

perspectives may have limited their on-the-ground approaches and perception of local communities would have been welcomed.

For the most part, Muschik is extremely effective in revealing the hands-on role that the UN leadership played in processes of decolonization. For example, the chapter on Bolivia brilliantly addresses the difficult domestic context and the diplomatic tensions that the Secretariat officials weathered, as they sought to introduce development and technical officials to the country during an economic crisis. The chapters on Congo, Libya and Somalia might have benefited from the same level of political analysis and external reflection in order to demonstrate fully the complicated circumstances that the UN Secretariat had to navigate in the newly independent nations.

Furthermore, the book includes some fascinating quotes that reveal the internal motivations and emotions of UN officials—a wonderful insight for scholars of the organization. Unfortunately, these are not always contextualized in the larger patterns of paternalism, racism and technocratic superiority that existed within the UN Secretariat. As such, while Muschik focuses on western liberal internationalists, her work points to the need for additional scholarship on other epistemic communities and that explores the experiences of non-western UN field-based staff including translators, development experts, economists, security personnel, drivers and others. Extending the research to include their perspectives will enable us to fully understand the heterogeneity of the ‘United Nations’ and its evolution during decolonization. This will hopefully uncover the organizational paradoxes and hypocrisies, as well as the broader knowledge communities that international organizations such as the UN have established. Ultimately, Muschik has written an ambitious book in its chronological, geographic and thematic scope, offering one perspective on the vast scale of UN interventions across the global South during the era of decolonization.

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**Settling for less: why states colonize and why they stop.** By **Lachlan McNamee**. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 2023. 256pp. £100.00. ISBN 978 0 69123 780 0. Available as e-book.

Examples of how settler colonialism seeks to erase native societies can be found across the globe. Its appeal is evident in India’s ongoing efforts to dilute the Indigenous demographic make-up of Kashmir; in the way Sweden’s policy of extractivism interrupts the Indigenous Sami population’s material and spiritual claims to their land; and in the way Turkish nationalist iconography in cities in southeastern Turkey adamantly deny the existence of the Indigenous Kurdish community. Hence, it makes sense that, in *Settling for less*, Lachlan McNamee does not limit the analysis to the traditional European (settler) colonial state. The book spans across diverse geographies and political contexts, including states ostensibly devoted to decolonization as well as those ‘ideologically committed to colonization’ (p. 3). McNamee asks, ‘when and why do states engage in colonization?’ and the book

adds nuance to the study of settler colonialism and the ways in which colonial states control and manage Indigenous lands (p. 6).

The author rightly points to how Patrick Wolfe's 'logic of elimination' has had a foundational impact on settler colonial studies, to the extent that it is often considered the 'obligatory point of departure' for any historiography of settler colonial politics (see Wolfe's 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research* 8: 4, 2006). According to Wolfe, this logic refers to the way the establishment of the settler society is premised on the demise of the Indigenous community. In the book, McNamee seeks to displace this logic of elimination, arguing that it overpredicts the occurrence of elimination and it under-accounts the costs that such efforts incur for the settler state (p. 57). Thus, McNamee proposes that the 'central error' of the logic of elimination is that it does not distinguish between the settler and the (settler) state (p. 98). While the urge to eliminate may originate with the settler, it rarely happened at the behest of the settler state. In fact, the elimination that the settlers instigated was often at odds with the interests of the metropole, which considered the accompanying violence, conflict and displacement (of labour) to be an ineffectual 'strategy of economic exploitation' (p. 57). Therefore, McNamee concludes, settler colonialism 'is always the exception and never the rule' (p. 57).

It is indeed worthwhile to examine the ways in which the interests and the priorities of the metropole and the settler converge and diverge. But even if settlers often spearheaded mass elimination 'in explicit contravention of metropolitan authority', does that mean that the settler state was foundationally averse to the logic of elimination (p. 12)? The settler state may deem the manner of elimination perpetrated by the settler to be detrimental to economic exploitation. But is this perception entirely incompatible with the settler state remaining committed to the core logic of elimination? For instance, the state's propensity for mass elimination is well evidenced in the historical accounts of the Palestinian *nakba* [catastrophe] that reveal a concerted effort to 'de-Palestinize' the landscape of the 'Holy Land' and materialize the myth that the Israeli state was established on land 'without a [Palestinian] people' (see Ahmad H. Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod's *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2007). In this context, the coexistence of the ideological commitment to the logic of elimination and what McNamee proposes as the settler state's aversion to anti-economic violence should be explored further.

Of course, much of the book focuses on the metropole's acquisition, control and governance of frontier lands. But how do other manners of subjugation feature in the makings and workings of colonization? Here, Frantz Fanon has demonstrated that colonialism entailed more than the material exploitation of the colonized. It also involved a form of spiritual colonization that sought to disentangle the colonized from their sense of self, making decolonization a long and laboured affair (see Somdeep Sen's *Decolonizing Palestine*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020; reviewed in *International Affairs* 98: 4, July 2022). How does this other manner of subjugation, which does not ostensibly contribute to a form of economic

exploitation, influence when and why states decided to colonize? Finally, the book prompts the question of agency when it comes to the Indigenous communities. Critics have noted that there is a certain inevitability associated with Wolfe's logic of elimination, which overlooks the ways in which the Indigenous populations resisted the state's efforts to erase them (see Max Ajl's 'Logics of elimination and settler colonialism', *Middle East Critique* 32: 2, 2023). Thus, the role of Indigenous, anti-colonial activism remains unclear, and future research could explore how it shapes the nature, timing, extent and limits of the colonial endeavour.

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## **Governance, law and ethics**

### **Hypocrisy and human rights: resisting accountability for mass atrocities.**

**By Kate Cronin-Furman.** Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. 2022. 180pp. £112.00. ISBN 978 1 50176 357 1. Available as e-book.

No state has a perfect human rights record. But what often distinguishes repressive states from their more liberal counterparts are the steps that the latter take towards accountability in the years after mass atrocities are committed. This leaves us with the question of how repressive states respond to calls for international justice. Is traditional advocacy messaging ineffective in these contexts? In *Hypocrisy and human rights*, Kate Cronin-Furman answers these questions with nuance and precision, arguing that such calls for justice often do not work. Instead, they frequently have the opposite effect, with governments doing 'just enough' to appease their detractors, while at the same time continuing with—or even accelerating—their repressive laws and policies (pp. 1–4 and 77–94). Thus, Cronin-Furman urges international human rights advocates, United Nations officials and even other governments to find alternatives and to adopt more indirect forms of advocacy (pp. 94–110). With a focus on responses to mass atrocities, the author argues that governments often struggle to maintain a balance between rebuilding friendly relations with the international community and ensuring domestic survival with the support of 'pro-violation constituencies' (p. 20).

In Egypt, for example, Cronin-Furman discusses one example of 'quasi-compliance'—the term the author uses for the 'just enough' approach to justice (pp. 19–20). Referring to the arrest of Egyptian human rights advocates in late 2020, the author describes a situation of initial international outrage against their detention. Yet, despite some gains towards justice, as the advocates were released, there was no accountability for what many saw as unlawful arrests. The arrested individuals still had their assets frozen and, today, they remain subject to travel bans. According to Cronin-Furman, there is credible evidence to suggest that the Egyptian government continues with this repressive policy (pp. 13–14). However, simply releasing the human rights advocates was enough to divert the attention of the international community.