

Book Reviews

Fouskas, Vassilis and Bulent Gokay (2019). **The Disintegration of Euro-Atlanticism and New Authoritarianism**, Palgrave Macmillan: London, (221 pp, ISBN: 978-3-319-96817-9).

With the advent of the new millennium, the weakening of the parliamentary liberal democracy became crystal clear. This highly complicated and gloomy process that has been named as various different forms, such as global democratic backsliding and rising global populist authoritarianism. Along the same line, these new limping regimes which are quite different than the established democracies have been categorising as electoral authoritarianism, semi-democracy, the illiberal democracy or newly popular competitive authoritarianism. Indeed, this situation of backward moves in contemporary liberal democracy has been studied with regards to economics, education, security, terrorism and similar factors and in this regard, Vassilis Fouskas and Bulent Gokay's newly published book *The Disintegration of Euro-Atlanticism and New Authoritarianism* is another comprehensive attempt to scrutinise the reasons and possible damages of this new ungovernable situation. However, from my point of view, their work of art has great many novel points in terms of terminology, subject choice and interdisciplinarity.

The book comprises six separate chapters including the Postscript-Political Perspectives part and illustrates the salient problematic socio-political and economic issues facing the contemporary world systems in different sections in a logical manner. Even though every single section explores different issues and geographies, they have one common and important point which makes the book quite different and novel compare to its sibling studies; interdisciplinary. By courtesy of the authors diverse and rich scholarly background they have managed to present different sides of the coins using via the tools of economy, political science, international relations, history and sociology.

Within this interdisciplinary frame, in chapter one, *The Study of Global Politics and Economics Today*, Fouskas and Gokay lay out the theoretical concepts and postulates upon which the main arguments developed in the book. In this chapter, the authors mainly discuss some of the fundamental concepts such as imperialism, neo-imperialism, authoritarianism and new (neoliberal) authoritarianism (pp. 3-12). Apart from its rich historical and analytical aspects, this chapter also introduce a new term which is essential for the next parts of book; ordoliberalism. According to authors free market-based neoliberalism and strong state based ordoliberalism are not separate, stylised public policies, whereby neoliberalism is the dominant form of policy in the Anglo-American contexts and ordoliberalism in the German–Austrian contexts. In other words, they scrutinise the definition of “ordo-model of neoliberalism” which appears to be more austere, disciplinarian and legalistic and, in general, requires a strong state upon which the entire socio-economic infrastructure rests. In this regard, they argue that likewise free market-based neoliberalism, ordo-model of neoliberalism can be defined a new type of authoritarianism which can contains the rest of the world such as Germany, Austria and even China (p.13).

Under the shadow of this general claim and coined term ordoliberalism or ordo-model of neoliberalism, the second chapter can be seen as an overall reading of the world's last two centuries'

history with the lenses of political economy. It is one of the richest chapters of the book and covers the example of power (read as hegemony) shifts within the world order. It tries to define that the new authoritarianism that finds expression in the public policies of new constitutionalism and ordoliberalism is the result of this global disorder and permanent crisis turned into permanent exception. Even though, it is a very solid and explanatory chapter, it would be very good to see some Schmitt-Agamben discussions regarding to the concept of exception under the new constitutionalism. This point might be my one and only criticism regarding to this solid book. While the second chapter underlines that the new authoritarianism and economical narrow pass will not only weakness of the USA and its mostly Western allies, but also transform the roles and impacts of the emerging powers globally, the third and fourth chapters focus on the important countries Germany and the United Kingdom. In chapter three, the authors anticipate the deepening and widening of free market reforms after the global financial crisis and the Eurozone crisis including the shrinking future of the German economy. In the fourth chapter, it has been argued that Brexit is one of the many morbid symptoms of the contemporary times (p.102) and it is one of the expected outcomes of the irrational neoliberal politics. As a reader, it was quite interesting to read the pages regarding Brexit after pro-Brexiter Conservative Boris Johnson's landslide majority in the December 2019 general election. Apart from these comprehensive chapters, part five mainly related with another interesting country cases namely Greece and Germany. It is indeed a very detailed and explanatory chapter regarding this very complicated country cases and as a scholar who has been working on similar topics reading a chapter on the comparison of Greece and Germany has opened new windows in my mind. At last, chapter six deals with a different geography and mainly focus on China. With the words of the author the essays collected in this chapter, lay out the framework of a more comprehensive and dense analysis of the disintegrative tendencies of the Euro-Atlantic core and of the new authoritarian and neo-liberal agencies that underpin and try, unsuccessfully, to contain those tendencies (p.149). This chapter fits perfectly with the Postscript-Political Perspectives part and mainly underlined that the world is at a crossroad.

All in all, in *The Disintegration of Euro-Atlanticism and New Authoritarianism* Fouskas and Gokay argues that the world is at a conjuncture for changing the terms of the debate beyond the limitations of conventional thinking and taking a long-term view, making a leap forward beyond capitalist organisations of politics and everyday life (p. 190). Indeed, it is an important claim and the authors support it in a very well-structured study. I can ealy argue that is a must-own work for every academic, researcher, journalist and expert who speculates and will continue to speculate about world in a broader sense. Moreover, the discussion of various topics with a shared perspective by two academics with relatively discrete areas of expertise proves, in the example of the world system, the fundamental breadth of social science both as a method and as an approach.

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Halstead, Narmala (2019). **Competing Power: Landscapes of Migration, Violence and the State.** New York: Berghahn Books (256 pp, ISBN: 978-178533-992-9).

Narmala Halstead's new title is based on a rich ethnographic study focusing on interactions between the state, violence and ongoing migration-related activities in Guyana. Particularly, it puts '*the local*' (p. 2) under the scope to demonstrate power relations among '*big ones*' (p. 10) by considering both micro experiences and macro change through mainly personal accounts of interviewers and



historical materials. It is based on long-term fieldwork in Guyana and New York amongst the Guyanese migrants between 1995 and 2012. It is supported by other archival data such as court documents as well as participant observation as part of an ethnographic approach.

Eight chapters in the book are organised around the concepts of the local, structural violence, social justice, illegality, power and empowerment. The first chapter begins with the historical background of Guyana in the context of political problems in relation to structural violence. Particularly, the lack of social justice appears as structural violence by the state in the story of Fatima and Fazad while touching irregularity. The following chapter explores the power relations of “*big ones*”, the powerful members in the society, and other kinds of violence through corruption. How illegality has been normalized by Guyanese people to cope with structural violence and how big ones’ power draws everyday life and socio-political settings in the local context are transpired in these narratives. Chapter three introduces the “*local others*” (p. 20) and the discussion turns to ethno-political violence by alternative “big ones” such as bandits. However, Lata and others’ accounts demonstrate that there is apathy to ethnic crimes in comparison to structural violence amongst local residents in Guyana. This disengagement or ‘acceptance’ of physical violence is parallel to the perceptions of illegality. It may appear as a first step for empowering individuals. The following chapter brings up several case studies of families who have attempted to gain status through external empowerment. This is discussed as a way of liberation from the injustices and poor living standards. All these efforts are linked to global networks and empowering structures for the “*small ones*” (p. 10). In this context, soft forms of illegality appear acceptable among the locals.

Chapter five offers case studies illustration the shifting power relations at micro level. The ways in which the local experiences of loss of status amidst both political and economic poverty are associated with the incapability to migrate from Guyana. They also illustrate how skilled migrants or returnees experience their new statuses. The sixth chapter focuses on misreading of power by the locals. As the narratives indicate, the locals turn a blind eye to corruption and violence through external empowerment gained from their relationship with the “*big ones*” such as policemen. The underlying reason of this behavior is to secure rights and social justice for themselves through establishing power relations however wrogn these might be. Then the author continues in the following chapter expanding the case studies of migrants and the locals with illegal practices in reaching global networking and gaining external empowerment. Halsted explores the idea of state reform that sees the individuals as the problem and diagnoses them as not having moral responsibility to support the state in ensuring rule of law. Lastly, a new theme arises from the perceptions of public about individuals with wrongdoings. Thus, new discourse of the state revolves around the concepts of faulty individuals, morality and blame-sharing.

The book *Competing Power: Landscapes of Migration, Violence and the State* draws a map of Guyanese people’s migration experiences in poor socio-political conditions amid structural violence. The rich ethnographic material and the narrative enable the reader to understand power relations between the locals and powerful persons while also taking on board historical and political changes at the macro level during the field research. Hence it is an important contribution to the field. I would strongly recommend it to anyone interested in migration, politics and qualitative research methods.

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