Book Reviews

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**1   Internationalism, Imperialism and the
Formation of the Contemporary World
by: Miguel Bandeira Jeronimo and Jose Pedro Monteiro
Published 2017
by Springer
One New York Plaza, Suite 4500, New York,
NY 10004-1562, USA, 365pp
ISBN: 978-331960693-4**

The book originally written by Hardt and Negri (2001) situated as a seminal work in the fields of imperialism. From that moment on, many studies focused on the effects of imperialism in the under-developed world. However, less attention was given to the dynamics of empires, as well as the socio-historical background that facilitated the rise and end of empires worldwide. This is exactly the point from where Bandeira Jeronimo and J.P. Monteiro depart. In his book, which is entitled *Internationalism, Imperialism and the Formation of the Contemporary World*, the editors gather a set of interesting chapters oriented to discuss critically the influence of imperialism in the formation of the contemporary world. Of course, in so doing, some important limitations and problems surface. Over the decades, imperialism has adopted different meaning and interpretations, not only according to each culture but period or epoch. The present book centres on the needs of formulating new questions revolving around the historiography of imperialism. Alternating diverse disciplines and viewpoints, the editors introduce a new debate towards a broader understanding of imperialism. At a close look, the language plays a vital role moulding the different interpretations respecting to the central powers. What is imperial for third world diverges from what is imperial for the first one. Equally important, in some cases, government manipulates history to impose their own meaning of the past, which is conducive to articulate some discourses to discipline the 'other'.

> "The efforts to articulate, to a greater or lesser extent, local, national, and international scales … are one example of this option, although the emphasis on this volume is placed upon the imperial, the international, and the transnational." (p.7)

As this backdrop, the first section signals to a hot debate about the multiculturalism and the climate of individualism fostered by capitalism. Scholars debate energetically to what extent empires withered away, or we live under the control of an invisible global empire. The chapters forming this section explore the local realities, contexts and landscapes in

the post-imperial days. Most probably, the end of WWII marked the start of a new decomposition of the pre-existing colonial order. Far away colonies geographically located in Asia, Africa and Oceania were organised by the British Empire to struggle against Nazi Germany. The efforts of colonies were not in vain. Once the war ended, the periphery demanded the adoption of democracy and individual liberties as two key factors of politics. The process of deconstruction, hence, showed the necessities to forge more humanitarian networks which gradually confronted with the existent colonial rule.

Complementarily, the second section focuses on the effects of WWII as well as the emerging cosmologies of imperialism that characterised the political thinking in a devastated Europe. It is important not to lose the sight of the fact that many colonies fought jointly the Allies against Nazi Germany. This orchestrated a new atmosphere of self-respect and autonomy by those incipient nations which were historically ruled by the imperial powers. The WWII not only transformed the ways imperialism was lived but also paradoxically legitimated some long dormant conflicts with the European Ruler, which derived from the declaration of independence. After all, the world was divided in two, East and West. The USA took the military and financial monopoly of the West while the Soviet Union sorted the destinies of East. The third part revolves around the problem of the liberal state which redeems two contrasting tendencies, the needs of self-representation with the individual rights. One of the limitations of the liberal state consists of the homogenisation of different ethnic minorities which were forced to coexist. For doing this, the state endorsed to a legal platform which legitimated the exploitation of a white ruling elite. While the colonial order sets the pace to the advance of the modern state, social scientist witnesses the emergence of a new normative revolution, which gradually undermines the credibility of colonialism. This begs a more than the pungent question, are empires in disappearance?

To respond this question, lastly, editors clarify that historiography is an obstacle towards an all-encompassing understanding of imperialism. For that reason, the scientist should speak of imperialism – not empires. What still is clear seems to be that imperialism and internationalism are inextricably intertwined.

In view of the titanic efforts in editing a book, which is formed by a great variety of texts, viewpoints and authors coming from different cultures, this book deserves recognition. This is a recommendable work for historians, sociologists, anthropologists interested by the imperialism and the internationalisation. Quite aside from this, high quality research should be placed under the critical lens of scrutiny. Here, some points or assumptions should be formulated.

Firstly, there are no clear guidelines or definitions around the term imperialism. Still further, the book deals with diverse individual (atomised) approaches that lead towards multiple issues. Secondly, topics as the current crisis of refugee, as well as the impossibilities of the western nation-state to tolerate the non-Western 'others' are mysteriously overlooked.

References

Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2001) *Empire*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

2   Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism: New Directions
by: Amina Yaqin, Peter Morey and Asmaa Soliman
Published 2018
by Palgrave Macmillan
233 Spring St, New York, NY 10013, USA, XV+311pp
ISBN: 978-331971308-3

In 13 chapters, which are distributed in four sections, Amina Yaqin, Peter Morey and Asmaa Soliman present an edited book entitled *Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism*. From diverse viewpoints, the common-thread argument in each chapter seems to be that terrorism woke up long-dormant prejudices and stereotypes revolving around the Muslim community. Not only terrorism opened the doors to new anxieties, but it divided the society between us and them. British Muslims often are looked on with suspicion, traced or strictly monitored to keep the homeland security. To put this in bluntly, this book deals with the tensions of migratory communities established in Europe, as well as the role played by the trust as the articulator of social cohesion. To what extent, Europe offers a multicultural climate for Muslim minorities is one of the topics editors want to unpuzzle. In this respect, the main contribution of this book rests on the controversy around the spirit of hospitality, which is being undermined by the fear of Muslims. While the European secularism emphasised on the importance of multiculturalism not only as a sign of progress but of moral supremacy (as it was forged by the enlightenment), the presence of Muslims in Europe is questioning to what extent Europe is tolerant with the alterity. To put the same slightly in other terms, the logic us vs. them reavivates long dormant prejudices and worries about the non-western 'other'.

The book is divided into four sections. The first part concentrates efforts in discussing the treatment Muslim community receives in Europe, as well as the contradictions of the dominant narratives according to 'multiculturalism'. For example, in a seminal chapter, Anshuman Mondal introduces readers to a broader investigation conducted by the Birmingham City Council in 2014, following some suspicions of a plan to Islamize local state schools. In a document named as *Operation Trojan Horse*, the council attempted to show that the British educational system remains vulnerable to an Islamic (radical) infiltration. The spirit of this document signalled to the problems of multiculturalism as the platform from where radical Islam operates. Beyond this, the author agrees, there lies a subtle but not for this less strong 'racism', which today shapes the 'Islamophobia'. The fundamental aspect of racist discourse is what Mondal dubs as 'crypto-Islamism', an essentialised view of Islam that speak of western citizens who profess Islam secretly while they openly adhere to other religions. This places the Islam in secrecy feeding some conspiracy plots. Just after a terrorist attack is perpetrated, crypo-Islamism is placed as the perfect scapegoat. These discourses toy with the belief that radical Islamism goes through the dark sides of crypto-Islamism. Ideologically manipulated by the media, democracy passed from being as something that is part of us to something that should work for them. Following this, the third chapter originally written by Alison Scott-Baumann explores the dilemmas of reciprocity which are balanced or altered according to the relation of power between the parts. The chapter examines the nature of trust, as well as its different dynamics in social relations. The author continues the discussion left by P. Ricoeur revolving around the term 'hermeneutics of suspicion' which denotes the progressive decline of trust in the Muslim community. The

hermeneutic of suspicion operates under the side of secrecy since we do not know who we are and of course, this happens because we do not know what we think. At the time, our predictions would be biased or materialised in other ways, our perception is subject to the error. This creates a great level of anxiety or dissonance between our decisions and the obtained outcomes. The suspicion sets a 'normative trust' to provide a clear direction to people – though it goes in the incorrect directions. The Muslim community is pressed to be analysed, controlled or scrutinised as external to British society, in a way that, those who promote the state of securitisation are the same who say overtly who or what dangerous is.

The second part of the book, formed by fifth, sixth and seventh chapters, deals with the problem of racism and Islamophobia. These chapters are well-versed in the sociology of racism keeping the same argumentation: behind Islamophobia lies a subtle new racism oriented not to target over some ethnic minorities as the classic racism, but blaming these suspected 'others' by their potential hostility to the established capitalist society. This means that these undesired others are not strictly marked by what they are, but following reasons of what they shall do some later day.

Complementarily, the third part centres on the question of genre, multiculturalism and the ethical borders of trust. In Chapter 8, Stephen Morton brilliantly elucidates how behind the neoliberal discourse of genre emancipation or the dependence of women in Muslim culture, there remains the logic of appropriation where the subject is left to be co-manager of its own destiny. In this respect, the fourth part discusses critically the role of Muslim minorities as an object of the *neoliberal secularism*. Most certainly, the recent forced migration of Syrians to Europe gave the perfect excuse for some right-wing groups to limit the presence of Muslim in Europe. Associated to the attacks in Paris, Syrians and Muslim communities are torn between the wall and the deep blue sea. The atrocities perpetrated by ISIS in the name of Islam reproduce a long-dormant racism against Muslim community which today combines rage with fear.

After further discussion, the reviewed book concentrates effort to understand a reality which today is neglected or covered by the media. The hostility manifested against Muslim faith is part of a much deeper racism which articulates the fear of terrorism with some emerging anti-immigration claims. Though from different angles and on the basis of different study cases, each chapter centres on a similarly-minded thesis (we have held in our recent book, *Terrorism, Tourism and the End of Hospitality in the West*): the rise and expansion of terrorism not only close the borders as well as the in-out integration but also is eroding one of the touchstone of western civilisation: the hospitality (Korstanje 2017). Last but not least, *Muslims, Trust and Multiculturalism: New Directions* offers an interesting and path-breaking diagnosis that remains indifferent to many others. The high-quality chapters, joined to the critical argument of the invited and renowned writers, makes from this editorial project a recommendable piece for those social scientists interested in expanding their understanding of terrorism and Islamophobia.

References

Korstanje, M.E. (2017) *Terrorism, Tourism and the End of Hospitality in the West*, Springer Nature, New York.

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1   **The Fragmented Landscape of Fundamental Rights Protection
    in Europe: The Role of Judicial and Non-judicial Actors
    by: Lorenza Violini and Antonia Baraggia
    Published 2018
    by Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
    The Lyppiats, 15 Lansdown Road, Cheltenham,
    Glos GL50-23A, UK, 240pp
    ISBN: 978-1-78-643-604
    ISBN: 978-1-78-643-605**

In this extremely interesting collection of articles regarding human rights protection in Europe, the subjects of the European pluralism in human rights protection and the consequences of the eurozone crisis in their evolution is examined. The economic, political, social and refugee crisis in Europe are providing the framework for an extremely useful theoretical analysis on the problems deriving human rights protection in Europe due to their 'fragmented' protection between national legal orders, the EU and the Council of Europe. The present book critically examines this phenomenon in search of the common principles that underlie under the differences and imbalances in human rights protection.

Thus, many extremely interesting subjects are debated in the present collection. The problem of human rights inflation in the EU (Matej Avbelj) and the difficult balance between fundamental rights and federalism in Europe in comparison to the USA (Federico Fabbrini), as well as the past and the future of common constitutional traditions in Europe are examined in the first part of the book, which focused in the theoretical complexity that the fundamental rights system in Europe presents. The second part of the book examines the extremely interesting subject of courts interaction in human rights protection. Thus, the role of the EU Court of Justice in the fragmented European human rights landscape is analysed (Šejla Imamović), along with the work of the most influential national constitutional court regarding human rights protection, the German Federal Constitutional Court (Clara Rauchegger). Finally, the difficult balance between privacy and national security is analysed in this part of the book (Luca Pietro Vanoni).

The third part of the book is devoted in the agencies and institutions that enhance human rights protection in Europe. Thus, the role of the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (Lorenza Violini), the role of national human rights institutions in Europe (Katrien Meuwissen), the equality bodies functioning in the EU (Maria Elena Gennusa) as well as the evolving paradigm of human rights protection by the Venice Commission is examined in the last part of the book.

Overall, this extremely interesting collective volume is trying to address the strengths and flaws of the fragmented and complex landscape of human rights in Europe from a novel perspective that combines theoretical analysis with judicial practice. An excellent contribution in the field of human rights theoretical analysis.

2 Constitutional Law and Regionalism: A Comparative Analysis of Regionalist Negotiations
by: Vito Breda
Published 2018
by Edward Elgar Publishing Limited
The Lyppiats, 15 Lansdown Road, Cheltenham,
Glos GL50-23A, UK, 291pp.
ISBN: 978-1-78-347-012-9
ISBN: 978-1-78-347-013-6

During the past three decades and specifically in Europe during the recent economic and political crisis, regionalist and local movements have revived claims of ethnic ownership thus creating tensions and antagonism towards the state institution. This complex phenomenon with global dimensions, with striking examples from Australia, the UK, Canada, Italy, New Zealand, Spain and the USA challenges state stability in many occasions. These movements vary in their specific characteristics but share a common trade, they all seek the recognition of their specific identity either in the form of being recognised as barriers of specific rights or by acknowledged a specific and differentiated political status.

This interesting and extremely topical subject is examined in the book via several examples of regionalist movements. The book is divided in eight chapters. The first chapter explains why and when a regionalist, identity-based claim is inserted in constitutional state, thus searching for the common characteristics of the modern regionalist movements. The second, third and fourth chapter of the book examine the British, Spanish and Italian decentralisation policies followed over the last years, and the role that the participation in the EU has played in the present regionalist and autonomist (especially in Catalonia) movements. The last four chapters of the book examine the problems of regionalism in Canada, the USA, New Zealand and Australia which present their own separate characteristics since they are states that endorse civic nationalism and are based on multiculturalism.

The present book presents an excellent analysis on this very interesting subject that lies in the heart of present politics, especially for Europe due to the recent autonomist movement in Catalonia and the discussion and debate over the Brexit. Most importantly, this book is analysing how identity-based politics might not only endanger state stability but also jeopardise human rights protection. Valuable lessons from this point of view are offered regarding negative racial discrimination and the need of enhancing the protection of minority rights via a broad and not narrow perception of the principle of equality.