

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



La trappola di Tucide e altre immagini : perché la politica internazionale sembra non cambiare mai / Anna Caffarena. - Bologna : il Mulino, 2018. - 137 (Saggi ; 875). - ISBN 978-88-15-27917-0

Anna Caffarena takes Alexander Wendt's dictum that international "anarchy is what states make of it" very seriously. Of equal importance for her is Wendt's affirmation that what states make of anarchy depends especially on the baggage of beliefs and ideas about world politics that they have and take for granted, and to which they resort to find their bearings in the world and figure out what proper ("rational") political conduct should be like. One might say, quite accurately, that Caffarena's book intends to outline the *ideational structure*, to phrase it in a constructivist vein, that has contributed to shaping international politics since the end of the Cold War. It focuses on the repertoire of *representations* and *images* of world politics circulated mainly by "news reports and expert studies" (9), that have profoundly affected states' interpretations of, and their expectations for, post-Cold War politics, thus also conditioning their conduct.

The goal of this very interesting book, as Caffarena affirms, is to "start a reflection on continuity in international politics [...], placing the relation between reality and its representation at the centre of investigation" (25). Caffarena contends that the persistence of certain images of world politics, despite their gross *inaccuracy*, has encouraged continuity in states' definition of their interests and behaviour, thus renewing old patterns in international relations. Especially worrisome, in Caffarena's eyes, is the "resiliency" of the image – embraced by *realist* scholars and commentators – of the international situation as one of anarchy, necessarily dominated by fear, in which every "rational" state must follow a line of conduct characterised at the same time by extreme caution and aggressiveness: in anarchy, as this image envisions, *one must attack in order not to be attacked*. A matter of survival. Regrettably, so Caffarena argues, "[b]y 'living' the images through which we give meaning to our environment, we indeed trigger a vicious (in this case) circle, as our practices recreate the social reality from which they themselves derive their own justification" (27). Realist images recreate "realist" practices, that is, a prevalent predisposition to power politics and war.

In the first of the two long chapters of which the book is composed, together with a dense Introduction, Caffarena warns that a large part of the images that guide our interpretation of world affairs – and affect decision-making – is little more than an anthology of *literary images*. As Kenneth E. Boulding put it, each of them is "a melange of narrative history, memories of past events, stories and conversations, etc., plus an enormous amount of usually ill-digested and carelessly collected current information" (45). Fatally, they distort reality more than shed light on it, but they still form the "mental geography" on the basis of which states' foreign policy is conducted. More importantly, Caffarena is keen to demonstrate that the image of world politics embraced by many academic scholars – Kenneth Waltz's *third image* – namely the realist conception of international anarchy as an arena characterised by the persistence of the security dilemma and the unavoidability of war (also known as *Thucydides' Trap*), is made up of the same flimsy stuff as Boulding's literary images. Realist representation, as Caffarena

puts it, has “colonized, constrained collective imagination, well beyond academia’s borders” (53), but the fact remains that the realist image is as flawed as it is dangerous.

Anarchy in itself, as Caffarena contends, does not necessarily breed insecurity, fear or competition. While states may fear *some* of their counterparts, they are not so concerned about *others*, such as their allies. The habit of collaboration and the institutionalisation of collaboration between allies tends to create a climate of confidence, thereby alleviating their fear of aggression, finally breaking the vicious nexus between anarchy and war (57). A case in point, according to Caffarena, is the liberal international order that emerged during the Cold War “with the aim of governing relations between democracies”, within which the resort to armed force has become simply inconceivable (71-2). Yet, realist discourse still keeps its grip on political imagination, as attested to by the fact that the rise of China and Russia today is increasingly framed within fallacious realist images, with the risk of making the dismal vision of “eternal” conflict enshrined in realist discourse a self-fulfilling prophecy, even though “the instruments to deal with and moderate great power competition are not lacking” (111).

Written in a clear and easy prose, Caffarena’s book has the merit of addressing a relevant and complex subject, and doing it with the theoretical competence already shown in her previous studies devoted to IR theory. Yet, like every book worth reading, Caffarena’s also leaves the reader with some doubts and questions. How to reconcile, for example, the opposition to the 2003 Iraq War expressed by prominent exponents of academic realism (notably John Mearsheimer, Caffarena’s *bête noire*) with Caffarena’s characterisation of realism as an obsessive urge to aggressive conduct? One may even argue that the “ideational” origin of the war in 2003 – a true turning point in the post-Cold War era, as Caffarena recognises – ought to be traced to the *liberal* image of world politics (confidence in the transformative potential of democracy; diffusion of democracy as the key for international order), in which Caffarena confidently seeks the antidote for bellicose realist iconography.

In effect, the realist conception of world politics may be interpreted more as an appeal for *moderation* than as an inevitable spur to war. Significantly, some of the most respected realist voices (think of Max Weber and Carl Schmitt) have pleaded not to let statecraft be led by a Manichean attitude of Good against Evil, ideological zeal, or the purportedly ‘progressive’ wish to shape the world in one’s own image. One may also add that from realism (which is quite different from the caricature of realism portrayed by many of its critics) has repeatedly come the recommendation not to lose sight of the world’s unavoidable complexity and pluralism (Weber’s notion of “polytheism of values”; Schmitt’s definition of world politics as a “pluriverse”), along with the awareness that only by acknowledging the profound diversity of values, interests and ways of life among peoples and nations is it possible to handle, *and moderate* (not to root out once and for all) political conflict among nations. In sum, one may wonder whether it has been the weakness of realism in the post-Cold War imagination, rather than its forcefulness, that has paved the way for the current crisis of the international order about which Caffarena is so rightly concerned.

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Palestine and rule of power : local dissent vs. international governance / Alaa Tartir, Timothy Seidel, eds. - Cham : Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. - xxix, 252 p. : ill. - (Middle East today). - ISBN 978-3-030-05948-4 ; 978-3-030-05949-1 (ebk)

After more than 70 years of struggle, Palestine's quest for independence, freedom and peace seems to have reached an impasse. Decades of diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict have failed to establish Palestine's right to self-determination. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation has deepened and become more entrenched. Palestinians face continued threats of dispossession of their land, resources and political rights, not only within the Occupied Palestinian Territories (oPt) but also inside Israel, where the Arab-Palestinian minority continues to lament discrimination and unequal rights.

Addressing these realities, a recent volume seeks to challenge the status quo in Palestine-Israel, warning against the creeping normalisation of Israel's occupation and human rights violations. Most importantly, it advances a narrative to counter the image of a subjugated Palestinian population, emphasising how the *power of rights* continues to prevail over the *rule of power* through everyday acts of resistance that often do not receive adequate attention or analysis.

This edited volume is the product of a joint collaborative effort conducted by the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva and the Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. The volume includes ten chapters written by different authors (ranging from academics to journalists and activists) and is divided into three parts.

The first section of the book, entitled 'Resistance and Mobilization against Apartheid, Settler Colonialism and Repression', illustrates the *de facto* condition of apartheid imposed by Israel in the oPt. It then explains how the occupation is challenged through the steadfastness and everyday acts of resistance and solidarity of ordinary people, civil society, grassroots organisations and popular storytelling.

The second section, 'External Intervention and International Aid', explores EU perceptions and attitudes towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, illustrating the (negative) impact that the neoliberal aid policies and leverage of international donors have had on Palestine's quest for independence. Stressing how international donors have sought to shape Palestinian institutions on Western models and values, the chapters demonstrate how people in the oPt have ensured cultural survival, resisting the legitimisation of colonialism.

Finally, the third section, 'Security Sector Reform, Resistance and Authoritarianism', examines how donor-driven security reforms have criminalised Palestinian resistance and led to a normalisation and professionalisation of the Palestine National Authority's authoritarianism. In line with the book's overall approach, the main focus of this section is what people think of these security reforms and the Palestinian Authority and what they are doing to resist them. Indeed, the *fil rouge* of the book is the perseverance of Palestinian resilience, also termed *sumud*, or the means to withstand economic and political hardship imposed by the occupation, international donors and a corrupt Palestinian leadership.

The volume contributes to ongoing debates on the Palestine-Israel conflict and the role played by the international community and international donors. The analysis adopts a bottom-up perspective, focusing on 'grassroots activism' as opposed to the

major Palestinian factions of Fatah and Hamas or the Palestinian Authority. Giving voice to these Palestinian movements, civil society actors and activists provides a fresh view of the inner workings of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation, highlighting its potential for the future.

This represents a valuable contribution to the established literature on the conflict. As one of the authors observes, “This resistance is rendered invisible because the violence – of the state [Israel] – is invisible” (49). Making these ordinary acts of resistance visible can help to refocus international debates on individual and collective rights, including Palestine’s inalienable right to self-determination and Israel’s violation of established international norms and principles.

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La questione orientale : i Balcani tra integrazione e sicurezza / a cura di Raffaella Coletti. - Roma : Donzelli, 2018. - xiv, 143 p. : ill. - (Saggi. Storia e scienze sociali). - ISBN 978-88-6843-784-8

The last thirty years since the end of the Cold War have been of key importance for both the European Union (EU) and the Balkans, as the region became a crucial testing ground for Brussels’ external action. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Balkans quickly became one of the most fragile regions on the European continent, dealing with long-standing internal cleavages and unresolved disputes. Against this backdrop, the European Union and its enlargement policy came to play a crucial role in allowing for change and structural reform in the region. EU enlargement towards the Western Balkans was revived after the setback provoked by the enlargement fatigue syndrome through the Berlin Process launched in 2014. The Process aimed at strengthening good governance and intensifying regional cooperation, making the EU the most influential normative power in the area.

This is precisely the main focus of *La questione orientale*, edited by Raffaella Coletti, senior researcher at the Centre for Politics and International Studies (CeSPI) and expert on the European neighbourhood. The book brings together a number of interesting essays focusing on the various facets of the challenging integration process underway in the Western Balkans. Its main aim is to foster debate on the topic, stressing the role civil society has had until now and could have in the future.

A collective effort, the volume is made up of eight chapters, dealing with the main issues the EU is facing today, from economic divergences (Chapter 2) and the jihadist threat (Chapter 4) to Brexit (Chapter 6). Thanks to its broad approach, it offers a comprehensive starting point for framing the limits and opportunities of the Union’s enlargement to its southeastern neighbours. It comes as no surprise that one of the main weaknesses in this process is the region’s poor economy (Chapter 2) which, in turn, contributes to the religious radicalisation and growing security challenges in countries like Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo (Chapter 4). Also working at cross purposes with

the Western Balkans' smooth integration into the EU is the deteriorating rule of law and freedom of the media (Chapter 3), giving the Balkan question a prominent role in the most recent academic literature.

The enlargement fatigue the EU has been experiencing since 2004 is further worsened by the growing populist wave, negatively affecting the efforts made to create a sense of European citizenship in the Balkan region, where Europeanisation and democratisation are still ongoing and imperfect (Chapter 8). Finally, Chapters 5 and 7 concentrate on two opposite problems regarding the region's governance. On the one hand, Chapter 5 analyses the multiple powers on the Union's borders that must be taken into account when considering integrating new members in the Union. On the other hand, Chapter 7 focuses on the actors outside the EU, namely Turkey, Russia and China, whose actions in the Balkan region are progressively outplaying those of Brussels, presenting a real security threat for the Union.

Contributing to the debate on the progress achieved in relations between the Western Balkans and the European Union since the activation of the Berlin Process, this book delivers a clear image and analysis of the EU's current engagement in the region. Indeed, it addresses a number of important issues that have characterised enlargement to the Balkans in a comprehensive way. Nevertheless, the book risks being too vague, as it tries to cover too many topics not giving them enough depth to be properly assessed. Moreover, its easy accessibility in some parts clashes with its specialist approach in other parts, which require a more detailed knowledge of the topic.

Despite these minor drawbacks, *La questione orientale* is a stimulating read for anyone who wants to delve further into the question of how security and European integration interrelate in the Balkan region today.

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Political trust and the politics of security engagement : China and the European Union in Africa / Benjamin Barton. - London and New York : Routledge, 2018. - xii, 211 p. - (Routledge studies in African politics and international relations ; 13). - ISBN 978-1-138-91738-5 ; 978-1-315-17874-5 (ebk)

With this book, Benjamin Barton, Assistant Professor at the University of Nottingham's Malaysia Campus and specialist in EU-China relations in Africa, provides a multi-level analysis of political trust and the politics of security engagement. He examines to what extent political trust, in a specific cognitive-based sense, determines the development of bilateral interactions. In particular, relations between the EU and China involving the security management of African conflicts are examined in a comparative analysis through the conceptual framework of political trust. Indeed, the research question could be: Is cognitive-based political trust an essential variable for understanding the nature of bilateral dealings in security management today? Communication theory – the cognitivist framework as mentioned in Chapter 2 – also plays a relevant role in this study:

cognitive-based trust is likely to take hold when both sides support a common sense of identification, in an emphatic and favourable social environment.

After an essential introduction of the literature on trust, from rationalist to cognitivist scholarship, in Chapter 3, Barton explores the bilateral engagement and interaction of security management in Africa, providing a comparative analysis of the 'traditional' Chinese strategy and the 'humanitarian' EU strategy. The theories require pragmatic demonstrations and Chapters 4 and 5 give explanatory examples of both. In particular, the Darfur case (Chapter 4) shows how China failed to make the necessary shift in its security management approach, resulting in the absence of cooperation with the EU. Instead, in the context of counter-piracy operations in Somalia (Chapter 5), China successfully acted with a more 'modern' EU approach, achieving an international community response.

Following that, in Chapter 6, the author inquires if, given the contrasting outcomes of the above-mentioned security management strategies, one can speak of the institutionalisation of trust and the agreements it would involve. The Libyan revolution and Mali insurgency are the cases used to answer this question. The latter demonstrates the present difficulty in institutionalising trust between such major actors as the EU and China. This could improve in the future, if both sides were to learn how to manage the available instruments more effectively. Lastly, Barton sums up the various elements, providing a final evaluation of his view of security management relations.

The main hypothesis formulated by the author is that the endemic political divide between officials could be bridged to foster a greater degree of trust. A second hypothesis is directly linked to the first: because of a lack of trust, an ideal-type communicative action can influence the nature of relations negatively. The sense of identification and the nature of the social environment are two elements directly linked to further development of trust. Both hypotheses provide the book with coherence and linearity as the explanations for each example analysed follow the same pattern: the literature, the geopolitical context, the problem and the solutions provided by the EU and China.

Political trust leads to further debate, and this can involve a number of variables that normally belong to the field of political science. China and the EU both have deeply rooted political and economic systems with differences that still seem to be insurmountable. Nevertheless, Barton explains how these limits can become opportunities or advantages for both actors in the context of African security risk management.

The author provides a complete and well-structured analysis of the EU's and China's relations in Africa. It will make good reading for those studying security management approaches, but will also be a comprehensive reference for academics and politicians – as well as an excellent source of information for all those interested in Africa and its relations with the EU and China.

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The High Representative and EU foreign policy integration : a comparative study of Kosovo and Ukraine / Maria Giulia Amadio Viceré. - Cham : Palgrave Macmillan, [2018]. - xxi, 274 p. : ill. - (European administrative governance). - ISBN 978-3-319-76613-3 ; 978-3-319-76614-0 (ebk)

Under what conditions can the High Representative of EU Foreign and Security Policy (HR) become a key figure in fostering integrated policies among EU member states and institutions? This is the subject that this book explores, and in answer, it argues that the condition that allows the HR to create opportunities and influence policy outcomes is an alignment of preferences and convergence among EU member states and institutions (*consensus*). The book offers a well-written, detailed and up-to-date analysis of the HR's role – a good complement to the edited volume by Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet and Carolin Rüger published in 2011, only one year after Ashton's tenure. However, Amadio Viceré's book is the first to examine the mandates of two different HRs (Ashton, 2009-14, and Mogherini, 2014-time of writing) in two different cases (Kosovo and Ukraine).

Another innovative feature of the book is the analysis of the HR's post, used to engage in the recent debate proposed by new intergovernmentalists (Bickerton *et al.* 2015; Puetter 2014), who claim that deeper integration can be achieved without greater supranationalisation (Dehousse 2011) in key policies that correspond to traditional state powers. The two cases selected present some matters typically subject to intergovernmental Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), as well as a few elements of supranational policies: enlargement in the case of Kosovo and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in that of Ukraine. Using a process-tracing methodology, the book analyses the role of the HR in both cases in order to identify institutional patterns in the EU's approach to the two countries.

The Kosovo case looks at the period from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 to the implementation of the Mitrovica Bridge Agreement (August 2016). Even if only 23 out of 28 EU member states have recognised Kosovo's independence, the book convincingly argues that the convergence among European political elites on the strategies to stabilise the country led the HR to act as an autonomous political actor. Thanks to this consensus, Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini acted as policy investigators and enforcers, and used their Vice-President (VP) hat to connect the CFSP agenda with the enlargement policy, combining intergovernmental and supranational factors.

The second case on Ukraine covers the period from the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009 to the implementation of the Minsk Agreement (July 2016). According to Amadio Viceré, even if Ashton left coordination and implementation of CFSP mainly to the Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighbourhood Policy, Štefan Füle, she was still promoting an integrated mode of governance. The situation changed after the November 2013 events. While EU member states agreed on the need to stop violence in Eastern Ukraine, there was no agreement among them as to what strategies to adopt, in particular towards Russia and its role in the crisis. The book argues that this disruptive context prevented HR Mogherini from acting as an autonomous political actor able to foster consensus and to prompt and enforce policies.

The book concludes that in Ukraine, on the one hand, both High Representatives failed to preserve the Commission's decision-making role by making use of their capacity as VP of the Commission, but that, on the other, this divisive context led to the creation of a new institutional practice. Indeed, the book argues that the Weimar Triangle, first, and the Normandy format, later, can be seen as examples of an integrated mode of governance without any increase in supranationalisation.

In general, the book provides an original contribution to the theoretical debate on European integration in EU foreign policy, in particular, between new intergovernmentalists and supranationalists. It acknowledges the role of supranational actors as drivers of integration, but at the same time claims that integration can also originate in intergovernmental forums, providing alternative catalysts for integration without supranationalisation. The book also contributes to the empirical knowledge of one of the two most innovative institutional structures introduced by the Lisbon Treaty (the other being the European External Action Service). This will serve well both students and scholars of European integration, and practitioners interested in understanding more about EU foreign policy dynamics. Finally, Amadio Viceré's book is a must-read for all researchers who wish to explore in more depth recent institutional initiatives, such as Mogherini's EU Global Strategy or the establishment of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) by using an original analytical framework that goes beyond the supranational-intergovernmental dichotomy.

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