

tionalism in order to serve that purpose or to avoid Russia's influence in the region. Moreover, unconditional *jus soli* as an element of territorial nationalism may create grievances in the public. In this sense, the author seems to attribute too much importance to territorial nationalism as a solution to ethnic tensions in the region.

Overall, the book provides comprehensive information on the formation of citizenship policies in three post-Soviet states and makes important theoretical contributions through its own interpretation of the history of nationalism. It is an important resource for scholars interested in nationalism, citizenship studies, and the post-Soviet region.

---

## The Imperial Discipline: Race and the Founding of International Relations

---

By Alexander E. Davis, Vineet Thakur, and Peter Vale  
London: Pluto Press, 2020, 197 pages, \$19.99 [paperback], ISBN: 9780745340623

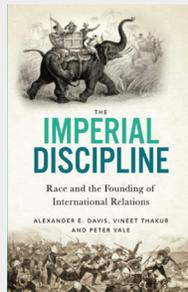
---

Reviewed by Abhishek Choudhary, University of Delhi

---

*The Imperial Discipline* challenges the accepted origin of the discipline of International Relations (IR). Authors Davis, Thakur, and Vale focus on 'Round Table' society, i.e., the network formed by the British imperial societies of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, and India, in tracing the actual origin of the discipline. In doing so, they uncover unexplored archives to assert that race played a major role in the founding of the discipline. Tracing the journey of the Round Table across continents, *The Imperial Discipline* moves beyond the unquestioned Eurocentric origin of the discipline. The authors argue that it was the efforts of the Round Table network that in fact led to the establishment of the discipline of International Relations (IR) as we know it.

While the Round Table aimed at achieving a more efficient imperial governance and sought to place the empire in a position of controlling world affairs, it eventually led to placing the Global South in an important po-



sition in the founding of IR. It was in this period that IR scholarship became intertwined with imperial racial thought. The first chapter details the role of Lionel Curtis in propagating the 'scientific method of the Round Table' (p. 20). The launch of the eponymous journal, *The Round Table*, initially sought to further imperial ambitions but eventually began to focus more on international issues during the inter-war period. The chapter locates the ways in which knowledge was produced and the manner in which the key players around the Round Table disseminated the imagination of 'the international' intertwined with the notion of the Commonwealth. The second chapter engages with the proliferation of the Round Table network into Canada. Curtis' role remained central in that the Canadian Institute of International Affairs could be viewed as the beginning of IR in Canada. Despite the shortcomings of imperial IR due to the diversity of views among the major institutional actors, the Canadian internation-

alist vision reflected some traits of Curtis' vision' to 'control and maintain world affairs' (p. 59).

The third chapter engages with the development of international thought in Australia. Locating the genesis of the discipline of IR in colonial history, the chapter engages with the role of the Round Table and the establishment of the Australian Institute of International Affairs. Curtis' arrival in 1910 and his efforts to concretize the ideas of the Round Table eventually found success and led to the foundation of a 'white Australian IR' that started to prioritize the study of East Asia (p. 80). The overall vision of the Round Table, despite some alterations, remained intact: the desire to keep the empire together. The fourth chapter focuses on South Africa. It provides a detailed analysis of the role of Jan Smuts in the founding of a specific kind of IR related to the enmeshment of race with IR thought. It reflected the 'tradition of the Curtis Method' and was manifested in the rise of Apartheid and racial segregation along with the 'claim of impartiality' (p. 98). The fifth chapter on New Zealand situates the island country in the tradition of the Round Table. Race again features as a 'crucial part' of New Zealand's 'external relations' (p. 104). The chapter discusses the relationship between the indigenous Maoris and the white colonizers. The founding of the New Zealand Institute of International Affairs and its links with the Institute of Pacific Relations solidified the connection between domestic race relations and the broader international affairs of the country. The Curtis Model was not easy to implement in New Zealand, and its international imagination rested on the idea of being a 'kinder imperial overseer than Australia' (p. 119).

The sixth chapter, on India, situates the general inability of the Indian Institute of Inter-

national Affairs (IIIA) to fulfill its mission or to implement the Curtis Model. It then engages with the emergence of the Indian Council of World Affairs, based on the Institute of Pacific Relations, and the struggle that ensued with the IIIA over legitimacy (p. 132). The clashes were exacerbated by the existent political rivalries driven by colonial attachments and anti-colonial nationalism. The concluding chapter seeks to bring together the 'loose narrative strands' of the five countries, which are woven through the common thread of the Round Table (p. 141). It reiterates the role of the complex colonial interactions that led to the emergence of the interconnected, yet differentiated and global nature of the discipline.

*The Imperial Discipline* provides an analysis of the spaces created for imagining the international along with the role of the Round Table, as well as the establishment of institutes and journals that engaged with a vision of the international. Its effort to decolonize IR by challenging 'Eurocentric historiographies' is remarkable (p. 147). The book follows an interesting, story-telling approach that makes it an easy read, despite being a serious academic intervention with extensive use of archives. The reader is able to relate to the main protagonists and other relevant 'characters' in the story of the emergence of the discipline.

The book provides a much-needed disruption in the discipline of IR, whose hegemonic nature too often goes unnoticed and unchallenged. The authors have engaged in strong archival research to uncover the progression of internationalist visions through the Round Table network. The authors seek to decolonize IR by bringing in non-Eurocentric perspectives and visions. The book provides fodder for researchers interested in problematizing

and retheorizing the ‘International.’ It will be of great interest to scholars and practitioners of IR, especially those seeking to question the

epistemological foundations of the discipline and challenge the normalized vision of the international.

---

## Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective

---

*Edited by Jocelyne Cesari and José Casanova*

New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, 309 pages, \$28.95, ISBN: 9780198788553

---

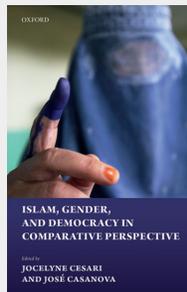
*Reviewed by Ravza Altuntaş Çakır, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University*

---

Gender and democratization are among the topics in which the notion of ‘Islamic exceptionalism’ appears to be most evident. Exceptionalism here implies an intrinsic quality in ‘Islamic’ culture that prevents women’s emancipation and gender equality. The edited volume, *Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective*, succeeds in disproving the assumptions of exceptionalism. A universal approach does not exist for the development of women’s rights. The contributors to this volume aptly demonstrate that the relationship between religion, secularism, democracy, and gender is multifaceted, not only in the Muslim world but globally.

The editors, Jocelyne Cesari and José Casanova divide the volume into two conceptual parts. The first looks at religion, gender, state, law, and democracy through diverse disciplinary perspectives such as sociology, history, law, and political science. Part two consists of case studies of different Muslim examples, both in terms of women’s rights policies and the contextualized responses of social actors, Islamic and secular alike, to the question of gender.

A central theme of the edited volume is the diverse correlation between democratization



and women’s rights in Muslim national settings, as elsewhere in the world. José Casanova (Chapter 2) and Joan W. Scott (Chapter 3) look at the intersection of women’s rights concerning secularism and democratization in the Catholic world and present critical insights with comparative significance for Muslim contexts. Casanova argues that during the third wave of democratization, issues of gender, such as abortion and same-sex marriage, did not play a determining role. He problematizes the correlation between democracy and secularism and the oversimplifications produced by this connection regarding women’s rights. Scott questions the secularization thesis by showing that secularization did not necessarily go hand in hand with the extension of women’s rights in France, where laicism maintained a misogynistic character until the mid-twentieth century. Scott finds *l'affaire du foulard* to be not an issue of women’s emancipation, but a ‘civilizing mission’ in disguise, driven by laicism that has never accorded gender equality a primary position (p. 74).

*Islam, Gender, and Democracy in Comparative Perspective* contains contributions showing the miscellaneous and contested nature