance, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the interactions between violence, gender, and technology in contemporary urban life. It calls for a rethinking of urban policy that focuses on the lived experiences of women and addresses the causes of fear and exclusion in the marginalized areas of Latin American cities.

The constant dissemination of warnings and news about crime and violence can reinforce a 'digital atmosphere of fear' that heightens perceptions of danger and induces overprotective behaviour, especially among women who already bear the burden of dealing with gender-based violence in public and private spaces. Furthermore, these platforms often mirror and reproduce social and spatial inequalities. Access to ICTs, the power to define what constitutes a 'threat' and the power to mobilize responses are unequally distributed. The authors note that racist and class-based assumptions often determine how certain bodies or behaviours are categorized as suspicious, which can lead to dynamics of exclusion, securitization, and moral panic. The article urges readers to reconsider the portrayal of ICTs as neutral or inherently democratizing tools. Instead, Focas and Luneke argue for a critical feminist approach that considers the affective, political and social dimensions of digital security practices. They argue that women's engagement with these technologies is deeply embedded in broader structures of insecurity, inequality and institutional absence – and that these digital strategies represent both a coping mechanism and a critique of state failures to protect vulnerable populations.

Carolina Galindo reflects on the influence of television and the mode of telenovelas in 'The Narconovela and Crime in Colombia: 40 Years after *La Mala Hierba*.' This article examines the emergence of the narconovela genre in Colombia, taking as its starting point the early and controversial television soap opera *La mala hierba* (*The Evil Weed*), which aired in the early 1980s. Through a detailed analysis of the public reception of the series and the media discourse of the time, the study traces the fundamental

role of *La mala hierba* in shaping the narrative and aesthetic framework that would later define the narconovela genre. By placing the soap opera in its historical and socio-political context, the article examines how early depictions of drug trafficking began to blur the boundaries between fiction and reality, spectacle and critique. Galindo examines the evolution of the genre and questions its politics of representation, aesthetic changes, and its role in shaping national ideas of crime, power, and identity.

The essay begins by establishing *La mala hierba* as a foundational text in the genealogy of Colombian narconarratives, marking a pivotal moment in which drug trafficking emerged not only as a social and political reality but also as a powerful cultural trope. Galindo traces how the early narconovelas captured the ambiguity of the drug trade, its allure and its violence, its promises of social mobility, and its disruption of traditional class and power structures. These early stories often reflected the blurred morals of a society struggling with the normalization of corruption, impunity, and extralegal authority.

Galindo examines how such cultural products contributed to the symbolic legitimization of criminality and offered complex representations that both reflected and shaped public understandings of power, violence, and aspiration in Colombian society. Furthermore, the article draws connections between *La mala hierba* and contemporary versions of the narconovela, considering its role in the broader Latin American media landscape and its impact on the normalization and commercialization of narcoculture. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing debates about the political and ethical implications of crime-based narratives in popular media and how these narratives shape collective memory, national identity, and social conceptions of crime. Galindo critically assesses the massification and commercialization of the narconovela on television, streaming platforms, and in popular fiction. The contemporary versions – highly stylized, dramatized, and often sensationalized – have transformed the genre into a transnational media phenomenon. Galindo points out, however, that these newer narratives often trade complexity for spectacle and reduce systemic violence to personalized dramas of revenge, desire, and betrayal.

Galindo engages with key theoretical debates about aestheticization and complicity, questioning whether the narconovela continues to offer critical insights or whether it has been complicit in glorifying violence and reinforcing harmful stereotypes. She notes that while some contemporary works attempt to question the complicity of the state, paramili-

tarism, or US imperialism, many others contribute to a moralizing narrative that individualizes crime and presents criminality as a pathology rather than a symptom. Importantly, Galindo also emphasizes the gendered dimension of the narconovela. Over time, the figure of the narcowoman has evolved from a peripheral role to a central figure. However, even in an empowered position, these representations often reproduce patriarchal logics, emphasizing beauty, seduction, and tragic downfall, without questioning the deeper gendered structures of narco-capitalism. Galindo concludes her analysis by noting that the narconovela remains an important cultural archive for understanding how Colombians, and increasingly global audiences, confront, process, and narrate the entanglements of criminality, state power, and neoliberal precarity. Forty years after *La mala hierba*, the genre is not only a reflection of evolving national anxieties but also a contested battleground for the politics of memory, representation, and resistance.

The final contribution by Melisa Cabrapan Duarte, ‘The Mapuche People in Vaca Muerta, Argentina: Between Criminalization and Anti-Extractivist Resistance Aesthetics,’ examines the socio-environmental conflict surrounding Vaca Muerta, a major hydrocarbon extraction site in northern Patagonia, Argentina, and its profound impact on Indigenous Mapuche communities in the region. As fracking activities expand under the national and international energy agenda, the Mapuche, particularly those organized in the Regional Coalition Xawvn Ko of the Mapuche Confederation of Neuquén, have become central actors of resistance against the encroachment of extractivists on their ancestral lands. The study focuses on the criminalization and repression to which the Mapuche communities are exposed due to their resistance to fracking. It shows how state and corporate actors mobilize legal and media frameworks to delegitimize Indigenous resistance. At the same time, the article explores the emerging political aesthetics of the struggle against fracking and shows how these communities mobilize cultural expressions, collective memory, and territorial practices, particularly through intercommunal alliances, to reclaim agency and articulate alternative futures.

By situating Mapuche resistance within broader debates about environmental justice, Indigenous sovereignty, and state violence, the article helps to elucidate how grassroots movements not only challenge extractivism but also create new spaces of visibility and political action. In doing so, it underscores the urgent need to recognize Indigenous struggles

as both epistemic and territorial, and as central to the vision of a sustainable and decolonial future in Latin America.

I am impressed by this analytical and profound investigation, which allows us to reflect at length on the hyper-neoliberal system of contemporary Slovenia, currently led by a turbo-neoliberal vision of the Slovenian liberal party 'The Freedom Movement,' which has replaced a strongly right-wing despotic predecessor, the Slovenian Democratic Party. This ousted right-wing party currently sits in opposition in parliament and has an army of supporters representing 25 percent of all eligible voters in Slovenia waiting for the new parliamentary elections. And finally, the despotic figure of the former right, now given even more impetus by Trump and the right-wing ideological ballast of the right-wing, corrupt EU government (just think of the hidden and criminal vaccine deals), will open up a space in which what we present here as a theoretical discourse from Latin America will become more and more of a visible reality in Europe.