

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEW PERSPECTIVES OR NEW EMPIRE? MIGRATION, COERCION AND NEW EMPIRE AS OBSTACLES AGAINST DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS

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Executive Summary

The overall intention of this chapter is to highlight the impact of the historical revolution in shaping the development of the New Empire. In particular, I relate the development of the New Empire to certain aspects of capitalism – namely, the authority of economic power elites in instrumentally controlling resources to the detriment of the overall common good. This chapter will include a case study focusing on the roles of infrastructure and educational and academic resources as new imperialistic forms. Moving forward, cooperation and collaboration in the formation of a supra-national organization that allows all individuals, regardless of specificity, to prosper and have their needs fulfilled is wanting. In pursuing this end, existing powers of governance must be challenged and subverted in the creation of a more egalitarian status quo that diffuses existing power hierarchies.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan, New Empire, Old Empire, Elites, Absolute Process, Migration, Academic Structures

Introduction

This chapter is theoretically situated within the seminal works of Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri, Peter Worsley and Pheng Cheah on modern imperialism in addition to the integrative structures of power in cosmopolitan modernity (Hardt & Negri, 2001, Worsley 1964, Cheah 2006). I proceed in my analysis to the coercive character of migration¹ (Guattari & Deleuze, 2008, p. 420) within academia to show the influence of the New Empire in the development and transmogrification of national cultures. Unlike Hardt & Negri, who consider migration to be the revolutionary potential of the multitudes as imperial subjects, I argue that the New Empire is in fact a *structure of seduction* grounded in certain nodes in the accumulation of *resources* (or “capital” in the Bourdieusian conceptualization of the term) as opposed to *capital* (in the Marxist conceptualization of the term). In this paper, the New Empire can be understood as places of capitalist accumulation² (p. 396) whereby migration does not necessarily represent the revolutionary potential against the New Empire, but is on the contrary the main instrument of the New Empire in perpetuating, regenerating, and reproducing its power and authority. This is exactly the mechanism through which the condition of underdevelopment has generated imperial structures. Therefore, the following analysis explores the ways of coagulation of new imperial powers, structures and networks in the academic subculture. This paper is largely inspired by the migration of scholars and scientists from Romania to America and Western Europe.

The “New Empire” in the form of capital, according to Negri & Hardt, is a regenerative self-organising and auto-poetical system³ (Luhmann, 2001, p. 101), which reveals the expansive ontology of an unbounded political “being” transcending and eluding boundaries such as nation, ethnicity and territory: “Capital on the contrary, operates on the plane of *immanence*, through relays and networks of relationships of domination, without reliance on a transcendent centre of power. Historically, it has destroyed traditional social boundaries, expanding across territories and enveloping always new populations within its processes” (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 326). The New Empire articulates itself within the frameworks of hyper-mobility, hyper-communication and seductive political and ethical values (such as democracy, economical wealth, freedom, or equity).

To be sure, “New Empire” refers to a global world integrated and interconnected not by conquests (as was the case in the pre-modern empires or in the colonial world), but convinced, seduced, and tempted

into adopting specific normative and normalizing value systems situated hierarchically whereby these specific value systems are taken as “superior”, “successful”, and “desirable”, whilst all other value systems become delegitimized and taken as its antithesis (i.e. “inferior”, “unsuccessful”, “undesirable”, “backward”). In other words, this “superior” value system becomes de-politicized. The agents of such value systems are typically the local power elites, who play a central role in the articulation of imperial power in both Old and New Empires (Hall, 2012, p. 306). While in the Old Empire elites were educated within the centres of power of the Empire (which in classical imperial forms are typically a conglomerate of economical, academic, political, social and symbolic aspects), the New Empire requires, in its global amplitude, to separate, specify and specialize structures of education in the formation of new elites. There are often different centres of economic, political, and academic excellence, which form specialised elites to assure in their integrative cooperation and networking the required holistic competence to incur “common” values, ethics and morality. In this very way it articulates, preserves and exercises power.

While elites unify both forms of imperial orders, these are, however, differentiated by the *structural formation* of these elites: the Old Empire is unified mostly by economic, military, social and political elites, while the New Empire gets its power and coercion through common values. We have for example, the American democracy, the Anglo-Saxon “Commonwealth”, the European Union, the seductive “American way of life”, with all of them at times assuming the character of an imperial proliferation in the form of seduction via the promotion of values as opposed to colonial imposition via brute force. (The force is in this case only an adjacent political option/possibility, not the basic element of modern imperial proliferation).

The similarity between the old classical and the new form of Empire resides in the polarisation between the metropolitan cores of “civilization” on the one side, versus the peripheral “to-be-civilized” areas on the other side. Empires do not need firm borders. They act, in the classical way, on the principle of military bases in foreign territories as points of irradiation of authority and power in the “uncivilized”, colonized, controlled world (e.g. the Roman Empire [100 BC – 400 AD] or the Ottoman Empire [1299 - 1453] and the contemporary Russian State), bringing “civilisation” *ad barbarous* through influence and power. This process is legitimated through the promotion of their ethical value system, which is presumed to be “civilized”. On the other hand, this unequal relation of power plays out

in distinct ways in the New Empires through *seduction*, such as the Roman Empire or the Byzantine Empire [5th century AD - 1453] or as the contemporary US continues to do today.

The difference between both imperial orders is that the New Empire is not bounded by essential categories or entities like “people”, “land”, “territory”, or “multinationalism”, but instead reveals itself as an *absolute process, movement and irradiation*, creating multiple “centres” of irradiating value systems: multiple values, multiple subcultures, and multiple centres. The major vehicle in the promotion of these values is through language. It is for this reason that language courses are the first major step in the enculturation, assimilation, and education of new students. The resource of language courses initiates its efficiency even in the countries extending beyond the imperial core. Persons of the periphery do not necessarily need to be present in the imperial core to get included/seduced by its value system; it suffices to learn English, German, or French in some cultural institute in their own countries.

Such systems emerge, subsist and change throughout history. Their importance resides not in themselves as such, in an essentialist way of thinking, but rather, on the one hand, in the modus of how people relate to them, and, on the other hand, how these orders succeed in integrating allogenic cultural systems. They have power so long as people believe that they do – so long as people continue to positively value their beliefs while devaluing opposing heterodox beliefs. This power hierarchy becomes reified, legitimized and continually reinforced. Power does not exclusively reside in the centre. It permeates and extends diffusely across borders worldwide. Power, in this understanding, is not a *thing* that can be held per se, but rather a form of seduction, integration, networking, and subliminal coercion that can have tangible consequences in the real world. By “subliminal coercion” I refer to a persuasive form of conviction that reinforces a particular mode of thinking that compels you to think and act in certain ways, though does not force you.

New imperial power articulates itself as the *information* that shapes how peripheral agents relate themselves to the centre and also how they come to understand themselves in this relationship whereby the periphery is seduced by the centre into adopting particular kinds of reforms in order to be positively valued. This process resides in forms of networking, and in the dynamics of their connection, communication, relation and interaction. As Paul Cilliers has argued:

[T]he notion ‘meaning’ can be used to indicate the identity of the system. Thus, the identity of a person or an institution is the result of constrained differences. Identity is an emergent property resulting from the diversity in the system, and not something which exists in an a priori fashion. [...] The relations constituting the system are not random or chaotic, they are structured. The complexity of the system is not simply a function of the interactions between many components, but of their organisation. The fact that some form of structure is necessary does not imply that the organisation of a system is ever static or complete, even if the organisation was initially determined from the outside. The play of difference leads to constant transformation of the relationships of the system” (2010, p. 13-15). Complexity needs to be meaningful and therefore requires self-organisation (Cilliers, 1998).

The need for order fosters the need for structure, which in turn fosters the need for authority. All mutually reinforce one another.

Classical imperial forms are structured by a system described as a hub-and-spoke model without a rim (Barkey, 2009, p. 9; Eisenstadt, 1963; Doyle, 1986; Motyl, 2001), which means that the networks between the hubs themselves are indirect and provided by the centre. This model becomes relative in the new imperial forms because the political control disappears. The agents and networks of the New Empire are directly connected to the centre as well as each other without the intermediation of some political centre. This means that the classical hierarchies become relative. New hierarchies, differentiated by meaning and goals, by interests and intentions, replace them. The economic centres differ in the New Empire, from academic to cultural centres.

The New Empire reveals itself as a multi-core structure with multiple centres, possessing the same functions of the old “classical” capital of the Old Empire: to articulate and organise power and authority in interconnected and interrelated forms. New imperial forms are “multiplicities of flexible arrangements, networked structures, institutional mixes, the layering of old and new, winners and losers in the [...]”⁴structures, the negotiated arrangements in different domains, and structural and symbolic sites of agreement and contention” (Barkey 2009, p. 24). The difference is that New Empires compensate for their absence of political sovereignty over peripheral subjected regions/provinces through the centralisation of power through specialized networks: economic, academic, cultural, and life-style networks.

Additionally, unlike the “Old” Empire (i.e. classical imperial forms), the

mobility of masses, cultural transfer, and the diffusion of knowledge are the constitutive factors of the New Empire. Mobility and global perspectives on mobility create, according to Hardt and Negri, a new political category of the “multitude” as a political subject of the New Empire (Sassen, 2004, p. 177). Mobility oscillates *towards* and *from* the metropolitan core, both directions being in fact ways to bring civilization *ad barbarous* or – reciprocally – educating the “barbarians” both at home and within the “civilization” metropolitan core. The idea of the civilizing task of the Empire is the central pattern both in the Old and New Empires (Barkey, 2009, p.13).

It is for this reason that migration should not be understood exclusively as a movement towards something or back from it, but a universe, a sphere, a dimension of concomitant exchange of persons and know-how, including exchange programs, scholarships and so on. In fact, Empire is simultaneously nowhere – if this “nowhere” is understood as a geographical location – and everywhere – in the people themselves as *loci* of values, dreams, and desires (Bull 2004, p. 222). Desire is not the revolutionary *movens* of the multitudes to blow modern forms of domination (Hardt & Negri, 2001, p. 49). On the contrary; it represents the seductive dreams of Utopia created by imperial centres in peripheries in order to attract them. That is why the New Empire seduces its subjects instead of conquering them. That is why the New Empire is in fact not a relocation, but a replacement – of people and values concomitantly. The New Empire exports values to the periphery and uses people as vehicles in the promotion of these values. Geographical mobility and “translation” are but the most visible aspects, while “replacement” (Karen Barkey calls it “placeness”) is used discreetly and insidiously, and is therefore the most effective tool in the promulgation of the New Empire (Sassen, 2004, p.177).

The same process can be observed in the academic world, which establishes mobility as a subliminal coercion *to* civilization, wealth and humanity. The new imperial order identifies and builds – through financial management and investment – centres/cores of academic civilization: the elite American universities, Berlin as the Seat of Humboldt University, and even all of Germany as an area of blooming and flourishing academic traditions, culture, and hegemony. Germany for instance – whose purpose is to be a “*Bildungsnation*” (nation of education) according to Chancellor Angela Merkel – thus becomes the desirable target of migration flows in the academic field.

These cores of “academic civilization” are, so to speak, a “must have” for anyone who aspires toward an academic, scholarly or scientific career. For example, Romanian scholars who completed their Ph.D. in Germany or in the USA have much better chances of becoming professors or attaining good positions when they return to their homeland. In the same way, the interest of the founding institutions of the “civilized world” is to send back “completely educated” personnel. As I applied myself a few years ago for a scholarship at one of the Church institutions in Germany, the two arguments for the denial of my grant were the following: first, I already had the possibility of completing a Ph.D. in Theology in Romania; and second, I could not assure them that I would go back to Romania after finishing my dissertation.

Such things show that the new imperial logic of modern Western civilization has – like the classical one – no clear frontiers, no borders, but only spheres of irradiation. There are different cores in relation to the subculture they organise: academic, economic, cultural, as well as sportive. The modern/new imperial forms are in fact *imperial networks* – structures of entangled power, of permanent negotiation of influence. Economic centres can, but do not have to, coincide with the academic centres (for example New York City or Princeton). Hence, Romania, compared to – let us say – Princeton and Berlin, is a peripheral academic *pars barbarica* (with an underdeveloped defective infrastructure, corruption, underpaid personnel, etc.). Yet compared with other “peripheries”, for instance with the Republic of Moldavia or with some Arabic or African countries, Romania becomes a desirable and attractive centre for students who see it as a trampoline toward the centre of the “civilized” world, such as Western Europe, USA, and Canada.

Another modus of imperial seduction’s proliferation are, for instance, new universities in the Arabic world, such as the “Georgetown University of Qatar”, the “Paris-Sorbonne-University” or “New York University” of Abu-Dhabi. They seek to improve their attractiveness through allusions to consecrated academic “powers”. The New Empire exports structures and brands like “Sorbonne”, “New York”, increasing the complexity of the phenomenon. The New Empire shows its seduction through the transplantation of academic structures and institutions, and, of course, of the values embedded within them. We do not have only the name “Sorbonne” in Abu-Dhabi, but also the European value system, which is made from the international brand of Sorbonne. While such academic reputations required centuries to develop in Europe or North America, the newcomers seem to be like a creation *ex nihilo*, lacking of course the

intrinsic *longue durée* processes, which led to the crystallization of academic cores in the Western world.

It is in this way that the academic world is shaped as a levelled structure of irradiation. Its seduction gives it global power and control over different parts of the world through condescending semantics such as the “Third World”, which infers a narrative of (European) superiority in contradistinction to the barbarian inferiority beyond European borders (Worsley 1964, p. 6). The structures of power are most clearly visible where privileged persons articulate and reinforce their authority through the affirmation of the status quo by reifying the power hierarchy that distinguishes between what is “desirable” and “undesirable”, “First world” and “Third world”, “civilized” and “uncivilized”. As stated by Homi Bhabha:

The work of the word impedes the question of the transparent assimilation of cross-cultural meanings in a unitary sign of ‘human’ culture. In-between culture, at the point of its articulation of identity or distinctiveness, comes the question of signification. This is not simply a matter of language; it is the question of culture’s *representation of difference* [MDG]...” (1994, p. 178).

Bhabha continues, in reference to the Empire:

These moments of undesirability must not be seen merely as contradictions on the idea or ideology of empire. They do not effect a symptomatic repression of domination or desire that will eventually either be sibilated or will endlessly circulate in the dereliction of an identificatory narrative. Such enunciations of culture’s colonial difference are closer in spirit to what Foucault has sketchily, but suggestively, described as the material repeatability of the statement. As I understand the concept – and this is my tendentious reconstruction – it is an insistence on the *surface of emergence* as it structures the present of its enunciation: the historical caught outside the hermeneutic of historicism; meaning grasped not in relation to some un-said or polysemy, but in its production of *an authority to differentiate* (Bhabha 1994, p. 186).

This is why scholars are determined to migrate and finish their education in traditional and renowned academic centres – to improve their chances of acceptance and acquire recognition through the “quality” of these institutions relative to non-traditional academic centres. Academic quality is a construct grounded in hierarchical and hegemonic definitions of what is good, adequate, proper, scientific, scholarly, etc. Therefore, migration is established as a form of coercion and not necessarily a sign of absolute

freedom. The right to free movement can also be a *dissimulation of power and control*. People who are in fact constrained by the requirements of their career are realizing paradoxically that they are necessarily coerced in the fulfilment of their own dreams. Very different from German students, Romanian students, for instance, must complete a check-list of fulfilments that regulate their lives; they must decide whether to graduate with a ‘strong’ diploma or to live with lesser professional chances in their homelands (where they must leave behind their family, their friends, and their traditions). To be forced into making such a difficult decision – to have to choose between economic success and living a dignified and familiar life, is necessarily coercive.

It is through desire that the mechanism of the new imperial centres maintain their attractiveness – because nobody guarantees that the young student going to Germany to graduate and pursue his Ph.D. will succeed in funding it, in finishing it, in finding a “proper job” after graduation, and, of course, in entering academia as a tenured professor. In fact, such risks and unknown variables feed this desire. These hurdles and the possibility of fiasco paradoxically maintain the mirage of better chances, better positions, and better qualifications. They are paradoxically the *movens* of academic migration: “the significance of the act of movement comes from its capacity to connect with a Utopian otherness” (Bull 2004, p. 223). One of the main rationales for the existence of classical Empires was undoubtedly the exploitation of material resources of the periphery for their transformation into symbolic, economic or cultural resources for the metropolitan core. The classical exploitation of resources in the New Empire continues to persist, but the emphasis lies on the utilisation of resources in the creation of distinct spheres of welfare, the promotion and reinforcement of particular lifestyles, and economic and political seduction (structures of attractiveness or satisfaction).

The critical question is whether these processes are forms of “governance” (Michel Foucault), whether they are conscientiously used to create dependence, authority, control, and power, or whether they were the bare result of pure dynamics, of auto-poetic processes as Niklas Luhmann would say. The new paradigm of analysis on imperial forms turns away from the classical social historical perspective toward a cultural micro-historical analysis of organisational development and institutional adaptation, reforms, and reproduction; an imperial dimension must perform in order to survive. “I argue that our historical analysis has to take temporal processes more seriously and must analyse the manner in which institutions are shaped by historical processes and persist over time, or

change in subtle, if not striking, ways. Therefore, I want to suggest, first, that we look at empire as a set of slow-moving, temporally based, entrenched, yet also changing political formations that need to be studied to understand how they change, adapt, and move on to maintain themselves, partly through reproduction and partly through innovation of their institutional structures” (Barkey, 2008, p. 5).

The classical Aristotelian *poiesis* was an intended, volitional, pragmatic process of creation of different products, arts, techniques and technologies in order to surmount difficulties of human existence and community. The *autopoiesis* of systems and subsystems, as Niklas Luhmann says, is a pure process of communication, with internal logics of proliferation and reproductiveness, which are, most of the time, out of any possibility to control (see above). The human attempt of taking control of the political system is an attempt to create regulated procedures of decision (“*Verfahren*”) (Luhmann 1969, p. 28 & p. 32).

These kinds of firm regulations are rather a Utopia, because, as we have seen in numerous political crises – procedures are changeable, negotiable, and dependent upon human existence and history. They are, after all, contingent and ephemeral. We cannot speak in this sense about a single brain, a single will, a single instance of power controlling and influencing history and human existence; we must disappoint the adepts of certain conspiracy theories. History flows unpredictably and the only thing we can learn from it is that there is always a little butterfly somewhere to unleash a storm five thousand miles away. Unpredictability does infer “lawlessness”. Of course there are complex relations of causality, just like between the butterfly and the storm five thousand miles away. Only we do not possess the skills or the mechanisms to calculate or predict such complexity. This makes history ‘unpredictable’ and difficult to control. The chronic Euro crisis and the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan show us that, if local or regional governmentality is so complex, then the global governmentality could be but a dream, a phantasm.

New Empire generates recognition, superiority, validity, and *honour* and *prestige* in order to prevail and exert influence over similar systems of other entities. Such structures or evaluations cause and encourage mobility. Once specific and minor political, economic, educational, life-style forms get recognised as being attractive, ‘good’, ‘better’, ‘superior’, etc. and become expected standards, such evaluations – to take over the terminology of Charles Taylor (1992, p. 93) – constitute themselves as a symbolic capital form which is, in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu,

exchangeable and *translatable* in other capital forms – for instance in power (Bourdieu, 1983).

Regarding the opposition between *critique* and *government*, Michel Foucault argues that:

The critical attitude as a virtue in general [...] at once partner and adversary of the arts of governing, as a way of suspecting them, of challenging them, of limiting them, of finding their right measure, of transforming them, of seeking them to escape these arts of governing or, in any case, to displace them, as an essential reluctance [...] at once a moral and political attitude, a way of thinking, and so forth, and which I will simply call the art of not being governed, or the art of not being governed like that and at that price. And I would thus propose this general characterization as a rather preliminary definition of critique: *the art of not being governed so much [MDG]*. [...] The essential function of critique would be that of desubjectification in the game of what one could call, in a word, the politics of truth (1996, p. 383-386).

I would respond to Foucault that critique is a revolutionary form of power that replaces something with something else; it is government itself. The act of government presumes subjects, intention, consciousness, will, premeditation, and reflection, and all these properties also fit the critique as defined by Foucault. But all this is Hegelian, Marxist, and in the case of Michel Foucault, neo-Marxist, meaning that everything in history is *necessary*. I think, on the contrary, that history is pure process without any programmatic or controllable necessity and can only be partially governed. History cannot be understood nor predicted. As Machiavelli recognised in the 16th century, governance is prediction. But history showed him once and continues to show us how unpredictable everything is (Grigore, 2015, p. 317, 323).

Conclusion

The New Empire continues to exist not because people or organisations plan it; it exists because people need to communicate with each other. Migration allows for interconnection within the world, with the promise of prosperity and welfare. Without access to the cores of civilisation, you are effectively excluded. You either get there yourself or you try to bring them to you, but, either way, you need them. Coercion resides within this reliance upon the core by the periphery. Such processes create valuations/evaluations/selection, hierarchies and power. The silver lining is that the New Empire does not forever have to exist as a European and

Eurocentric form. This will likely change, for history is not a causal chain (or at least it cannot be proven to be so). History eludes (*entzieht sich*) any governance. As Foucault put it, history *is not governed too much*. It is, instead, the greatest critic of governance of all.

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Notes

¹ I understand “migration” as a different category to “nomadism”. I apply the differentiation made by Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari for whom migration is characterized by the specific geographic and cultural goal of the migrant, while nomadism’s goal is the movement itself: “Where the migrant leaves behind a milieu that has become amorphous or hostile, the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart [...]. If the nomad can be called the territorialized par excellence, it is precisely because there is no territorialization afterward as with the migrant or upon something else as with the sedentary” (Deleuze & Guattari 2008, p. 420f).

² “The constitution of the multitude appears first as a spatial movement that constitutes the multitude in limitless place. The mobility of commodities, and thus of that special commodity that is labour power, has been presented by capitalism ever since its birth as the fundamental condition of accumulation. The kinds of movement of individuals, groups, and populations that we find today in Empire, however, cannot be completely subjugated to the laws of the capitalist

accumulation...” (Hardt & Negri 2001, p. 396f).

³ “Self-Organisation” (*Selbstorganisation*) is after Niklas Luhmann the capacity of a system to create structures due to own (internal and not external) operations. The “autopoiesis” (*Autopoiesis*) would be in this sense the barometer of self-organisation, the process determining the present situation (*Zustand*) as basis of further efficient operations.

⁴ In the original text is the term “governance structures”. The reason I have removed it in the quotation will become clear following the last paragraphs of this essay. Anticipating these findings, we can say: the New Empire is not a form of governance, but a pure process of auto-poiesis and reproduction of power.