

REVIEWS Books and Other Publications

Kapoor, D(ed.) Against colonization and rural dispossession: Local resistance in South and East Asia, the Pacific and Africa. Zed Books, 368 pages, ISBN Paperback: 9781783609437, eBookPub: 9781783609451, eBookKindle: 9781783609475 Library Edition: 9781783609444

This book collection is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the impact of rural dispossession and exploitation of indigenous populations, farm workers and landless peasants in the Global South. While it explores and carefully interrogates the multiple ways in which this process is being enacted through political, social and economic forces driven by neoliberal policies stemming from policy frameworks established through the 'Washington consensus,' it also takes issue with bottom up notions of 'development' that have been orchestrated by apparently liberal and enlightened government agencies, think-tanks, NGOs and the like that seemed to have offered an alternative to the neoliberal juggernaut that has swept the globe since the Thatcher/Reagan years of the 1980s and 1990s. In this vein, the recent revelations surrounding Oxfam personnel (and those of other agencies such as UNICEF) being implicated in sex-trafficking in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake of 2010 poses difficult questions for those in the mainstream development business. Indeed, 'business' in this context seems to imply the reproduction of colonial relations of domination and exploitation.

Following two introductory chapters by Kapoor and Sockbeson that focus on respectively on: colonisation and rural dispossession; and indigenous resistance to colonial dispossession in North America, the book is divided into two sections. The first section is comprised of chapters on South and East Asia and the Pacific region and includes papers on: land sovereignty in Samoa; Indigenous Adivasi in India; landless peasants in Indonesia; 'fisher

resistance' in Tamil Nadu; and mining activism in Bangladesh. The second section of the book focuses on the 'African region' and explores similar struggles in South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and the Niger Delta. The geographical reach of the collection is, therefore, quite impressive, as is its diversity in exploring the multifaceted and diverse character of political struggles/resistance to the encroachment of capitalist social relations through neocolonial regimes of accumulation in the Global South.

While these chapters cover a great deal of ground, ranging from resistance to the Asian Development Bank's attempts to privatise land use in Samoa and the 'agro-extractive regime' of Indonesian Palm Oil, the guiding theoretical thread that runs across and organises them is an exploration of Harvey's (xxx) thesis of accumulation by dispossession or 'ABD.' However, Harvey's ABD thesis is not simply adapted and replicated in this volume, but is subject to a critical analysis that "acknowledge(s) the historical geographies of race and the coloniality of power" (p.23) that has been absent in much of the literature on "critical agrarian studies." This is not surprising given Marx's original analysis of 'primitive accumulation' from which Harvey's ABD is derived. Drawing on Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism*, Kapoor notes that although Marx thought all kinds of servitude and slavery were abhorrent, he nevertheless believed that the landless classes were without political agency in the modern world. A view, it should be noted, that Engels held of Irish migrants in his *The Condition of the English working Class in England* (1844).

This collection, therefore, is not only a welcome critique of the field of development studies and international relations as it has been constituted over the past half-century or more, but is also a welcome addition to the literatures on the sociology/anthropology of resistance, agrarian studies, indigenous research methods, and the politics of dispossession in the contemporary Global South. It is an indispensable read for scholars working in these areas, as it is for students who want an alternative analysis of prevailing notions of 'development' endemic to institutions such as the World Bank, IMF, some NGOs, and university think-tanks such as Sussex University's Institute of Development Studies or the Overseas Development Institute (UK).

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