

**BOOK REVIEW**

Nandita Sharma (2020) Home Rule. National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants. Durham and London, Duke University Press, xi + 372 pp. ISBN: 9781478000952

In this book, Nandita Sharma traces the historical formation and political separation of 'natives' and 'migrants' from the 19th century to the present. By tracing patterns of colonial relations, she develops a theory of international migration that situates current political debates within a deep postcolonial history of biopolitics, population control and citizenship policies. The book provides an overview of some of the key historical developments in the formation of the postcolonial new world order (PNWO) and analyses postcoloniality in historical and theoretical perspective.

Two types of postcolonialism are explained. The first refers to scholarship that maps the connections forged by imperialism across space and time. This literature exposes its contemporary legacies and politicises the postcolonial condition in the independent nation states. The second type that is used in this book is the postcolonial new world order (PNWO), a contemporary mode and governmentality of ruling relations. Postcolonial domination in this view is normalising nation states in producing subjectivities that turn us into national natives of some places. A confusion around the term postcolonialism is explained in that some people are still being colonised (politically, economically or socially). The *post* in postcolonialism is according to Nandita Sharma meaningless. Postcolonialism, she argues, has ended the legitimacy of imperial states but not the practices associated with them. In the postcolonial new world order, practices of expropriation and exploitation have expanded intensively.

The aim of the book is to plot the formation of postcolonialism as a new world order and to show its biopolitics and governmentality. The book is ambitious and covers a wide range of topics from the colonial period in the nineteenth century to the current postcolonial world order. With its length and sometimes a bit dense narrative structure, it might feel overwhelming at the start but it is definitely worth finishing. The breadth and wide range of examples is actually a strength.

The book is structured in nine chapters. The first three chapters outline the core conceptual and historical linkages underpinning the argument of the book that is a critique of the efforts to use nationalism to underpin the postcolonial world order. It is shown how postcolonialism has turned the category of the native on its head. And how it has created a world in which migration is increasingly presented as a form of 'colonialism'. Many examples are given of natives who increasingly imagine themselves as being colonised by migrants.

From chapter four onwards, the focus is on the specific role of the nation state as the site for the expansion of immigration controls. It covers the period from the First World War to the Second World War. Immigration controls have become crucial technologies for nation making, and criteria for political membership have shrunk. Hostility to those who move, or who are imagined to have moved, is bred in the bone of the Postcolonial New World Order.

In Chapters five and six, the emergence of the Postcolonial New World Order is explicitly explained in the context of the period of decolonisation. In chapters seven and eight, the expansion of national citizenship and immigration controls are described in detail. Chapter seven is called the global lockdown. It shows how after late 1960s mobility restrictions were put in place and have resulted in a world where there is little freedom of movement. Important reflections are shared on national discourses around autochthony and political membership that

have legitimised nation states erecting barriers to the entry of people into their territories. Also, the violence that comes with this type of ordering is convincingly illustrated.

Anti-immigrant politics of both right and left across Europe, Asia, Africa and Americas are used as illustrations for the native–migrant dichotomy. It is shown in a nuanced way that each instance of autochthonous politics is specific to its own historical and social context and voiced by people very differently affected by imperialism, racism and nationalism. It is also shown that autochthonous discourses are relational as they produce migrants as the negative others of national natives. This relational thinking is well illustrated by the description of national-native and migrants as being co-temporal (a shared time), co-spatial (a shared space) and co-productive (a shared history).

In the concluding chapter nine, a more visionary view is presented and questions are asked around how the ruling categories of 'native' and 'migrant' can be changed so we can build a common worldly place where our fundamental liberty to stay and move is realised. Nandita shows a path from an oppressive past to a radical human future based on a mobile politics of solidarity. The cover art of the book is a drawing of the tower of Babel (1563). This biblical story about the great city and tower of Babel fits this thinking. The word Babel stems from the Hebrew verb *balal*, meaning to confuse or confound and also to mix up. When God destroyed Babel people were separated and differentiated with long-lasting effects. Nandita Sharma shows how God has been replaced by the new religion of nationalism. And how our ability to engage in a common endeavour across and especially against these differences has become difficult to imagine and even harder to carry out in a postcolonial new world order, a world in which people are defined as part of separated nations.

What I missed at times in the book was the voice of migrants and natives themselves, especially in the last chapter where the author presents her proposed solutions and ways forward in terms of producing counter narratives and moving beyond the fixation on national boundaries. The overall aim of the book of course was to provide a historical grounded analysis of the postcolonial world order which has been done in a very stimulating, well-structured and thought-provoking way. It is convincingly shown how in the new Postcolonial New World Order migrants are increasingly portrayed as colonial invaders and how the category of the 'native' has been revitalised. Claims to autochthony, being the native people of a place, are increasingly mobilised to define 'true' national belonging. Migrants are in this discourse quintessentially people that are 'out of place' and as a result increasingly face exclusion, expulsion and even extermination. All over the world, not only in the United States and the EU, we are seeing an increasing reliance on nativist discourses that separate the 'natives' and the 'migrants' both as social categories and political identities.

The Netherlands, where I was born, officially classifies its residents as either autochthonous (people of Dutch territory) or allochthonous (people of foreign birth). Geert Wilders, a right-wing politician, started in 2010 with an explicit narrative around the fact that Muslims were trying to 'colonize' Holland. He called for an end to Muslim immigration and the repatriation of all Muslims, even including Dutch citizens. Currently, the party of Geert Wilders has the third largest number of votes which is not very hopeful in terms of producing counter narrative. Lacking in Home Rule is references to resistance which would have made the book maybe a bit more appealing and hopeful. But nevertheless this book is definitely worth a read for students and researchers interested in nation building and processes of othering across post-imperial contexts.

DISCLAIMER

The opinions expressed in this Book Review are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors, Editorial Board, International Organization for Migration nor John Wiley & Sons.

PEER REVIEW

The peer review history for this article is available at <https://publons.com/publon/10.1111/imig.12859>.

Ilse van Liempt 

Utrecht University

Email: I.C.vanLiempt@uu.nl

ORCID

Ilse van Liempt  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4978-3101>