

actors and the ways in which humans have accounted for the environmental impact of their economic behaviour.

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BESTEMAN, CATHERINE. *Militarized Global Apartheid*. [Global Insecurities.] Duke University Press, Durham (NC) [etc.] 2020. 197 pp. \$89.95. (Paper: \$23.95.)

Crises show up at borders. War, climate change, violence, oppression, inequality, human trafficking, geopolitical quakes – borders are where the rubber hits the road. Borders are in the news almost daily. They are the focus of extensive research – from historical points of view, on states as builders of borders, on capitalism from the enclosure of the commons to barbed wire, nativist nationalism, securitization and surveillance, border sociology, ethnography and cultural studies. The American anthropologist Catherine Besteman contributes to this literature with accounts of sundry borders, securitization, and smart borders. Distinctive for the book is its central thesis that the apartheid regime of white supremacy is globalized and militarized. According to the cover blurb, “Besteman traces how militarization and securitization reconfigure older forms of white supremacy and deploy them in new contexts to maintain this racialized global order”, a theme that echoes throughout.

Obviously, this raises questions. Israel/Palestine borders and occupation of the West Bank – are a matter of race and white supremacy? A wall between India and Bangladesh and strife in Kashmir and Assam – white supremacy? Myanmar military expelling Muslim Rohingya, conflicts between Buddhist Thais and Muslim Thais in South Thailand, between Sinhala Buddhists and Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka, between Sunni rulers and Shia citizens in Bahrain, between Northern Irish Protestants and Catholics, between Han Chinese and peoples in Tibet and Xinjiang, Pakistan’s problems with Baluchistan, Turkey’s hostility towards Kurds, Russia invading Ukraine – are these expressions of white supremacy, manifestations of a “racialized global order”? Conflicts between and among peoples exist across the world, but how many among these are “racial” or “racialized”? On a practical note, are there enough whites to sustain the borders of white supremacy across the world, also considering demographic decline?

Besteman’s approach is part of an American academic genre that, in the US, has become difficult to avoid, the civilizing mission of Political Correctness (PC). With it comes a stilted conception of race. Race and racism, it is argued, go back to Europe in the 1400s, or earlier to premodern times (p. 8) and “racialism and capitalism emerged together” (p. 9). This is based on a “racial contract” that is global and “foundational to modernity” (p. 9). Colonialism and imperialism came with militarized apartheid and now the Global North protects itself from the Global South with “hegemonic whiteness” on its ramparts, from Israel to Australia.

Features of this approach include the following: 1) it is all encompassing, sweeping – in time (premodern onward) and space (global), with a *single logic* that drives and upholds a transhistorical package deal, similar in structural format to world-system theory and Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. 2) it is multidimensional – racism, capitalism, and modernity come in a package. 3) research tilts towards rhetoric rather than analysis, a book in the style of a pamphlet. The sources tend to be a narrow unilinear sample, all arrows pointing in the same direction, a citation community (which usually includes Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*). The reasoning is self-serving; when the text stretches “race” to vague fluidity it promptly argues that much actual race thinking is vague (p. 14). Race becomes a concept without boundaries. Race becomes cultural, imagined, includes caste, class, nation, sectarian divides, nearly any form of hierarchy and social antagonism, as if we are back in the days that nations were also races (“the Irish race”). Thus, it borrows the moral pathos of the concept while keeping the door wide open as to its contents. The drawback is that when race explains everything it explains nothing. 4) historical knowledge is potted, also intellectual history, arguing that race goes back to feudal times (or antiquity) – although the concept of race did not come into being until the 1780s in Göttingen. 5) America-centrism (as in Manifest Destiny, modernization theory, the Washington consensus) is about as tedious as Eurocentrism. American political correctness with American social problems organizing the tableau of world problems and American authors serving as guides to European and world history, yields a horizon as provincial and unworldly as American ethnocentric hegemony, now with a fresh gloss of righteousness.

More specifically to this book, while the discussion is about the hardening, securitization, and extension of borders (all of which is appropriate), the other side of the picture does not come up: mobility and migration as part of long-term evolution. A wider literature deals with mobility, migration, and diasporas over millennia. Globalization is an expression of long-term mobility. The osmosis of cultures and the blending of peoples are part of these developments. The literature on borders is a latecomer subset of the wider mobility and migration literature; but in this book the subset is the narrative. For example, migration comes up as the criminalization of migration, “crimmigration” (pp. 62, 107). Restrictions on migration take up the available oxygen while the contributions of migration and the growing demand for migration do not come up. Migrants' remittances to developing countries far exceed foreign aid and World Bank funding. Besides, for wealthy countries, in the words of a German plea: “Liebe Ausländer, lasst uns nicht mit die Deutsche allein”.

The two most important twenty-first century variables that affect migration and mobility, demographic decline and climate change, do not come up at all. Demographic decline is a profound and formidable break with evolutionary trends. Because of demographic decline and aging nearly across the world (except Africa), immigration is becoming a must, a plain necessity. Nativist nationalism and right-wing populism (no immigrants) is over its peak, a waning trend, even as it continues to create headlines and garner votes. Demand for migrant labor has been rising fast, also in the wake of Covid-19. Even in ethnocentric countries such as Japan it leads to recognizing migrant workers' rights, ignored for long, a step towards multiculturalism. Because of climate change people everywhere are and will be moving north and inland (cf. Parag Khanna, *Move*). In this book, these crosscurrents do not come up because they do not

fit in the American box. They do not fit the American PC mold, because they have nothing to do with race or white supremacy. The core problem of race in the US, the legacy of the plantation economy, is a fundamental American problem (hence the electoral college, the Senate, the filibuster rule, the Supreme Court, states' rights, gun rights, self-defense, stand your ground, mandatory sentencing laws, and other bedrocks of conservatism), but it is *not* a world problem. Plantations were often a part of colonies, of course, but these plantation economies were not *part* of a lasting settler colonial society. The US's special case cannot serve as a portal through which to understand global relations. This book situates the global problematic in North–South relations, but with the rise of Asia (“The Future is Asian”) the world increasingly hinges on East–South relations, which does not appear in this tableau. The book follows the modeling of *The Pentagon's New Map* (2003), but in the post-American world of vanity wars and the 2008 crisis this tour guide is well past its sell-by date. The world integrative force is no longer the United States but greater Asia, hence American shadows are not global ghosts.

White supremacy as the cause and rationale of the tightening of borders is upheld until close to the end of the book when two quite different reasons for hardening borders pop up: Islamophobia and securitization (p. 119). Which is plausible, yet as the horizon widens it also narrows: Islamophobia is rebaptized as a form of racism (what else could it be) and securitization is recast as part of a security-industrial complex and “security imperialism”, i.e. both are translated into American lexicon. “Muslim” is presented already earlier as “a racialized category” (p. 13). Can white supremacy, part of aggressive American inward-looking provincialism, serve as the guide to problems of borders worldwide and as a beacon of global understanding? This is a monocentric reading of a multicentric world. It replaces twentieth-century convergence on an American dream with twenty-first-century convergence on an American curse. I would not recommend the book as a useful guide to understand the historical theoretical roots of apartheid or racism, at the most as a telling example of American Political Correctness.

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BIGELOW, ALLISON MARGARET. *Mining Language. Racial Thinking, Indigenous Knowledge, and Colonial Metallurgy in the Early Modern Iberian World.* Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg (VA) 2020. xix, 354 pp. Ill. Maps. \$39.95. (E-book: \$29.99.)

To assess the merits of a book that seeks to understand lexicon as an “abstract marker” of race is a daunting task for political economists such as the author of this review. On the one hand, we political economists are suspicious of the ways in which the field of critical studies has descended upon our foundational questions, acting as *force majeure* that keeps shifting scholarly attention to the study of race at the expense of Marxist inquiries on capital accumulation. On the other hand, we are