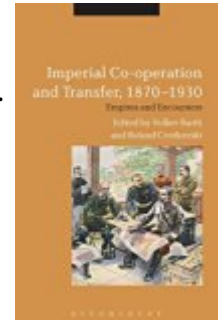


Volker Barth, Roland Cvetkovski, eds.. *Imperial Co-operation and Transfer, 1870-1930: Empires and Encounters*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015. Illustrations. 256 pp. \$112.00, cloth, ISBN 978-1-4725-9213-2.



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The story of rival European empires scrambling to outdo each other, leading to the colonization of most of the Earth's surface and eventually to World War I, is well known and generally taken for granted. While not denying the role of competition in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperialism, this anthology complicates this established narrative by revealing that empires cooperated and shared knowledge with each other to an extent not previously appreciated. Providing both macro-historical reflections and a wide range of empirical case studies, this important volume challenges us to rethink how the interaction of different empires affected the course of modern history.

Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski's introductory chapter presents a strong case for a closer investigation of "diverse inter-imperial encounters" beyond mere rivalry and attempts to define useful boundaries for research on this topic (p. 3). The authors convincingly argue that "strictly comparative studies of empires run the risk of artificially separating highly intertwined units" that

were characterized by collaboration and exchange in such fields as policy, ideology, and practical methods of rule (pp. 8-9). They also question the analytic differentiation of "continental" and "maritime" empires (p. 8). Later chapters in this volume indeed reveal that the rulers of both types of empire shared a great many assumptions and methods. While making an admirable call to "avoid isolating highly interrelated fields" (p. 19), Barth and Cvetkovski nevertheless struggle to define exactly what kinds of imperial encounters should fit into their model. Their choice to focus on "imperial elites" (mostly politicians, administrators, academics, and other colonial lobbyists) is crucial given that "inter-imperial collaboration was seldom openly advertised" to the wider public of the imperial metropole, who the authors imply were more strictly nationalistic (p. 16). Nevertheless, the authors' efforts to analytically separate *imperial* cooperation and transfer from *national* exchanges and from other processes, such as globalization, modernization, and so on, seem mostly futile and counterproductive given the

sheer extent of cross-border connections and the interrelatedness of these processes. Similarly, it is difficult to understand the authors' preoccupation with isolating active collaboration from instances of one-sided emulation of other empires' colonial ideas and practices, the latter of which were doubtless at least as important in facilitating the development of shared colonial knowledges. The difficulty of upholding such distinctions becomes clear in the volume's empirical chapters.

The next chapter, by John M. MacKenzie, does an impressive job of placing late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imperial cooperation and transfer in a larger historical context. MacKenzie suggests that there was a "considerable rupture in the late eighteenth century," when fiercely competitive mercantilist empires, whose commercial rivalries were reinforced by religious conflicts, were superseded by "industrial" empires that were more internationally oriented and willing to cooperate (p. 36). Enlightenment ideas, such as universal, internationally practiced science and free market economics, blunted previous enmities. "There can be little doubt," MacKenzie asserts, "that whereas mercantile conflict was based on genuinely different world-views, religious and political, modern European imperialism had common intellectual origins" (p. 38). MacKenzie goes on to demonstrate that World War I brought about a sudden reversal of this wave of inter-imperial cooperation: "The really rich paradox about the modern period is that the most active time of such co-operation occurred in the decades before World War I, supposedly the time of intense imperial rivalries, while the retreat to a more nationalist approach occurred during the interwar years when we have allegedly moved into a time of experimental internationalism symbolized by the League of Nations" (p. 48). MacKenzie's macro-historical arguments clearly demonstrate the potential this volume holds for modifying our understanding of the course of global imperial history. A kind of second introduction to the book, this chapter would have provided a better initial gate-

way to the volume's subject than the more methodologically focused opening chapter.

After these broad introductory chapters come two important empirical chapters on transnational organizations for imperial cooperation. Ulrike Lindner's chapter fills a research hole by providing a much-needed history of the Institut Colonial International (ICI), one of the most significant examples of inter-imperial cooperation. Lindner skillfully places the founding of the ICI in a context of increasing international scientific collaboration and argues that transnational scientific discourses were a key means of creating colonial legitimacy. The title of the following chapter by Florian Wagner, "Private Colonialism and International Co-operation in Europe," makes one think of East India companies, but the chapter is in fact about nongovernmental associations that promoted colonialism. Wagner makes a strong case that these, rather than governments, were the key players in orchestrating inter-imperial exchange in Europe. Despite some unfortunate overlap with the previous chapter in its presentation of the ICI, this superb text covers much ground and makes an important contribution to the main arguments of the entire volume. Most notably, Wagner explains that for many contemporaries, colonial competition was believed to be a productive force that strengthened Europe as a whole and facilitated its (ostensible) common goal of spreading civilization, thereby making possible a blend of antagonism and cooperation that was not seen as contradictory by its agents.

The following two chapters cover legal exchanges. David Schorr demonstrates how French, British, and American laws and judgments on water rights circulated and intermixed in these countries' respective empires despite their diverging legal traditions. As Schorr indicates, however, this example of transnational or trans-imperial exchange had little or nothing to do with the discrepancies of power between colonizer and colonized, making this case study less relevant to the

book's theme than the others. The following chapter, by Alexander Morrison, describes how Russian colonial officials in Turkestan were more inclined to emulate British strategies for ruling Indian Muslims than studying more relevant local conditions, leading to an embarrassing rejection of their attempted British-style codification of shari'a law. Besides providing an amusing example of colonial ineptitude, Morrison demonstrates that Russia's "continental empire" was very much a part of the transnational colonial networks of the time.

Torsten Weber's subsequent chapter shifts the geographical focus farther east to look at relations between the Chinese and Japanese Empires in the decades following the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. Weber focuses on how mostly unofficial discourses of pan-Asian commonality emerged in both empires and, perhaps more interestingly, on how the Euro-American concepts of the Monroe Doctrine and "yellow peril" were emulated by Japan (the latter through a discourse of "white peril" with Europeans and Americans as a common enemy for all Asians) to assert its leadership over East Asia. The next chapter, by Daniel Brückenhau, provides readers with a fascinating look into the understudied world of anticolonial activists in Europe and colonial powers' countermeasures. Using three well-chosen case studies, Brückenhau skillfully illustrates how British, French, and even German authorities worked together to catch anticolonialists who had fled to other European countries. Protests by the metropolitan Left in many cases complicated this cooperation, however, by contesting infringements on asylum rights and national jurisdiction, often sheltering anticolonialists from prosecution.

The final section addresses colonial military exchange and cooperation. Susanne Kuss analyzes the role and relationship of France and Germany in one of the most well-known examples of colonial cooperation: the 1900-1 invasion of China by a multinational force from eight colonial powers

(the Boxer War). Kuss finds that the punitive expedition to Baoding that was dominated by French and German forces was in fact plagued by friction, mutual distrust, and persistent attempts to outmaneuver the other side. In the volume's closing chapter, Jonas Kreienbaum attempts to find empirical proof that the British in South Africa consciously adopted the counter-guerrilla technique of concentration camps from the Spanish, who invented it during their war in Cuba, and that either or both of these examples was emulated by military leaders in German South West Africa. While unable to conclusively prove British imitation of Spain, Kreienbaum demonstrates that developments in Cuba received extensive media coverage in the United Kingdom and were frequently compared to Britain's South African concentration camps. More tangible evidence of German copying of British camps is available, although Kreienbaum notes that concentration camps had a significantly different character and function in Germany's African colonial war.

This volume suffers from a certain lack of cohesion despite the strong common thematic focus of all of its chapters and would have greatly benefited from a conclusion. Concluding chapters are not in vogue these days, but the complicated and often ambiguous relationship between cooperation, competition, and emulation that the empirical chapters reveal strains the delimitations set forth in the introduction and raises important, broader questions that remain largely unanswered. A common analysis of these and similar cases offers the possibility for many exciting new interpretations of colonial history which will hopefully be taken up by future work.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, the individual contributions are of uniformly high quality and cover an impressive geographic scope. That so many of the authors have a background in German-language scholarship is also a strength of the work; taking German colonialism as the most frequent point of reference does much to illum-

nate the inter-imperial dynamics of the period. One of the foremost merits of this volume is that it continually problematizes colonial power relations. For a book mostly about elite colonial politics, it does an unusually good job of remaining aware of the suffering that colonialism inflicted upon the peoples it subjected around the world. Unlike many volumes on similar topics of colonial administration, it frequently reminds readers of the violence underpinning colonial rule, particularly in the chapters about concentration camps and the Boxer War. The agency of the colonized, whether they be Indian anticolonial propagandists circumventing British police or Central Asian Muslims rejecting Russian attempts to codify religious law, is also a recurring theme. Both in this approach and its main revisionist aim of problematizing the simple narrative of imperial competition, this book makes a significant contribution to the field of colonial history.

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