

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The bottom billion: why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it**, by Paul Collier, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007, 224 pp., £16.99/€ 22.99, ISBN 978-0-19-531145-7

The central argument of *The Bottom Billion* is appealing. In five parts and 11 chapters Paul Collier tells us that the bottom billion of poor world citizens are caught in countries that suffer from at least four significant traps: 1) they are in civil war, 2) have abundant natural resources which lead to greed, 3) they live in landlocked countries with bad neighbours, and 4) they are badly governed. Every trap gets a separate chapter. It is, according to Collier, difficult to escape from these traps. Globalization doesn't help, because the bottom billion are marginalized in the world economy. Instruments that can help them are: aid, military intervention, laws and charters and trade policy. Again four chapters. The bottom billion however were left alone by the international community, but this should come into action now, because the problems of the bottom billion will spill over to other countries, to us. And thus the last chapter presents an agenda for action.

An assessment of *The Bottom Billion* then boils down to two questions. What is the value of the four traps? In what way do the policy prescriptions follow the analysis of the four traps? It is clear that we have to define 'value' and this leads to two sub-questions: are the four traps defined realistically and based on reliable scientific evidence? Are there other traps that are of more importance than the traps identified by Paul Collier? It is also clear that finally the policy prescriptions should give an answer to the problems as identified in the form of the four 'traps'. Rethinking the book I was wondering why this book also irritates me so much. I have read all the acclaim for it from the *Statesman* to the *Economist*, from the *New York Times* to the *Financial Times*, but I miss in all these very positive reviews a real discussion of the values of this book. I see ten reasons why this irritation pops up, time and time again, but I will leave it here at six.<sup>1</sup>

1. Let me start with three irritation points on the value of the type of regression analysis that you will find in most of the papers that sustain the book. In it general large datasets on national statistics are linked in complex statistical exercises. I really think that the value of that type of research is close to zero. This is due to the quality of the databases that are available for this type of research, the conceptual frameworks that are used, and the kind of argumentation the authors use. I will start to illustrate that with comments on the databases that are used in the regression analyses of Paul Collier and his colleagues. Only in one place (p. 68) does Paul Collier admit that a database he uses – in this case the CPIA (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment) database of the World Bank 'has the disadvantage of being subjective'.<sup>2</sup> He then concludes, but 'there is no real alternative' and continues on the route. I recently revisited several African countries, but if you asked me which is the most corrupt of them, I would not be able to tell you. Still the World Bank database on corruption is grounded on this type of highly subjective judgement. The same type of comments can be made on the Transparency International

database, the World Bank 'Doing Business' database (World Bank 2008), and even the DAC statistics on development assistance. The question of course then is: what is the value of research which is working with such unreliable data?

2. Several of the concepts used in this research are flawed. The main one might be fungibility. Aid is fungible when it only substitutes government spending; when the activities that it finances would have been financed by the aid recipient government anyway. Paul Collier states (p. 103): 'We estimate that something around 40% of Africa's military spending is inadvertently financed by aid'. 40%? 40% of the defence budgets of Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco?<sup>3</sup> Or 40% of Nigeria, Sudan, Angola and South Africa?<sup>4</sup> In terms of amounts of aid and in terms of amounts of defence spending that is impossible. It suggests that nearly half of total aid to Africa or at least a quarter of aid to Sub-Saharan Africa is diverted to defence budgets. Paul Collier could only come to the conclusion that 40% of aid is diverted to military spending if he assumes that aid is 100% fungible. This is of course not true. In very aid-dependent countries only 5–10% of aid might be fungible. But also in a country like South Africa where aid is minimal compared to government spending, aid might not be fungible to its full extent, when donors are financing programmes in niche areas.<sup>5</sup>

But the most important point here is that all types of societal and historical complexities are left out in the construction of far too simplistic models. Daron Acemoglu (2008), professor at MIT, commenting on the Collier and Hoeffler papers concluded: 'The economic framework is very deficient. It has a number of serious conceptual and methodological problems'. To give one example: if you want to study the relation between ethnic diversity and civil war, it might not be important that there are 100 ethnic groups or only two. Historic, economic and social relations between these groups are of much greater importance than the numbers and you cannot find these historic and social relations in a Russian atlas on ethnic diversity, data from which Collier and Hoeffler use in their analysis. It is impossible to build these complex histories and relations into a statistical model and the numbers alone will not tell you much about these histories. This type of regression analysis doesn't allow for complexity: if you have to build in all the factors that influence a social phenomenon you can no longer run your computer programs. Finally, you cannot reduce all these complexities to single numbers.

3. My last criticism on this type of research is that the authors frequently jump to conclusions. There are several places in Paul Collier's book and in the background papers where the same mistake is made. Collier presents findings of regression analysis as real life facts and when the statistical efforts don't help him enough or not at all, he presents circumstantial evidence – for example quoting uncritically a Nigerian minister of finance (p. 116). Acemoglu (2008), quoted above, indicates on the Collier and Hoeffler papers: 'The correlations that are interpreted as causal effects are really no more than correlations'. And that is true for all remarks in Collier's book about civil war and democracy, civil war and resources, etc. Conclusions of regression analysis should be presented at best as indications of how certain relations might be and not as being the one and only truth. The official evaluation of the World Bank research by a team of high-flying experts concluded that the researchers 'appeared to think that the attribution of causality can be solved by technical means' (Deaton 2006, p. 67).

4. How many traps are there and what is the value of each of these traps? Are the four traps that Paul Collier identifies real traps and are they the most important ones? I don't have many problems regarding the trap of being land-locked and surrounded by bad neighbours. My problem starts with the natural resources trap. Is there a natural resources trap if we look at Norway or even at Dubai? Of course not, it becomes a trap, as Paul Collier also indicates, when the resources fall into the hands of greedy politicians. So what we might see here is not a natural resources curse or trap, but – with reference to Bayart and Chabal/Daloz – a robber barons' or a kleptocrats' trap.<sup>6</sup> Again, there are big problems with causality here. Are resource rents

making democracies malfunction (p. 42) or are malfunctioning democracies making resource rents into a curse?

Why do we stay with four traps? We could extend them. I personally think that in Sub-Saharan Africa by far the most important trap is the 'not-a-nation trap', fostered by politicians: ethnic loyalties are put first and there is little loyalty to the nation. This has disastrous effects for African politics. The second most important trap might be the low social development and ignorance trap, which leads to a weak institutions trap. The validity of Collier's four traps, to answer the first question, seems limited. Simon Maxwell (2008), who states that he loves *The Bottom Billion*, sees amongst others an inequality trap, a poor endowment trap and a catch-up trap. There was certainly a Washington consensus trap and we might conclude that there is also a poor policy advice trap. With all these traps there might no longer be a real trap, but only a morass.

5. Paul Collier describes aid agencies as difficult to change and also in his recent article 'Is Aid Oil?' (2006) he seems to have completely missed the enormous changes in the aid architecture that we have seen in recent years. In 'Is Aid Oil?' he still only analyses the old forms of aid, like project aid and technical assistance. He does not comment at all on the newer aid instruments like sector-wide approaches and general budget support. He seems to have missed the Paris Declaration and does not seem to know what the enormous effects of it are on the aid machinery. It makes all the advice Collier gives on aid in chapters 7 and 11 questionable.

6. The book stops where it should have been giving some extra historical and contextual analysis and deepened the analysis on states and policies of the bottom billion. I could have taken Paul Collier back to the beginning of the 1960s when a rebellion was launched in Katanga and when the CIA staged a coup against Patrice Lumumba which brought sergeant Joseph Désiré to power (Joseph Désiré renamed himself Mobutu Sese Seko later). I could have asked Paul to go to the end of the 1960s, to the Biafra war and the role of oil companies like Shell in it; or to the mid-1970s and the way the CIA organized this strange coalition against the government in Angola, by financing Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi. I could have brought Collier also to the friendship between Giscard d'Estaing and the cruel emperor Bokassa, to show that diamonds are a president's best friend. This all to show the complicity of Western powers in the trap of the 'curse of resources'. Paul Collier definitely seems to forget that the resource curse was not a coincidental curse, or one which is on the shoulders of African leaders alone. This is important not so much for a lesson on the 'realism' of international relations, but because it sheds another light on the 'resource curse', and also because it could inform the agenda for action.

Paul Collier stops where Joe Stiglitz goes on. I think that it would have been valuable if Collier had really analysed what the donor community has been doing and what kind of complicity it has with the failure of states, what it has been doing in post-war situations, what the World Bank advice over the years has been with regard to export agriculture and de-industrialisation, what the effects of the Washington consensus have been in the 1980s and 1990s. A serious analysis of changes in the aid *bizz* is absent, as also is a deeper evaluation of what donors have been doing in post-conflict situations. It means – and that is the answer to the second question – that there is no real bridge between the problem analysis (the four traps) and the policy prescriptions. It is easy to conclude that Collier's recommendations 'hang in the air'.

Joe Hanlon (2003), in his review of Collier's earlier book *Breaking the Conflict Trap*, concluded that it was 'both challenging and intensely annoying'. I would repeat that for this book. I miss too much history, political science and contextual analysis in Paul Collier's book. The author prides himself in the introduction on being interested in many aspects of development. Yet I miss in the articles and papers which form the basis of this book references to

significant historic and political science books and articles, for example Bayart, Chabal and Daloz, Meredith. References in his book and papers are mainly to his own papers and those of World Bank colleagues. One of the conclusions of the World Bank research evaluation holds: 'The degree of self-reference rises almost to the level of parody'.

Collier, with his position between the negativism of William Easterly and the overwhelming optimism of Jeffrey Sachs, has become a new hero in what he himself calls the aid *biz* and *buzz*. What then should our ministers and ministries get out of this book? What with this appeal for 500 to 700 million of the poorest that our ministers and ministries have, according to Paul Collier, abandoned? At least twice our ministers and ministries followed World Bank and IMF economists uncritically and the results for development policy and our policies in these organizations could certainly be described negatively, in particular of course in the years of Structural Adjustment, but also in the discussions on and follow-up of 'Assessing Aid'. So my recommendation would be: be more critical, take what you think is good out of the book, be suspicious of the 'science' behind it and thus also of some of the recipes.<sup>7</sup>

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### Notes

1. A more extensive review can be found at the websites of CIDIN ([http://www.ru.nl/cidin/general/recent\\_publications/](http://www.ru.nl/cidin/general/recent_publications/)) and of *The Broker* (<http://www.thebrokeronline.eu/en/archive/authors/Hoebink-Paul>).
2. In some of his papers other remarks can be found, e.g. on the datasets on inequality.
3. Total military spending of North Africa in 2006 was \$9.8 billion and total aid to North Africa \$2.7 billion (figures from SIPRI (<http://www.sipri.org/contents/webmaster/databases>) and OECD/DAC (2008)).
4. Total military spending of these four countries alone is suggested (based on figures of the *CIA World Fact Book*) to be more than \$10 billion. Total military spending in Africa is, according to SIPRI, supposed to be \$ 18.8 billion and \$9.0 billion for Sub-Saharan Africa. Figures differ among sources. Total aid for Africa in 2006 was \$43.4 billion and for Sub-Saharan Africa \$39.9 billion. Sources: SIPRI (<http://www.sipri.org/contents/webmaster/databases>), *CIA World Fact Book* (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>), OECD/DAC (2008).
5. This all of course apart from a discussion on the legitimacy of defence spending also in African countries, which seemed to be challenged by Collier and Hoeffler by the use of the word 'diverted'.
6. In a recent paper Christa Brunnschweiler and Erwin Bulte (2008a) criticized also the causality that Collier and Hoeffler find in their papers on the resource trap and the relations between resource rents and conflict. They conclude: 'The last word in the resource curse debate is far from having been spoken; but economic advisors should be aware that natural resources do not necessarily spell doom for development. Instead, their development can be a valuable part of a sustainable development strategy' (p. 616). The two background papers are: Brunnschweiler and Bulte (2008b, 2008c).
7. Maybe he is the last one we should quote on this type of analysis, because his book *The White Man's Burden* (Easterly 2007a) is built on only two or three of these type of papers, but Collier's statistical analysis leads William Easterly to the conclusion on Collier's book: 'If Collier's statistical analysis

does not hold up under scrutiny, unfortunately then his recommendations are not a reliable guide for deploying foreign aid, technical assistance or armies. Economists should not be allowed to play games with statistics, much less with guns' (2007b, pp. 1475–1476).

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**Reinventing foreign aid**, edited by William Easterly, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2008, x + 569 pp., £22.95 (paperback), ISBN 978-0-262-55066-6

Since its founding in 2001, the Center for Global Development has established itself as a leading voice in discussions on foreign aid reform in Washington, DC. This volume, edited by William Easterly and sponsored by the Center, provides a showcase for work on aid conducted by scholars at the Center and in its broader research network. In 20 chapters the volume addresses a variety of topics related to foreign aid provision, including programme evaluation, effects of multilateral lending, the relationship between aid and public service provision, and the provision of global public goods. The chapters also vary in style, ranging from contributions that are supported by formal models or econometric analysis to chapters the editor himself qualifies as opinion pieces.

Although the title of the volume suggests that its pages might be full of policy proposals that promise to transform how aid is delivered, the contributions are more detailed in their analyses of pathologies of foreign aid than in their treatments of how to correct these problems. The authors catalogue a long list of aid shortcomings that help to explain its limited effectiveness as a policy instrument. These problems include the incentives that aid agencies face to disburse funds quickly and to limit evaluations of their programmes, the multiplicity of donor and recipient objectives, and the strain that project proliferation and donor fragmentation place on recipient bureaucracies. A number of authors stress the notion of missing accountability that arises from the peculiar circumstance that the constituencies which finance aid and the populations which are supposed to benefit from it live in different countries. If the effectiveness of aid in promoting

development goals has been limited, this volume conveys that reasons for this ineffectiveness lie in the domestic political economies of donor and recipient countries alike.

Given the political nature of the constraints that are invoked in the volume to account for limited aid effectiveness, it is curious that the authors do not further explore variations within the donor community and on the recipient side that might shed light on how aid systems can be reformed to address some of the shortcomings highlighted above. As Birdsall suggests in the concluding chapter, since the 1990s numerous donors have responded to the mixed record of aid success by reflecting on how to improve the design and implementation of aid programmes. Yet the 'aid agency' that is discussed in the book is often a faceless one. It seems doubtful that experiences with supporting adequate programme evaluation, ensuring a consistency between allocation and disbursement decisions, striking a balance between innovative programming and promoting interventions supported by evidence-based research, or integrating private sector development objectives have been uniform across the donor community. Hence, part of the key to grappling with the deficiencies in aid provision that the authors identify, might lie in investigating how individual donors have sought to improve their aid systems and how successful they have been in accomplishing this goal.

The last six chapters of the book deal more directly with the theme of reinventing foreign aid. In one of his multiple contributions to the volume, Kremer outlines the advantages of initiatives designed to correct market failures in the area of pharmaceutical development for developing country populations by shifting a funding emphasis from financing research inputs to supporting research outputs. Such initiatives could include promising rewards to drug developers or guaranteeing a market for vaccines. Radelet and Levine review three relatively new aid initiatives: the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (the Global Fund), and the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). Radelet and Levine are careful to note that while these initiatives promise to address some of the shortcomings of more traditional forms of aid delivery, they also have the potential to reinforce existing problems with foreign aid provision. For instance, if the Global Fund has admirably narrow objectives and a lean bureaucracy, it also potentially contributes to the problem of donor proliferation. The MCC, designed to channel aid to countries where favourable domestic conditions will ensure the wise use of resources, also adds to the donor coordination problem and presents challenges for increased country ownership. The overall message from this evaluation of new initiatives, and one that pervades the volume, is that the complexity of foreign aid as a policy instrument suggests that reformers should proceed cautiously.

The prescriptions for reinventing aid proposed by Whittle and Kuraishi and Hoffmann emphasize the utility of integrating business thinking into global development initiatives to a greater degree. Presenting a case for the model of aid delivery promoted by their organization Global Giving, Whittle and Kuraishi highlight the value of uniting individual donors and recipients through a decentralized marketplace, while Hoffmann argues for increased support for small and medium-sized enterprise development in poor countries. Analyzing the relationship between private and public contributions to global development is unquestionably an important area of inquiry in thinking about how aid systems can be reformed in the future. However, one danger in examining this relationship, in evidence in Whittle and Kuraishi's chapter in particular, is to argue in favour of a private solution by listing deficiencies in public aid provision rather than by presenting evidence that private initiatives themselves have succeeded in producing results that public initiatives have not.

Although some of the research presented in this volume will probably be familiar to some readers, the book provides a good overview of the political economy of aid and will be useful as background reading for researchers interested in foreign assistance reform. Several of the individual chapters provide excellent introductions to specific topics. This is true of the

contribution from Duflo and Kremer on the use of randomized evaluations, for example, and Moss et al. contribute a similarly outstanding chapter on the link between aid and institutional development in recipient countries. By acknowledging that many questions about aid reform remain unresolved, this volume can also be viewed as a friendly invitation for further exploration of the issues that it raises.

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**Nouvelles migrations latino-américaines en Europe. Bilan et défis**, edited by Isabel Yépez and Gioconda Herrera, Louvain-la-Neuve Presses Universitaires de Louvain-UCL, 2008, 308 pp., 25€ (paperback), ISBN 978-2-87463-107-8

This collection edited by Isabel Yépez et Gioconda Herrera is the result of a workshop organized by the European Union – Latin America Relations Observatory (EULARO) in November 2006. The book aims to constitute a state of the art report on the presence of Latin American migrants in Europe. By doing so, this work seeks to address what is perceived as a gap in the current migration literature. Although the topic has attracted a lot of scholarly attention in Southern Europe (particularly in Spain, Portugal and Italy), there remains a need to examine migration in the broader framework of the European continent. The collection contains 13 articles organized in four sections, and is structured around three central themes in the study of contemporary migratory and post-migratory phenomena in Europe which recur throughout the book: the transnational dimension of the life of migrants and their families, the question of remittances in economic and policy terms, and the gender dimension of migratory flows.

In her introduction, Isabel Yépez reminds us that, long before the current movements of Latino migrants to Europe, large numbers of Europeans migrated to the New World with a significant impact on the receiving societies. Latin American migration to Europe over the last 30 years has largely moved from a politically motivated to an economically motivated migration, which has increased over the last few years due to a combination of factors: the socio-economic crisis in various home countries, the tightening of the US borders after the September 2001 attacks, the greying of the European population and its need for an increased workforce, the deepening of the North–South discrepancies and the role of specific receiving countries' legislation, such as Spain's.

López de Lera and Oso de Casas offer a much more detailed historical overview of Latin American migration to Europe in their review of the literature for the case of Spain. This chapter clearly underlines the qualitative and quantitative changes in Latin American migration to Spain. Moving from 200,000 to 1.5 million between 2000 and 2006, the Latino population in Spain has indeed dramatically changed the profile of the migrant population in this country. The authors stress the specific context in which this increase has taken place. In a context of population ageing and low fertility, the changes in Spain's nationality law (facilitating the access to nationality for second-generation Spaniards residing abroad) and the 2000 and 2005 regularization processes for undocumented migrants have revealed to all the attractiveness of Spain for Latin American migrants. Yet the article also presents significant data showing that the Latin American migrants' fertility rate in Spain resembles more and more that of the native

population thus making migration a short-term solution to the ageing of the Spanish population.

Padilla conducts a similar effort in the case of Brazilian migrants in Portugal. After placing this migration in the specific context of Portugal's colonial history, the author shows how the country's accession to the European Union stimulates both the highly-qualified and low-skilled migration. A specific argument is also made on the expectations of Portuguese employers with regard to Brazilian migrants, with the over-emphasis put on culturalist arguments (such as the one considering Brazilian migrants as 'livelier' than others) facilitating access to the job market but at the same time relegating them to low-skilled jobs.

In her article on Latin American migrants in the Netherlands, Barajas also underlines the weight of clichés on the integration process of this population. Three specific prejudices on the status of refugee, prostitution and criminality are examined in this contribution that also reviews the existing Dutch literature on this population. This article's strength is also to put the changes in this population's profile in relation with the country's changing migration and integration policies in the wake of the contestation of the multicultural model in the early twenty-first century.

Herrera proposes a different approach in her paper on the Ecuadorian population in Europe (this part of the paper is nicely complemented by Poulain's article on the statistics on the Latin American presence in Europe that stress the limits of the different statistical sources available on this population). To explain the dramatic increase in Ecuadorian migration flows, the author proposes different push (economic crisis of 1999, lack of opportunities created by the state, concentration of wealth) and pull factors (increasing need for labour in the field of services to persons in Spain). The most convincing part of the paper comes later however. Herrera first underscores how the social organization of migrants through networks constitutes a strategy to overcome the restrictions set by the home state. She also highlights how families and women in particular play a decisive role in the migration strategy. Then, the author skilfully shows how Latin American women compensate deficiencies of the welfare state in receiving countries by providing services that the latter is unable to provide. Lastly, she proposes to examine the transnational dimension of Ecuadorian migrants' practices in Europe at three levels (culture, status of belonging and economic practices).

Herrera's paper concludes with a concern for the need for comparative research on Latin American migration to be conducted. This concern is shared by Queirolo Palmas and Ambrosini in their paper on Latin American migration to Italy that starts with a discussion on Latinos in the US. Despite their unwillingness to consider Latin Americans as a monolithic category, the authors try to show some of their common characteristics and underline a series of factors explaining their move which have been mentioned earlier: socio-economic crisis in the home country, role of networks, the role of the family strategies and gender or the risks related to exploitation. Other characteristics are stressed and notably the metropolitan dimension of this migration and its high level of organization through associations which, in turn, increases the visibility of this population. The paper concludes by discussing the relevance of the concept of transnationalism when migration occurs between two very distant areas that render circulation costly, which stresses, once more, the need to conduct research on similar national migrant groups in different receiving countries.

A section of the book is devoted to papers on remittances. Auroi's article on the impact of remittances on local development is organized around three central questions. The first question concerns the impact of remittances on the increase of discrepancies between popular classes in receiving countries and refers to the concern expressed in studies showing the differences between the families having a member abroad and those who do not. The second question concerns the development of institutions aimed at stimulating the productive use of money



transfers for the benefit of local communities. Here the frequent use of informal means to transfer money is perceived as an impediment to make loans available for local development in the home country. The third question relates to the use of remittances and the priorities to which they should be devoted. Here, the references to institutional mechanisms stimulating the productive use of remittances in Mexico and Salvador show both the strength and weaknesses of the state's involvement in the debate. Canales' paper on remittances and development starts by underlining a point less frequently made in the literature on the increasing importance of remittances in some countries to compensate for the effects of the failed structural adjustment policies imposed by international organizations. He then discusses four dimensions of the remittances debate: productive investments, the multiplier effect, social inequalities and the macro-economic impact.

The third chapter contains three articles on the gender dimension of migration. Actually, only two of these articles shed light on the status of Latin American women in Europe. Oso Casas' article on the integration of Latin American women in the Spanish labour market shows how the socio-economic changes of recent decades in Spain (i.e. increase in the number of women who are working and inability of the welfare state to provide practical solutions to this situation) have created a structural need for female domestic migrant workers. Subsequent discussions of the sex industry and female ethnic entrepreneurship show contrasting alternatives to domestic work which is described as difficult to get out of. Lagomarsino's paper on Ecuadorian women in Genova begins with a point also seen in the Spanish case that some women's migratory strategy is to join their family in the country of residence in a second stage of the migratory experience. Lagomarsino too pinpoints the weaknesses of the welfare state and the participation of European women in the labour market as factors creating structural needs for invisible female migrant workers. She also stresses the specific emotional dimension of the domestic work and notes that it is not valued (or taken into consideration) by the employers of this labour force. For the author, this also relates to the fact Latin American women are perceived by Italian society to have a cultural vocation to fill these work positions.

Unfortunately for the coherence of this volume, it concludes with two less convincing papers. Degavre's paper offers a thorough and informative discussion of the concept of 'care' for old non-autonomous persons. It is probable that the reason for including this article was to offer a theoretical framework to the two papers on Latin American female domestic workers. However, we can only regret that the application of the concept to ethnic groups and migrant communities is not further developed in the paper (especially when the author appears to have conducted interesting fieldwork in Brussels). The last paper by Carlier offers a very good discussion on the right to move and the right to sojourn and proposes step by step reforms to make the former a sort of universal right (by suppressing visas) and to leave the latter as a favour granted by public authorities except for family reunification and asylum. While this article is an interesting contribution to the debate on the migration-related legislation in Europe, the relevance of this paper to conclude a volume on Latin American migration in Europe remains unclear.

To conclude this review, the edited volume by Yépez and Herrera is a convincing contribution to the understanding of new migration in Europe. The book would have been stronger if it had included more contributions on Latin American migrants outside of Southern Europe (Italy, Portugal and Spain) and if it had devoted more time to a comparison with the situation of Latin American migrants in the United States. Nonetheless, as announced by the editors, one of this book's goals is also to stimulate further research by underlining gaps in the existing literature. By reviewing the most important dimensions surrounding Latin American migration to Europe today while acknowledging that more research needs to be done, it certainly achieved this goal. Accordingly, this book should attract the interest of social

scientists and policy-makers but also of individuals curious to learn more about recent and important changes in contemporary European societies.

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**The gender politics of development: essays in hope and despair**, by Shirin M. Rai, New Delhi, Zubaan, 2008 (hardback), ISBN 978-81-89884-54-3, London, New York, Zed Books, 2008, 216 pp., £60 (hardback), ISBN 978-1-84277837-1, £16.99 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-84277-838-8

The book by Shirin Rai is an inspiring reading of the gendered dimensions of post-colonial states and the complex ways in which both colonial and post-colonial states and communities are connected through policy discourses and economic and political measures that affect strategies of development and women's empowerment. This collection of essays ties together issues of politics, nationalism, democratization, globalization, and development, making us reflect on the power of patriarchy and capitalism as well as on women's possibilities for contesting such power. It is an enjoyable and recommended read that will be of special interest to scholars in politics, economics, and gender studies.

Rai's book helps us sharpen our understanding of empowerment, giving us reasons for both 'hope' and 'despair'. Her reflections confront us with a reality that shows progress in gender equality, such as women's increased presence in political institutions, women's political struggles, and the diffusion of state feminism, as well as the perpetuation of socio-economic inequalities in the labour market, violence against women and higher illiteracy rates among women. Linking analyses of political economy at a global level with studies of the developing national and local contexts in South Asia, with attention to the role of institutions and civil society, she provides us with a comprehensive vision of the constraints and opportunities offered for women's empowerment.

A complex picture is developed in eight clearly written chapters. Chapter 1 on 'Gender, nationalism and "nation-building"' depicts the limitations of nationalism for gender equality. Women had much to lose from alliances of male colonizers with male colonized nationalist elites because 'the autonomy of the patriarch within the home was allowed by the colonial state in the hope of undermining anti-colonial resistance' (p. 25). During social reform of colonial states things changed, except for women: dominant nationalist male discourses frame women as guardians of traditions, responsible for the transmission of traditional cultures and values to children. However, contradictions within the conversations of the colonial and nationalist male elites 'allowed spaces for contestation that were utilized by women' (p. 12) to challenge patriarchal framing of women that came from both colonial and nationalist projects.

'Women and the post-colonial state' is the subject of Chapter 2. This fascinating account of the struggles of New Delhi women street traders for their right to work on the pavement provides us with insights on women's strategies for struggle that are both 'in and against' the state, and are successful precisely due to this versatility. Starting from the post-structuralist idea that neither the state nor civil society are unitary, Rai discusses how the state delivers both violence against women and support for their rights. Employing an analysis of the political opportunity structure, the author shows how spaces for women to further their interests by changing meanings and resources are opened by particular legal institutions, individual people committed to the cause of

the activists, specific political events that open windows of opportunity, and the strategic struggles of the women traders defending their rights.

Two chapters focus on gender and democratization. In Chapter 3, 'Theorizing gender and democratization', the author discusses feminist theoretical contributions to debates on democratization and the challenges of democratization in terms of institutional politics, entitlements, globalization, and economic liberalization. Chapter 4, 'Mainstreaming gender, democratizing the state?', argues that effective gender mainstreaming requires processes of political democratization in decentralization processes, in political parties, through monitoring and auditing mechanisms, through leadership commitment to mainstreaming, and through women's political presence within the institutions. It also engages with one of the key questions for scholars in gender and politics, which is to assess the role of women's policy agencies in advancing women's interests. While Rai's answer is that such bodies advance women's interests under certain conditions (i.e. location, resources, links with civil society, clarity of mandate, and accountability), she also admits that it is uncertain 'whether, given their relatively weak structural position within the state system, they can deliver a more sustained socio-economic agenda of redistribution' (p. 89).

A recurring theme of the book is that feminist politics should never lose the focus on redistributive politics. This is the conclusion of Chapter 5, 'Quotas in context', co-authored with Farzana Bari, Nazmunessa Mahtab and Bidyut Mohanty, which explores the development of quotas in three South Asian countries: Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. Two key points are worth noting. The first is a warning against over-simplistic assumptions regarding the impact of quotas for gender equality: quotas need to be understood in context, being part of a complex picture where a multiplicity of political and socio-economic factors play a role in the promotion of women's effective empowerment. The authors explore the opportunities and constraints of the new local government's quotas for women in the three South Asian countries considered, providing the readers with a thorough picture of the struggles that preceded their introduction and of the impact of quotas on women's effective political participation. The second argument made is that empowerment is a contested concept and that its assessment in a specific context needs necessarily to consider how intersecting class, gender and race inequalities affect the 'politics of recognition' promoted by quotas. According to the authors, recognition cannot be disentangled from Fraser's 'politics of redistribution', which is why quotas need to be part of a broader strategy that also includes a redistribution of socio-economic resources.

Chapter 6, 'Globalization, development and global governance', is recommended to any scholar who wishes to know more about global governance discourse and its gender implications. The author examines the concept of global governance as markets, institutions, ideology, and spectacle, and develops an articulate analysis of academic and political debates on the issue. Rai powerfully challenges the neo-liberal discourse of governance constructed as a self-evident positive political goal, in spite of its negative implications for peace, equality, social justice, and democracy. She discusses feminist contributions to theorizing global governance and at the same time urges feminist alternative conceptualizations of governance to deepen their focus on redistribution by developing a gender-class intersectional analysis. Space is opened for future research, as the reader is left eager to know more about what such feminist alternative articulations of governance would imply.

Reflections on gender and globalization continue in Chapter 7, written with Sharmishta Barwa, this time applied to 'Knowledge and/as power'. This captivating essay deals with the deep gender and class implications of international trade agreements applied to intellectual property rights: these agreements reflect hegemonic constructions of knowledge that privilege the power of male subjects over female subjects and Northern countries over Southern countries. Since what counts as knowledge is constructed by the most powerful, women are mostly

excluded from being inventors and patenters of their own inventions. But the main concern of the authors is that international regulations on trade-related intellectual property rights fix these unequal patterns of knowledge and power, thus legitimating gender and class inequalities.

Reflections on power and knowledge are also applied to the context of research in Chapter 8, 'Networking across borders', an account of the setting up and work of the South Asia Research Network on Gender, Law and Governance. Rai examines the politics of networking through the analysis of the politics of process (testing deliberative politics), outcome (considering issues of access and dangers of circulating knowledge), and framing (unveiling the discursive dominance of particular actors). She raises our awareness of how research networks are embedded in power mechanisms and, for this reason, 'they need to be self-reflective' to be able to deal adequately with 'the consequences of network failure' on those involved as well as those who depend on the work of these networks (p. 174). By ending on this note of academic self-criticism, the author proves once more her admirable search for a coherent balance between theory and practice.

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