

CHINA CROSSROADS

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Rethinking White Supremacy in International Legal Order

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This talk explores the embeddedness of white supremacy in the international legal order. While mainstream international law is portrayed as a universal framework upholding equality and human rights, its historical development is deeply intertwined with racial domination and the preservation of white power structures. This erasure of race, racialization, and systemic racism in international law's narrative aligns with the politeness of race that conceals historical atrocities behind the façade of liberal progress. By centering white supremacy as a global political system, this talk examines the persistence of racial inequalities that benefit the Global North at the expense of the Global South. This talk challenges the Eurocentric epistemologies that dominate international law and calls for a radical rethinking of the discipline. Reframing international law requires confronting not only the discipline's overt historical biases but also its ongoing complicity in racial injustice.

[Mohsen Al Attar](#) is Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in Suzhou. He joined the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in 2023 as a Senior Associate Professor in the Department of International Studies. Before coming to XJTLU, he worked at many universities around the world including UCL, Warwick, Queens (Belfast), McGill, and Auckland. He researches and lectures in the fields of International Law and Political Economy with a focus on theory, inequality, and colonial history. Over the past few years, he has shifted his research toward the relationship(s) between law, race, and revolution, though he persists with his preferred anti-colonial lens.

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