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Emotional Interdependence: Reconceptualizing Mutual Dependence from Global North to Global South

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Turning from Global North perspectives to those from the Global South, this article introduces contrasting approaches to emotional interdependence in international relations, considering how it may operate in a world order beyond Western dominance. After critiquing the artificial tension between reason and emotion in dominant "rationalist" approaches to interdependence, the article unpacks two sets of previously overlooked perspectives on emotional interdependence. First, it turns to paths not taken forward in the history of international thought in the Global North to indicate their elaboration of conceptualizations of emotional interdependence that extend beyond singular expressions of sympathy and empathy given the role of reciprocity, continuity, and extension to humanity. With reference to their application to contemporary experience, the analysis highlights the limitations of approaches rooted in Western constructions of humanity and universality, and subsequently turns to perspectives from the Global South to delineate the contours of pluriversal approaches to emotional interdependence. Rooted in concepts including Buen Vivir and Ubuntu, pluriversal emotional interdependence involves horizontal reciprocity, coexistence of multiple emotional worlds, and inseparability of humans from nature. The case of South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu" is used to illustrate pluriversal emotional interdependence in diplomatic practice and its roles in mediating between worlds.

Este artículo cambia su enfoque desde las perspectivas del Norte Global a las del Sur Global. Esto nos permite presentar enfoques contrapuestos con relación a la interdependencia emocional en las relaciones internacionales, considerando, además, cómo se puede operar en un orden mundial más allá del dominio occidental. El artículo realiza una crítica de la tensión artificial entre la razón y la emoción en los enfoques dominantes «racionalistas» sobre la interdependencia y, a continuación, desglosa dos conjuntos de perspectivas sobre la interdependencia emocional que se habían pasado por alto anteriormente. En primer lugar, el artículo entra en caminos que no habían sido tomados anteriormente en la historia del pensamiento internacional en el Norte Global con el fin de señalar su elaboración de conceptualizaciones de interdependencia emocional que se extienden más allá de expresiones singulares de solidaridad y empatía, dada la importancia de la reciprocidad, la continuidad y la extensión hacia la humanidad. En lo referente a su aplicación en la experiencia contemporánea, el análisis destaca las limitaciones de los enfoques arraigados en construcciones occidentales de humanidad y universalidad, y, a continuación, utiliza perspectivas del Sur Global con el fin de delinear los contornos de enfoques pluriversales de interdependencia emocional. La interdependencia emocional pluriversal, enraizada en conceptos como el «Buen Vivir» y el «Ubuntu», implica reciprocidad horizontal, coexistencia de múltiples mundos emocionales e inseparabilidad de los humanos con la naturaleza. Utilizamos el caso de la «diplomacia del Ubuntu» de Sudáfrica con el fin de ilustrar la interdependencia emocional pluriversal en la práctica diplomática y los roles que ejerce en la mediación entre mundos.

Abandonnant les perspectives du Nord global pour adopter celles du Sud global, cet article présente des approches contradictoires de l'interdépendance émotionnelle en relations internationales, en envisageant son fonctionnement dans un ordre mondial qui s'affranchirait de la domination occidentale. Après une critique de la tension artificielle entre la raison et l'émotion dans les approches « rationalistes » dominantes de l'interdépendance, l'article décortique deux ensembles de perspectives jusqu'ici omises sur l'interdépendance émotionnelle. D'abord, il s'intéresse à des trajectoires délaissées au cours de l'histoire de la pensée internationale dans le Nord global pour montrer leur élaboration de conceptualisations de l'interdépendance émotionnelle qui dépassent des expressions ponctuelles de sympathie et d'empathie, étant donné le rôle de la réciprocité, de la continuité et de l'extension pour l'humanité. Par rapport à leur application à l'expérience contemporaine, l'analyse souligne les limites des approches ancrées dans les constructions occidentales de l'humanité et de l'universalité. Elle se tourne par conséquent vers des perspectives du Sud global pour tracer les contours d'approches pluriverselles de l'interdépendance émotionnelle. Ancrée dans des concepts comme le Buen Vivir et l'Ubuntu, l'interdépendance émotionnelle pluriverselle implique une réciprocité horizontale, une coexistence de multiples mondes émotionnels et l'inséparabilité des humains et de la nature. Le cas de la « diplomatie de l'Ubuntu » de l'Afrique du Sud est employé pour illustrer l'interdépendance émotionnelle pluriverselle dans la pratique diplomatique et ses rôles dans la médiation entre les mondes.

Keywords: interdependence; emotions; relationality; humanity; Global South.

Interdependence is one of the most prominent concepts in the contemporary analysis of international relations, understood to describe a phenomenon "that shows no sign of weakening" even as "the era of Western dominance is ending" (Acharya and Buzan 2019, 309). Definitions of interdependence may seem quite open, with the most widely circulated claiming that "interdependence, most simply defined, means mutual dependence" and "in world politics

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[it] refers to situations characterized by reciprocal effects among countries or among actors in different countries" (Keohane and Nye 2012, 7). Despite this prospective openness, prevailing conceptualizations of "types of interdependence" in international relations have tended to be quite limited. In a recent survey by one of its leading proponents, for instance, three principal forms are disaggregated: (i) economic interdependence encompassing features such as trade, investment, and markets; (ii) strategic interdependence including the role of deterrence; and (iii) environmental interdependence involving global challenges such as climate change and epidemics—in each case emphasizing the varying vulnerabilities of states to these phenomena (Nye 2020, 9–11).

This article urges consideration of a fourth form: emotional interdependence. As elaborated in the next section, dominant "rationalist" approaches to interdependence in international relations have tended to assume emotions to be either subordinate or a threat to the pursuit of common interests. By contrast, the subsequent analysis draws attention to divergent perspectives on how not only interests but also emotions may involve reciprocity across international borders. Two alternative conceptualizations of emotional interdependence are outlined, each rooted in a different previously overlooked literature in preponderant approaches to interdependence in international relations.[1]

First, the article excavates neglected pathways from the history of international thought in the Global North to reveal how they offered a simple model of emotional interdependence by which the emotional well-being of people around the world depends upon that of each other, rooted in approaches ranging from those emphasizing mutual sympathy among individuals across borders to those proposing humanity to constitute an affective collective. By highlighting how such approaches were intended to complement interest-based accounts of international cooperation, the analysis addresses a significant gap in established studies of the history of interdependence thought that have emphasized the latter (De Wilde 1991; Ceadel 2011). However, through evaluation of apparent manifestations of these forms of emotional interdependence in practice, the article highlights the limitations of their assumptions concerning prospectively universal emotional responses across humanity, and how they overlook diversity and difference.

The discussion therefore subsequently turns to perspectives from the Global South to elaborate the principal dimensions of alternative—pluriversal—approaches to emotional interdependence that embrace rather than obfuscate diversity through their emphasis on relations across multiple emotional worlds. The operation of pluriversal emotional interdependence in practice is illustrated with reference to South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu," which has made explicit reference to emotions and dialogue between worlds in contrast to standard approaches to foreign relations. In drawing attention to pluriversal understandings of emotional interdependence, the article may help us better understand how interdependence may function in a changing global order in which diverse worlds coexist and prevailing Western assumptions cannot be assumed to be universally valid.

In its attention to contrasting perspectives on emotional interdependence, this article makes a contribution at the intersection of two flourishing areas of research in contemporary world politics, the complementarities of which merit further investigation: emotional international relations and pluriversal relationality.[2] The study of emotional interdependence sheds light on features of emotional dynamics in international relations that extend beyond those most prominent in the well-established study of empathy and sympathy in world politics.[3] For instance, the initial analysis highlights how perspectives on emotional interdependence emphasize a more multidirectional and persistent relationship than ad hoc or unidirectional expressions of empathy and sympathy.[4] The subsequent discussion, on the other hand, explores how pluriversal approaches from the Global South may eschew pitfalls of universalizing and anthropocentric perspectives on emotional interdependence through consideration of how it may instead function in "a world in which many worlds fit" and in which humans and nature are inseparable.[5] First, however, it is necessary to establish the problematic way in which emotions have been considered in mainstream work on interdependence.

The Marginalization of Emotions in Mainstream Interdependence Theory

A striking continuity in preponderant perspectives on interdependence in international relations has been presentation of the phenomenon in purportedly "rationalist" terms, portraying emotions as either subordinate to or a threat to assumed common interests. Such perspectives are marred not only by their marginalization of emotions but also by their neglect of wider forms of relationality and interdependence across and beyond the human.

Standard accounts of interdependence thought extend back to the work of Norman Angell (De Wilde 1991; Ceadel 2011). Angell (1914, 221, xxii; 1910, 283) emphasized the "financial, industrial and commercial interdependence of modern states," which he argued would "progressively nullify the effectiveness of physical coercion," and he urged education to be "more rational in our attitude to war" such that "the purely impulsive element loses its empire over us." A sharp contrast was therefore drawn in Angell's work between the emotional—which was interpreted as a source not of interdependence but of war—and the "rational" pursuit of mutual economic interests, which was perceived as a means to overcome this problem.

Assessments of the subsequent evolution of interdependence thinking highlight continuities in emphasis upon the economic and the rational, such as in the work of Ramsay Muir and Charles Merriam (De Wilde 1991). Scholarship on international organizations and interdependence also emphasized economic rationality, with Ruggie (1972, 878, 892) stressing "the joint production and the joint regulation of

[1] The potential for consideration of emotions to rethink international cooperation was suggested in Crawford (2000), but it was not taken forward in analyses of interdependence.

[2] In this, the analysis takes forward possibilities highlighted in Ling (2014a), as will be elaborated later in the article when introducing pluriversal approaches to emotional interdependence.

[3] On empathy and sympathy in international relations, see, for example, Head (2016), Hutchison (2014), and Pedwell (2014).

[4] These distinctions are elaborated in the third section of this article, which also highlights the wider reach of emotional interdependence beyond the collective emotions of groups in international relations (such as the "affective communities" studied in Hutchison 2016).

[5] Here, the analysis builds on work highlighting the potential of pluriversal perspectives for the study of international relations put forward by, inter alia, Townsell, Chadha Behera, and Shani (2022), and Townsell et al. (2021). The terminology of a "world in which many worlds fit" originates in the Zapatistas' 1996 Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle (cf. de la Cadena and Blaser 2018, 2–3); on the application of this concept to international relations in general, see Blaney and Tickner (2017).

goods and services" and how "the propensity for international organization" is related to "the need to become dependent on others for the performance of specific tasks." Although Ruggie (1972, 893, 878) acknowledged "the shortcomings of a market-rational orientation … in coping with highly interdependent and complex phenomena," like Angell he portrayed emotions as a threat to interdependence in the form of "the general desire to keep such dependence to the minimal level necessary."

Keohane and Nye (1977, 9–10, 12–3; 2012, 15) sought to advance a more "analytic concept" of interdependence, exploring "sensitivity" and "vulnerability" and the role of "asymmetrical interdependencies as sources of power among actors," aiming to develop an approach applicable to military-strategic relations in addition to economic aspects. At the same time, a further contrast was emphasized between "dependence" in the sense of "external reliance of well-integrated nation-states on one another," and systemic "dependency" of developing states as they integrate into the capitalist world order (Caporaso 1978, 13).

Whereas Angell and Ruggie portrayed emotions as a prospective threat to the "rational" pursuit of mutual interests, Keohane placed emotions in a subordinate position. Noting the possibility of "empathetic interdependence," by which "actors may be interested in the welfare of others for their own sake," Keohane (1990, 229–31) emphasized that "empathy will play a subordinate role" to "more narrowly defined self-interest" in all but "relatively small spheres of activity," and "even when behavior appears to be motivated by empathy it may be possible to construct an alternative, and plausible, explanation for it on the premise of egoism."

Post-Cold War constructivist perspectives on interdependence marked a change of direction. Wendt (1999, 345–7) argued that "most [interdependence] scholarship has focused in rationalist fashion on the consequences of interdependence for behavior," in contrast to his emphasis on how it is necessary "to create a shared representation of the interdependence and the 'we' that it constitutes before anyone has made any behavioral decisions at all." Yet as Sterling-Folker (2002, 17) highlighted, the continuities between neoliberal institutionalist and constructivist perspectives on interdependence are considerable, with "constructivist accounts" alleged to "simply make explicit an assumed but unexplored step in situationally strategic neoliberal arguments." Moreover, the significance of emotions to interdependence remained marginalized in dominant constructivist approaches, and it has even been alleged that "common presuppositions in orthodox constructivism in fact obstruct the study of affect and its role in social and political life" (Ross 2006, 197).

Into the second decade of the twenty-first century, emotional features have continued to be sidelined in the mainstream study of interdependence in international relations. Instead, the predominant foci in recent works have included expanding upon the strategic and economic dimensions of interdependence in new concepts such as "Weaponized Interdependence" (Drezner, Farrell, and Newman 2021) and the "Political Economy of Complex Interdependence" (Oatley 2019), or applying established conceptualizations of interdependence to particular geopolitical relationships (Nye 2020) and to an expanding array of global issues (Holtz et al. 2020).[6] Moreover, in none of these cases has attention been paid to wider forms of relationality and interbeing, to which this article will later draw attention.

In summary, mainstream approaches to interdependence in international relations have tended to characterize emotions as either a threat to or subordinate to interdependence. However, as has become increasingly recognized in the study of emotions in world politics, perspectives claiming an antagonistic relationship between rationality and emotions are built on an inaccurate premise. Drawing on the work of neuroscientists such as Antonio Damasio, it is now generally recognized in the study of emotions in international relations that "emotion and cognition are not competing processes" (Mercer 2010, 5), with Hutchison and Bleiker (2014, 495) observing that "the need to rethink the dichotomy of emotion and rationality is now well recognized." Such a perspective informs literature that has "turned to specific ways to integrate the consideration of emotion into existing research within specific areas, such as diplomacy, security, war and ethnic conflict, transnational actors, institutions, and conflict management" (Koschut 2022), but interdependence has remained an exception.[7] In this context, this article seeks to turn attention to previously marginalized perspectives from the history of international thought and beyond the Western canon that foreground emotions in interdependence, and which assert that such an emphasis need not necessarily be incommensurable with the persistence of forms of interdependence stressed in "rationalist" perspectives.

Excavating Emotional Interdependence in the History of International Thought

By exploring paths not taken forward in the preponderant literature on interdependence discussed so far, an initial—albeit limited—model of emotional interdependence may be identified in previously overlooked aspects of the history of international thought in the Global North emphasizing an ongoing relationship of mutual "fellow-feeling" prospectively extending across "humanity." These approaches draw attention to the interdependence of emotions, but as shall be elaborated in the next section, they rest on problematic assumptions regarding purportedly universal emotional responses.

One of the most curious features of the analyses of interdependence considered in the previous section is the way in which they departed from the consideration of emotions in earlier work on political economy on which they otherwise built, such as that of Adam Smith, which laid far greater emphasis on emotional ties beyond borders. Such work was situated within a wider context of Enlightenment thought emphasizing the common concerns of "humanity," within which a conceptualization of emotional interdependence was implicit that emphasized the mutual dependency of the emotional well-being of people in different countries. Later writers whose considerations of emotions were overlooked in the dominant literature on interdependence were to highlight reverse dynamics, emphasizing the mutual emo-

[6]The phrase "emotional interdependence" has only featured once before in the study of international relations—and in that case, the focus was in fact on dependency relationships, not mutual dependence: Matsuoka (2018, 162) considered Japan's postwar dependency upon the United States as a case study of how the Japanese concept *amae* (situations in which someone "depend[s] and presume[s] upon another's love or bask[s] in another's indulgence" (Doi 1992, 8)) relates to dependency theory by helping to understand "the willingness of dependent states to rely on asymmetrical relations."

[7]Beauregard (2022, 32) refers to "cognitive-emotional interdependence" by which "cognitions and emotions are … impossible to understand apart from one another."

tional costs of developments such as armed conflict in shattering emotional ties binding people across borders.[8]

George Berkeley—whose work anticipated many of the themes later taken forward by Smith—wrote in his *Essay on Moral Philosophy* of how, as a man, he had "a fellow feeling of everything belonging to a man" and argued that "we may observe in the Spirits or Minds of men a like principle of attraction [to that among objects in the solar system], whereby they are drawn together in communities, clubs, families, friendships, and all the various species of society." Although he claimed that "the attraction is strongest between those which are placed nearest to each other," he also wrote of "that diffusive sense of humanity" supported by "that sympathy in our nature whereby we feel the pains and joys of our fellow-creatures" which "makes us inquisitive concerning the affairs of distant nations which can have no influence on our own" (Berkeley 1713, 253–6).[9] Barnett (2011, 50) notes the subsequent development in eighteenth century France of "the concept of *humanité*, implying a deeply felt concern for the welfare of one's fellow human beings."

In this context, Smith was to write of how he considered the happiness of individuals—even those far from one another—appeared to be dependent on that of others. In the opening sentence of his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, for example, Smith (1759, 1) observed that "How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it." Smith shared with later perspectives on economic interdependence their skepticism with respect to the extent to which concern for others could extend beyond the nation, and it is in the context of the assumed preference for "the support of domestic over foreign industry" that the only reference to an "invisible hand" of mutual self-interest was made (Wyatt-Walter 1996, 15, 22). While later authors were to take forward from Smith the emphasis on pursuit of self-interested behavior as a means out of the limitations of "love of country," a fuller picture of his writings must note the emphasis also on the role of "love of mankind" and the complementary nature of what he termed "the system of human affections" in advancing "the general order and happiness of the whole" in conjunction with each individual self-interestedly pursuing that "which was most within the sphere both of his abilities and his understanding" (in Forman-Barzilai, 2010, 213–4).

Smith was far from alone in noting the "pleasure of mutual sympathy" and how "nothing pleases us more than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast" (Smith 1759, 14).[10] Among eighteenth-century authors most explicitly anticipating features of emotional interdependence, Emmerich de Vattel wrote not only of "humanitarian obligations" but also of how these are "duties which men owe one another" since "as social beings [they] must help each other" not only for their "self-preservation" but also for their "happiness and in order to live according to their nature" (in Gorge´ 1938, 10).

The consideration of emotions evident in the writings of Berkeley, Smith, and Vattel offers a simple model of emotional interdependence emphasizing the significance of individuals' mutual "fellow-feeling," which, while stronger in relation to those nearest, may extend as far as the entirety of "humanity." These writings laid especial emphasis on the mutual dependence of individuals' happiness irrespective of where one another may be located, in Vattel's case involving the happiness felt through providing assistance to others. They all emphasized the role of "sympathy," but rather than focusing on singular occurrences of the phenomenon, they appeared to point to something that was both more reciprocal and more enduring in nature. Insofar as these writings emphasized emotions bringing people together, they offered what might be termed a "positive" model of interdependence (with "positive" referring to the role of attraction).[11] Smith was also to consider what might be termed the "negative" dynamics of emotional interdependence—by which human suffering and not only happiness may be mutually dependent—when he asserted, "That we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it" (Smith 1759, 1). However, there were limits to whom was considered within the scope of the "humanity" of which they wrote, with their attention concentrated on emotions of "fellow men" and those not subjected to imperial conquest: even though Vattel and Smith are sometimes considered to have contrasted with Berkeley in putting forward anti-imperialist perspectives, these notably excluded Indigenous peoples (Anghie 2014; Ince 2021).

As the concept of interdependence was later developed in the early twentieth century, the previous considerations of emotions were overlooked in the preponderant "rationalist" approaches to the concept. These approaches also failed to take forward alternative possibilities for consideration of emotional interdependence embedded in the writings of others who sought to develop international theory in the early years of its formation. While previous writers had largely concentrated on "mutual sympathy," the "negative" dynamics of emotional interdependence, by which disasters such as war cause mutual suffering by shattering the emotional bonds among people across borders, were made more explicit in later work produced at the time international relations emerged as a discipline.

This later work included literary approaches to international theory of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which have been gaining renewed attention for their consideration of love, among other previously overlooked emotional features of international relations (Hartnett 2022). Instructive are the writings of novelist and poet Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), whose approaches to the international, despite later neglect, were at the time considered significant in the development of international thought (Galsworthy 1923; Armitage 2013, 26, 1). In contrast to his contemporary Angell, who claimed that war was rendered unjustifiable on the basis of its unprofitability, for Hardy war was unjustifiable on the basis that it shatters ties of common human sentiment. Writing in 1886, Hardy asserted that humanity constitutes "one great network or tissue which quivers in every part when one point is shaken,

[8]The binary logic of "positive" and "negative" dynamics in this initial model is subsequently transcended in the "pluriversal" approaches considered later in this article.

[9]Berkeley (1713, 254) noted the possibility of the irreconcilability of fellow-feeling between those of different nations, arguing that "affection towards the individuals of the same species who are distantly related" may be "rendered inconspicuous by its more powerful attraction towards those who have a nearer relation."

[10]On sympathy in cosmopolitan thought from Smith to Nussbaum and Appiah, and for critique of its limitations, see Hallemeier (2012).

[11]This relationship may be a supplementary feature of "humanitarian interdependence"—understood as "policies to protect vulnerable communities from problems that spill across borders that governments cannot handle alone" (Brysk 2009, 169)—literature on this has tended to focus on material rather than emotional spillover effects of disasters.

like a spider's web if touched" (in Hardy 1984, 183). In contrast to bidirectional expressions of sympathy, the emphasis here is on a wider form of mutual emotional interdependency across humankind, which war and other disasters may disturb.[12]

The invocation of emotional ties across humanity was also to be found in alternative perspectives in the early twentieth-century analysis of the role of international organizations in advancing international cooperation, which subsequent dominant literature on interdependence also overlooked. To illustrate this, we can turn to a pioneer in the history of women's international thought, Laura Dreyfus-Barney, who was also the progenitor of the League of Nations' Liaison Committee of Major International Organizations.[13] Dreyfus-Barney (1933, 5) asserted that international organizations working for intellectual cooperation "realized the power of those spiritual values of thought and *feeling* which cut through the frontiers of nations, races and classes, by which all distinctions and even differing opinions are welded together to build a harmonious and complete whole." Moreover, she argued that this provided the context within which the mutual interests considered by others could be most fruitfully pursued in helping to "produce an atmosphere favourable to the solution of vital problems and to the development of a system of co-operation" (Dreyfus-Barney 1933, 5). The movement for intellectual cooperation sought to enhance this form of interdependence by working "to free the mind from prejudice, hostility and ignorance, and to fortify it through co-operation and wider knowledge of human relationships" (Dreyfus-Barney 1933, 6).

Whereas the earlier approaches of Berkeley, Smith, and Vattel largely conceived of emotional interdependence in terms of an ongoing relationship of mutual sympathy between distant individuals, in these later accounts there was greater emphasis upon emotional interdependence conceived as operational across humanity as a collectivity. Despite their differences, both sets of perspectives contrast with interest-based accounts claiming that "interdependent relationships will always involve costs, since interdependence restricts autonomy" (Keohane and Nye 2012, 8). Such a perception rests on the individualistic premise that autonomy is an intrinsically preferable state and neglects the extent to which the well-being of each may be considered to be intimately related to the well-being of others.

Nevertheless, the dynamics of emotional interdependence in the interpretations outlined so far and the dynamics emphasized in interest-based accounts may be complementary, as the authors considered in this section emphasized. While much of the later work on economic interdependence neglected this complementarity, we have seen how in the earlier work of Smith the dynamics of mutual sympathy were put forward in conjunction with his better-known references to the role of the "invisible hand" of self-interested behavior. A turn to these earlier literatures also appears to anticipate the recent growing acknowledgment that international cooperation cannot be understood solely in terms of the pursuit of mutual interests since underpinning that pursuit is the role of the emotional belief of trust, with Mercer (2010, 5–6) arguing that "cooperative behavior leads to a feeling of trust, and the feeling of trust is evidence that one should cooperate" and highlighting psychological research that appears to confirm that feelings of warmth and affection and not merely perceived common interests underpin trust relationships. Similarly, in Dreyfus-Barney's approach, international organizations were considered not merely the embodiment of shared interests but also shared feelings that have produced a "favorable atmosphere" for a system of international cooperation.

The Limitations of Approaches Rooted in Universalizing Assumptions across Humanity

The interpretations of interdependence across international borders excavated in the previous section urged consideration of mutual dependence not only of interests but also of emotions. Smith observed a form of cross-border interdependence of antagonistic emotions—or what he termed "hostile passions"—whereby a person's "approbation of his own fellow-citizens" can be obtained by "enraging and offending their enemies" (in Forman-Barzilai 2010, 207). However, the primary emphasis in the literature considered so far was upon forms of "fellow-feeling" apparently promoting cooperation rather than antagonism. This section of the article will highlight how the forms of "fellow feeling" identified in these literatures appear to point to dynamics of emotional interdependence that extend beyond short-term expressions of sympathy or empathy, but which are rooted in problematic assumptions regarding purportedly universal responses among humanity. By exploring invocations of these forms emotional interdependence in practice in the humanitarian responses to the 2005 Asian tsunami and in international child sponsorship programs, the discussion ahead highlights the diversity and asymmetry of experience, which necessitates a turn to alternative knowledge from the Global South in the subsequent section of this article.

Sympathy has come to be "associated with the (sometimes patronizing) act of commiserating with another," while empathy has been "articulated as the affective act of seeing from another's perspective and imaginatively experiencing her or his thoughts, emotions and predicaments" (Pedwell 2014, 6). Wilson and Brown (2009, 2) define sympathy as "the recognition of another's emotional state," as in "I recognize your pain" and empathy as "a projection of one's own mental state into that of another" as in "I feel your pain"—in each case, the relationship is considered in the short term in respect of a particular instance of recognition or feeling of another's emotional state. In the approaches to emotional interdependence considered so far, on the other hand, there is an emphasis not on singular expressions of sympathy and empathy by which emotions such as happiness or pain are recognized and felt by another, but rather on the ways in which one another's happiness and pain may be inseparable and in a state of mutual dependence beyond any particular instance of emotional recognition and shared feeling.

In this manner, there appears to be a distinction between the focus here and some of the primary concerns of recent literature on sympathy and empathy in international relations.[14] For instance, work on the "global politics of pity" has considered "suffering being observed and considered sympathetically but also with a degree of *detachment*" rather than mutual dependence (Hutchison 2014, 8). There is also a

[12]Relatedly, Halpern and Weinstein (2004, 563) observed that "it is the interpersonal ruins, rather than ruined buildings and institutions, that pose the greatest challenge to rebuilding society after war and genocide"—and the reason for this may be understood in terms of the role of denial of common humanity in enabling atrocities (Kelman 2014).

[13]On Dreyfus-Barney's significance, see Goodman (2012). On the evasion of women thinkers in mainstream accounts of the evolution of international relations theory and the importance of addressing this deficit, see Owens (2025).

[14]This literature is very extensive, and it has only been possible here to refer to some of the principal works.

contrast between consideration of interdependence of emotions and consideration of the role of empathy in the sense of "seeking the individual perspective of another" (Halpern and Weinstein 2004, 168) or "recognizing others as human beings … [and] ontological equals" (Head 2016, 102) in conflict resolution, since these forms of empathy do not necessarily involve a reciprocal and ongoing relationship.

In summary, a focus on emotional interdependence in the interpretations delineated so far involves three major distinctive features: (i) a relationship of *reciprocity* in the recognition and feeling of one another's emotions; (ii) the continuation of this relationship on an *ongoing* basis; and (iii) the prospective operation of this relationship in relation to anyone identified as *human*. On account of this third feature, emotional interdependence is also distinct from the study of group-specific collective emotions of "affective communities" that do not extend to humanity as a whole.[15]

There are two contrasting conceptualizations of the role of humanity in the considerations of emotional interdependence outlined in the previous section. For authors such as Smith, the approach was largely centered on individuals, with what he termed "mutual sympathy" felt most strongly between those nearest each other, and less strongly to anyone identified as human, although he also wrote of "the general order and happiness of the whole." It is this latter aspect that was more prominent in the early twentieth-century work, where there appears to be identification of an affective collective consisting of humanity as a whole, implicit in references to humanity as "one great network or tissue" or "a harmonious and complete whole."

Hutchison (2016, 4) explored how "shared emotional understandings of tragedy" have served as a mechanism by which an "affective community" may be established temporarily among a particular group of people. In the approaches considered so far, on the other hand, there is an assumed preexisting and permanent relationship of emotional mutual dependence across humanity, of which experiences of shared tragedy are interpreted as providing a short-term manifestation. In such approaches—"by which all distinctions and even differing opinions are welded together"—differences and diversity are obfuscated, and the possibilities of resistance overlooked. Moreover, these perspectives are anthropocentric in their focus on "humanity."

As was noted in the previous section, early accounts of emotional interdependence were limited in their exclusion from consideration of women and colonized peoples. Moreover, if we consider apparent manifestations of emotional interdependence in the forms outlined so far in contemporary practice, their problematic assumptions become further evident. Studying emotions in international relations is understood to require going beyond "conventional social science methods" and turning instead, for instance, to evaluation of "processes of representation and communication" as means to interpret what might otherwise be "unobservable" (Bleiker and Hutchison 2008, 115). In this context, it has been suggested that discourses emanating from "emotional landmarks" may enable identification of emotional "systems of meanings at the macro-level" (Koschut 2017, 280–2), which may include the interpretations of emotional interdependence set out so far.

The humanitarian response to the December 26, 2004, Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami may be considered a landmark case illustrative of the "negative" dynamics of emotional interdependence in the perspectives in the previous section. The devastation motivated the largest ever private philanthropic response to a natural disaster (Flint and Goyder 2006, 21). Traditionally, this has been interpreted as an example of empathy in world politics, involving "an unprecedented degree of worldwide identification with the victims" given its "emotional resonance" (Brauman 2009, 108), especially mediated by first-hand visual footage (Hutchison 2014). However, some of the discourses that manifested in the response may appear also to be indicative of "negative" dynamics of emotional interdependence, by which the suffering consequent to the tsunami was claimed to be felt across the human race, whether directly impacted or not. In Europe, the days following the tsunami were marked by collective mourning of the tsunami's victims, with EU member states observing a three-minute silence (Morrison 2005). In this context, Paris-based poet Thich Nhat Hanh (2004) interpreted a feeling of global collective loss and suffering: "The whole human race is in mourning … although we are sitting here [in Europe], a part of our heart and body has died also … we see that their suffering is our own suffering, and their death is our death." Statements such as this embody a system of meaning involving the mutual dependence of human suffering, at least in the sense of mutual sympathy suggested in the work of Berkeley and Smith. However, some of the expressions of loss seem to extend further to the identifying an affective collective encompassing humanity as a whole, or even beyond, with Nhat Hanh (2004) further claiming in this context that "the human species and the planet Earth are one body" and that "what happens to one part of the body happens to the whole body."

An emphasis on such discourses distracts from the inequalities evident in a wider consideration of responses to the tsunami. Notably, humanitarian appeals in response to the 2004 tsunami have been critiqued for the mobilization of "stereotypical and deeply colonial representations of developing world disaster" in fundraising imagery that presented "victims as powerless and submissive" and Western aid workers as "full of the power and control that local victims lacked" (Hutchison 2014, 1, 7, 11). This is just one way in which we can see that responses to the tsunami were far from identical in different contexts, and cannot simply be interpreted as involving a singular emotional response across humanity.

As for discourses that appear to provide evidence for the interdependence of human happiness (i.e., the "positive" model in the approaches considered so far), asymmetrical features become further evident. Exemplary here are child sponsorship programs by which donors in wealthy contexts pay subscriptions to charities providing for the welfare of children in disadvantaged circumstances, a practice pioneered by Save the Children and now emulated by many other nongovernmental organizations.[16] These programs forge a "discursive link between the perceived development of the sponsored child (or their community) and the personal development of the sponsors" through slogans such as "change a life, change your own" (Sushi 2009, 214; Ove 2018, 124). Frequent among the discourses circulated among these programs are references to the oneness of humanity and the perception that the happiness of each depends on that of others, with the majority of responses to

[15] On group-specific collective emotions of "affective communities," see especially Hutchison (2016). A focus on humanity as a whole also distinguishes the concept of emotional interdependence from the study (e.g., in Koschut 2014) of "emotional security communities" limited to particular clusters of international actors such as alliances. In this connection, a very different avenue of research from that in this article would be consideration of how antagonistic emotions such as fear may involve mutual dependencies.

[16] Similar initiatives were undertaken by missionary societies earlier (Kaell, 2022).

a survey of child sponsors identifying the "good feelings associated with helping others" as the prime motivation, and one respondent highlighting that "it certainly makes me feel good to know that a child is being educated, fed, supported … for me that is the best thing: that I am still able to be a part of—I don't know, humanity I suppose … It is a two-way street" (Ove 2018, 124, 125). This statement appears to imply a perception that the well-being of the sponsors is in some degree both dependent on that of those sponsored and tied to the notion of the interlinkage of humanity's well-being more generally, involving a reciprocal ("two-way street") relationship. Reciprocity and linkage to wider humanity may also be evident in interviews with those sponsored who reported the happiness and transnational sense of community that they derived from being sponsored, with one noting "it felt great, really felt like I was belonging" (Bornstein 2005, 86).

However, one of the greatest problems with child sponsorship programs is that the interdependence relationship is a highly asymmetrical one. The well-being of each may appear to be in a mutual dependency relationship—but the sponsor's position is much less vulnerable: in the event that sponsorship ends, both parties may feel a sense of loss, but the impact of the loss for those sponsored may be significantly more far-reaching, extending beyond the shattered emotional bond (Bornstein 2005, 86; Sushi 2009, 216). Here, we can see that features of interdependence emphasized in "rationalist" approaches—such as the role of vulnerability and asymmetry that Keohane and Nye (2012) emphasize—may also be evident in manifestations of emotional interdependence, with the interdependence relationship in the case of child sponsorship programs involving far greater vulnerability for the sponsored than the sponsor, reflecting the asymmetrical economic relationship between them. Since the interpretations of emotional interdependence considered so far seem to have involved the perpetuation of such forms of asymmetry, we may need to turn instead to very different interpretations of emotional interdependence that seek to accommodate difference and mediate between worlds rather than perpetuate the dominance of one over another.

Critical perspectives on child sponsorship highlight the "objectification of Southern children" and the "hard sell of little faces" in fundraising efforts (Ove 2018, 141, 144). This points toward a fundamental problem with conceptualizations of emotional interdependence rooted in the Western tradition outlined so far: their embedding within colonial constructions of universality and humanity that reproduce rather than challenge colonial and postcolonial asymmetries of power. As Mehta (1990, 427) highlighted, the context within which conceptualizations of humanity and universalism were developed in purportedly liberal European political thought "is unmistakably marked by the systematic and sustained political exclusion of various groups and 'types' of people," including, as Morefield (2014, 4) notes "women, non-freemen, and colonized peoples." In the next section of this article, therefore, the analysis turns instead to perspectives from beyond the Western canon to elucidate pluriversal approaches to emotional interdependence, rejecting colonial and other exclusions.

Pluriversal Emotional Interdependence

In one of her last articles, Ling (2014a, 579, 583) highlighted how "bringing emotions to the theoretical fore opens up opportunities to throw off the shackles of colonial politics," in particular through "the need to recognize multiple co-existing emotional worlds." Rather than relying on conceptualizations of the roles of emotions in interdependence built on exclusionary categories of "universality" and "humanity," a turn to "pluriversal" perspectives from the Global South can shed light on approaches that are "grounded in diverse cosmological traditions" and are open to their coexistence (Trownsell, Chadha Behera, and Shani 2022, 789). Given their diverse roots, they offer many prospective pathways for further investigation, so this analysis will highlight their common distinguishing features on account of their pluriversality and examples, including Kamesta Asaike and Ubuntu, to indicate the rich scope for further inquiry in this domain.

Ling (2014b, 14–5) identified a significant contrast between perspectives emphasizing "universalization/standardization *despite* our differences" and those emphasizing "communication and negotiation *across* difference." Whereas an effort to develop a model of emotional interdependence assuming universal responses across humanity rests on the former approach, a turn to pluriversal perspectives from the Global South draws attention instead to the latter. In contrast to the previously discussed perspectives, there is a greater emphasis in these approaches on: (i) horizontal reciprocity[17] rather than top-down charity, (ii) the scope for the coexistence of multiple worlds rather than assuming the universality of any one, and (iii) recognition of the relationship between humans and the natural environment in contrast to anthropocentrism.

The perspective Ling (2014b, 13) advanced was "wordlist" in that it "explicitly acknowledges the existence and role of multiple worlds in making our world politics." The accompanying "pluriversal turn" in international relations often uses as its starting point the assertion in the Zapatistas' 1996 Fourth Declaration of the Lacandón Jungle that "many worlds are walked in the world" and that "In the world we want, everyone fits. In the world we want many worlds to fit" (EZLN 1996). Consideration of "pluriversal international relations" therefore involves recognition not merely of "a multiplicity of worldviews" but rather "the existence of many reals" (Blaney and Tickner 2017, 310). The terminology of the "pluriverse" has been taken forward among some of the principal social movement networks claiming to offer perspectives from across the Global South, such as the Global Tapestry of Alternatives, which has assembled a dictionary of the "pluriverse" highlighting the diverse alternatives to standard development discourses practiced among Global South communities that are rooted in plural worlds rather than advocating singular pathways toward development (Demaria and Kothari 2017).[18]

Consideration of these approaches intersects with the recent "relational turn" in the study of international relations, drawing attention to perspectives beyond the dominant canon that involve a shift in focus "to assuming interconnection as the primordial condition of existence" by which "relations are seen first and what are typically seen as separate categories through a separation-based lens are now understood as components of and secondary to relation" (Trownsell et al. 2021, 27). Moreover, as Tickner and Querejazu (2021, 394) highlight, "being, feeling, knowing,

[17]There is a sharp contrast between transactional approaches to reciprocity and the horizontal reciprocity involved in pluriversal perspectives emphasizing the enmeshment of co-created actors caring for and comprehending each other through shared relations.

[18]The Global South encompasses hugely varying contexts, and elite networks in the Global South may reproduce dominant development discourses rather than those of the pluriverse. An advantage of the terminology of the pluriverse is that it accommodates these differences rather than subordinating one set of approaches to another.

and doing are considered inseparable, simultaneous, and cyclical components of existence within deep relationality." Such a perspective draws on the concept of *sentipensando* (feeling-thinking), a term used to describe approaches rooted in ancestral knowledge of Abya Yala[19] that involve the "simultaneous use of two forms of intelligence: sensory and intellectual knowing" (Rendón 2021) and which emphasize "the process of recognising and valuing the knowledge of the other," facilitating both their coexistence and reciprocal learning (Fals Borda, quoted in Rodríguez Castro 2021, 67). Such reciprocal learning may facilitate the development of what Trownsell (2022, 803) has referred to as a form of "ontological agility" by which people may "engage across and through pluriversal worlds in meaningful way" (in contrast to "inclusion"-oriented projects that assimilate differences).

In view of these features, pluriversal relational approaches offer means to understand dynamics of emotional interdependence without recourse to homogenizing assumptions of universal responses across humanity. To this end, Ling emphasized two concepts: (i) "resonance" between worlds "when one set of articulations at one site vibrates with those of another"; and (ii) "interbeing," which "reflects the Buddhist tenet of co-dependent arising (*pratityasamutpada*) where the self 'flows' through inter-subjective reverberations with others." Long (2021, 20–1) similarly highlighted that *pratityasamutpada* "asserts a *radical* interdependence between individuals and between humans and their social and natural environments" in its assertion that "reality (including our 'self') lacks a fixed, inherent, or essential nature" and that "every functioning thing we perceive arises (and ceases) in dependence on its causes and conditions, its parts, and the minds that perceive it." A turn to further relational perspectives from the Global South draws our attention more closely to emotional features of such radical interdependence from very different worlds.

Take, for example, the Kametsa Asaike approach to living well together (Buen Vivir) pursued among the Ashaninka people in the Peruvian Amazon, which offers a much less anthropocentric approach to emotional interdependence than those previously considered. Kametsa Asaike involves recognition that "subjective well-being is only possible through collective well-being," which extends to humans, other life-forms, and the planet, and which involves a "deliberate practice" including "working hard" and "sharing in socially constructive emotions" (Caruso and Sarmiento Barletti 2019, 220, 221). Here, the starting point for emotional interdependence is the relationship with others and with nature, and—significantly—"a cycle of interdependency and interconnection" is established by living "following an ethos of conviviality" in relation to other people and the Earth (Caruso and Sarmiento Barletti 2019, 221). Through this, there is developed an "emotional order learned from … the love and care of his/her kinspeople" and by which antisocial emotions such as anger are cast away (Sarmiento Barletti 2011, 29, 139).

The term "Buen Vivir" has been applied to similar conceptualizations of living well together evident in diverse communities in this region involving "forms of understanding the relation between humans and non-humans which do not imply the modern separation between society and nature" and which "are open to multiple, parallel, non-linear, and even circular, historical processes" (Chuji, Rengifo, and Gudynas 2019, 111). The emotional relations between human and nonhuman beings that these involve have been taken forward in manifestos for alternative approaches to ecological protection, such as the Kawsak Sacha (Living Forest) declaration of the Kichwa People of Sarayaku, Ecuador. Kawsak Sacha refers to "a space where the life of a large number of diverse beings flows, from the smallest to the largest … from the animal, plant, mineral, and cosmic worlds; their function is to balance and renovate the emotional, psychological, physical, and spiritual energy which is a fundamental part of all living beings" (Gualinga 2019, 223). The Kawsak Sacha declaration asserts that "whereas the western world treats nature as an undemanding source of raw materials destined exclusively for human use, Kawsak Sacha recognizes that the forest is made up entirely of living selves and the communicative relations they have with each other," and "these selves, from the smallest plants to the supreme beings who protect the forest … live together in community … emotionally, psychologically, physically, and spiritually" (Kichwa People of Sarayaku 2018).

A similar emphasis on care for others and the environment is evident in the Nguni Bantu concept Ubuntu. While encompassing diverse perspectives, central to Ubuntu, as Desmond Tutu (2004, 25) put it, is that "we need other human beings in order to be human." There is an important contrast between the relational conceptualization of "humanness" in Ubuntu by which "one becomes a person solely through other persons," and the conceptualization of "humanity" in the Enlightenment tradition by which humans are ascribed a set of particular characteristics, leaving the possibility for some to be considered less or not human (Le Grange 2015, 304). Moreover, Ubuntu involves not only nurturing one another since "one cannot realize one's true self in opposition to others or even in isolation from them" (Metz and Gaie 2010, 275), but also a profound role of emotions, aligning with Léopold Senghor's epithet "I feel the other … therefore I am" (Nussbaum 2003, 22).

Tutu (1999, 34–5) described how "a person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes with knowing he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished." As Le Grange (2019, 324) argues, Ubuntu "suggests that our moral obligation is to care for others, because when they are harmed, we are harmed. This obligation extends to all of life, since everything in the cosmos is related: when I harm nature, I am harmed." This relational understanding of "humanness" in Ubuntu therefore transcends the anthropocentrism of approaches to emotional interdependence rooted in constructions of "humanity" from the Global North that eschew consideration of mutual dependence of the well-being of humans and other lifeforms (Le Grange 2015, 307). As applied to political life, Ubuntu also contrasts with exclusionary conceptualizations of interdependence in its pluriversal emphasis on—in the words of shack dwellers' movement Abahlali baseMjondolo—pulling "all the different people together and make sure everyone fits in … a different approach from normal kinds of politics" arising "from the understanding of what is required for a proper respect of each person's dignity" (Zikode 2009, 34).

References to approaches to Buen Vivir and Ubuntu have made their way into formal policy-making in a number of Latin American states and in South Africa, respectively. Ecuador, for instance, made Buen Vivir the central principle of a series of "national plans for Good Living" from 2009

[19]Abya Yala is a Kuna term popularly used to identify the landmass inhabited by Indigenous populations of the Americas, in contrast to labels such as "Latin America."

onward.[20] While mobilized primarily in relation to domestic social, economic, and political development, Buen Vivir was also applied to Ecuadorian foreign policy. The 2013–2017 national plan for Good Living, for instance, emphasized "shared dynamics for the Good Living" across Latin American nations, requiring foreign policies of "co-responsibility," advancement of "diverse development models and ways of inter-relating," and integration with a view to "peaceful and solidary relations" (National Planning Council 2013, 86).

The most explicit reference to pluriversal emotional interdependence in foreign policy may be evident in the South African government's 2011 white paper on foreign policy entitled *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu*. In this document, it is claimed that South Africa pursues "an approach to international relations that respects all nations, peoples, and cultures … [and] recognizes that it is in our national interest to promote and support the positive development of others" in "recognition of our interconnectedness and interdependency, and the infusion of Ubuntu into the South African identity" (DIRCO 2011, 4). Naudé (2016, 487–8) has argued that the construction of "a world of Souths" featuring "many acts of selfless solidarity" in this narrative may be evidence of "how affects inspire action in international relations." Moreover, this construction may offer evidence of how pluriversal emotional interdependence is apparent in formal diplomatic communication, with horizontal reciprocity emphasized in the White Paper's reference to how "As a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity in the past, South Africa believes strongly that what it wishes for its people should be what it wishes for the citizens of the world" (DIRCO 2011, 10). Given the interconnectedness of one another's wellness emphasized in Ubuntu, the White Paper stresses a foreign policy approach that advances the well-being of all and explicitly rejects approaches that advance the well-being of some at the expense of others (DIRCO 2011, 10–11; Madise and Isike 2020, 5). Moreover, the approach recognizes difference in its emphasis on respect for "all nations, peoples, and cultures" (DIRCO 2011, 4)—an aim announced by Mandela (1993, 89) as a foreign policy seeking "to make the world safe for diversity."

Pluriversal Approaches in Practice

The emotional features of Ubuntu have been emphasized in South African foreign policy-making since the end of apartheid, with one diplomat describing the approach thus: "In all government levels, even the international one, when you deal with people you have to show compassion … all government departments have Ubuntu in their policies, implicitly or explicitly" (van Norren 2022, 2795). Given its implication that "your pain is my pain" and "an injury to one is an injury to all," thereby rendering retribution counterproductive, Ubuntu was significant in South Africa's truth and reconciliation process, underpinning its emphasis on forgiveness rather than punishment—an approach that in turn was influential in conflict resolution processes elsewhere in the African continent (Akinola and Uzodike 2018, 93, 95–6). Since Ubuntu perspectives on peace-making "strive for peace and kindness instead of fighting against violence" (in the words of Bobby Hackland-Morris of the Ubuntu Peace Project), this has shaped South Africa's approach to conflict resolution, laying emphasis on mediation over sanctions (Sidiropoulos 2014, 198), and gaining a reputation as "unmistakably a regional peacemaker" given its mediatory role in regional conflicts, including in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Tella 2021, 94).

Moreover, as South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation from 2009 to 2018 Maite Nkoana-Mashabane (2011) emphasized, since South Africa's "is a foreign policy that is guided by Ubuntu," it involves "a commitment to the establishment of mutually beneficial international partnerships," contributing to "the priorities of our continental and international partners as well." The South African Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation claims to have advanced this approach through multilateral initiatives, including its role in creating the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development and its aim to create a South Africa Development Partnership Agency in view of its conceptualization of how "states are interdependent" and the need to advance "collective well-being" and "cooperation over competition and collaboration over confrontation" (DIRCO 2011, 10, 23–4). Ubuntu has also been at the forefront of South African public diplomacy initiatives, including Ubuntu Magazine, Ubuntu Radio, and the Ubuntu Awards (Emelianenko 2022, 203).

Ubuntu underpins the emotional resonance of South African foreign policy-making, understood to provide "an alluring moral authority that permeates all sectors" and enabling South Africa in some instances to act as a voice for other African nations, especially within the BRICS (Madise and Isike 2020, 7). The resonance of the "diplomacy of Ubuntu" among South Africa's neighbors is facilitated by the way in which—as Qobo and Nyathi (2016, 423) argue—"Ubuntu is seen as representative of a wider value system or paradigm … used as a 'catch-all' term to characterize the norms and values that are inherent in many traditional African societies." South Africa's moral leadership has been evident in its renunciation of nuclear arms, helping dissuade other African nations from the pursuit of a nuclear arsenal (Ogunnubi 2022).

In line with the expectation that advancement of "pluriversal" approaches takes forward the possibilities for a world order in which "many worlds fit," South Africa has highlighted how advancement of Ubuntu can be reconcilable with advancement of established international humanitarian principles. For instance, in bringing its December 2023 application instituting proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice, its foreign ministry emphasized how its approach stood at the intersection of the principles of Ubuntu and the provisions of the Genocide Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Minister of Justice Ro Lamola described the application both as "plea for ubuntu" and as "a plea for the humanity of the international community," and described how its application to the court took forward a foreign policy approach that "embraces the concept of Ubuntu as a way of defining who we are and how we relate to others" (Lamola 2024).

While the resonance of South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu" with international humanitarian norms may be relatively straightforward, the pluriversal form of worlding inherent in this approach has had to coexist with the very different forms of worlding of the system of sovereign states and capitalist economic relations (which Ling (2014b) referred to as "Westphalia world"). South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu" has involved emphasis on the reconcilability of this approach with coexistence with the capitalist economic order, with the 2011 white paper aiming to highlight, for instance, the complementarity of its aims with the advancement of economic "competitiveness" and management of "scarce resources" (DIRCO 2011, 16, 19).

[20] These plans related to the periods 2009–2013, 2013–2017, and 2017–2021.

Critics of South African foreign policy have decried a descent into "crude instrumentalism" under Jacob Zuma (Le Pere 2017, 96), and have expressed concerns that its multilateralism may underpin "hegemonic ambitions" in the continent (Mandrup and Smith 2014, 156). There has also been tension between the ideals espoused in South Africa's claim to advance the "diplomacy of Ubuntu" and the social problems evident at home as well as the prominent role of resource extraction in the South African economy. However, a fuller understanding of these issues must take into account the legacies of imperial rule and the apartheid era, and the marginalization of Ubuntu-based practices that these represented (Tshishonga 2019).

Inconsistencies were also evident in the Ecuadorian government's claims to have advanced Buen Vivir, with continued reliance on resource extraction and suppression of Indigenous anti-mining activists taking place at the same time as the co-optation of their anti-hegemonial discourses in relation to the international system (Williford 2018, 110), and Buen Vivir appears to have been de-emphasized in Ecuadorian policy-making after Rafael Correa's tenure as president came to an end. At the same time, co-optation of the discourse of Buen Vivir has extended to the work of multilateral development agencies, including the efforts of several of these agencies to establish benchmarks of development beyond GDP, leading to accusations of Buen Vivir coming to serve in these instances as an "empty signifier" (Domínguez, Caria, and León 2017, 133).

Despite such problems, turning to concepts such as Buen Vivir and Ubuntu sheds light on dynamics of emotional interdependence that transcend the assumptions of Western humanism, emphasizing horizontal reciprocity rather than top-down charity and grounded in the interbeing of humans and nature. Moreover, pluriversal emotional interdependence contrasts with the universalizing approaches considered previously by emphasizing multiple ways of advancing mutual well-being in coexistence, with the potential to function outside the hierarchies that have been embedded in Global North approaches. When put into practice, as was evident in the case of South African foreign policy, pluriversal emotional interdependence has underpinned the resonance of South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu," even as the approach has had to coexist with the very different form of worlding of the capitalist economic order.

Conclusion

Theorization of interdependence in world politics has been constrained by previously preponderant perspectives that considered emotions to be either a threat or subordinate to interdependence conceived in market-rationalist terms. In this article, on the other hand, we have seen how diverse approaches to emotional interdependence have been evident in overlooked features of the history of international thought in the Global North, as well as in pluriversal perspectives from the Global South.

Paths not taken forward in dominant approaches to interdependence in international relations offered a model of emotional interdependence emphasizing both apparently "positive" dynamics of mutual well-being derived through cross-border advancement of the wellness of others and "negative" dynamics of the shared emotional costs inflicted by disasters, whether directly affected or not. Emotional interdependence in these perspectives extended beyond particular instances of sympathy and empathy in their emphasis on relationships that are understood to be ongoing, reciprocal, and extending to constructions of humanity.

In contrast to the embedding of colonial hierarchies in approaches rooted in universalizing assumptions with respect to the emotional interdependence of humanity, a turn to perspectives from the Global South, including Kametsa Asaike and Ubuntu, offers conceptualizations of emotional interdependence rooted instead in pluriversal relationality. Such perspectives emphasize horizontal reciprocity in place of top-down charity, the scope for coexistence of multiple emotional worlds in place of assuming a "one-world world," and interbeing with nature rather than anthropocentrism. They are long-established in the practices of diverse communities, and as illustrated in this article, they have been apparent in emerging power foreign policy, including South Africa's "diplomacy of Ubuntu."

Pluriversal emotional interdependence involves a form of worlding that coexists with the universalizing form of worlding of the dominant political and economic order, as was illustrated in the South African case. However, we have also seen how South Africa's diplomatic discourses have resonated between these worlds. This is especially pertinent in a changing world order where perspectives rooted in the artificial subordination of emotion to reason that were central to the colonial order are becoming harder to sustain as previously dominant powers are becoming increasingly displaced.

Attention to emotional interdependence opens up a rich area for further investigation. The opportunities encompass numerous features, including consideration of how it is constructed differently in different contexts, and the tools for their elucidation and comparison. While this article has emphasized perspectives on the mutual dependence of emotions underpinning cooperation (in the case of those from the Global North) or mediation between worlds (in the case of those from the Global South), the interdependency of antagonistic emotions suggested in Smith's work is an area worthy of further investigation, as is how pluriversal perspectives may offer prospective means toward reconciliation.

An especially rich area for further consideration is the varied tapestry of Global South perspectives extending beyond those elucidated in this article, and the extent to which they may complement one another, and may be reconcilable with other approaches, including from the Global North. Emotional interdependence beyond the human and extending to nature is an especially promising area for further inquiry. The interactive dynamics between emotional interdependence and other forms of interdependence, as well as interrelationships with other features of international behavior, also merit deeper consideration, as do the deficiencies of different aspects of emotional interdependence and the ways in which these may be addressed. Emotional interdependence involves an array of approaches, among many others, through which international relations may facilitate the coexistence of multiple worlds, but as with the advancement of pluriversal approaches more generally, it is also necessary to consider how they can withstand challenges.

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