

**Stefan Berger, Thomas Fetzer (ed.), Nationalism and the Economy. Explorations into a Neglected Relationship, Budapest (Central European University Press) 2019, VIII–313 p., 2 fig., 3 tabl., ISBN 978-963-386-198-1, EUR 56,00.**

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Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, »nationalism« has become a growth industry in academia: the last thirty years, historians and social scientists have not only published extensively on different aspects of »nations and nationalism«, but also have developed new approaches and methodologies, as constructivism or »banal nationalism«. There is a blind spot in nationalism research however: »economic nationalism« or, more general, the link between nationalism and the economy.

This book, a collection of thirteen essays and an introductory chapter wants to fill this gap. After the introduction, both editors give a state of the art of historical research (Stefan Berger) and political economy research (Thomas Fetzer) on the link between nationalism and the economy. They argue that this nexus has to be taken seriously and deserves to be researched further: the aim of the book is precisely to show the potential of this research field.

The thirteen articles serve as examples of domains where the relation between economy and nationalism is explored. The list of authors includes prominent scholars like Harold James as well as PhD-candidate Sergiu Delcea who wrote a stimulating article on economy and nationalism in interwar Romania from the perspective of welfare state development. The authors touch upon various aspects of economy and nationalism from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present as nation branding, foreign direct investment and the »national interest«, regimes of land property, issues of uneven economic development in the context of the federal state of Yugoslavia or the relationship between migrants and economic nationhood.

The book is all but Western European centred: for obvious reasons, much attention is paid to Central and Eastern Europe, but also to the USA and China. Two contributions, one on the making and perception of »economic Europeaness« in recent years, the other on the renewal of liberal economic thinking in the interwar period do explicitly not focus on a specific country or nation but take an international or transnational approach. In general, it can be said that the phenomenon of economic nationalism is well integrated in the changing international context and that economic nationalism appears often to be a reaction to international economic changes, of which »globalisation« is a typical, but not the only example. In the article of Hagen Schulz-Forberg, it becomes clear that for some proponents of »neoliberalism« in the interwar period a redefinition of roles between the nation state and the international level was seen as a response to the ideological crisis



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of liberalism: expanding the social role of the nation state could safeguard liberalism at international level.

More in general, free trade as defined by the classical political economy of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century serves in many of the contributions as the implicit or explicit point of reference. »Economic nationalism« is in classical liberal economic doctrine assimilated with protectionism and as such the antipode of liberalism which is based on free market and (international) free trade. Even if this view was already put into question by some representatives of classical liberalism, as Friedrich List, this volume shows that equating economic nationalism with protectionism is reductionist, since economic nationalism can have quite different manifestations (including consumption) and can very well be compatible with intensified international trade, as nation branding in a context of globalisation shows: »nation branding« focussing on »unique« features of a nation or a region can be functional to attract foreign direct investment in competition with other countries or regions just as aiming at an increase of foreign direct investment can be, as in the case of Estonia, a protection against a state perceived as a foreign threat.

Having said that, this book is not just written from a liberal perspective: alternative views as heterodox Marxism, Rostow's theory on industrial development, aspects of Keynesianism which put into question the assumptions of classic liberalism on economic nationalism or contributed to an alternative vision on (economic) nationalism are integrated in many essays in this volume. Many of the authors share the constructivist approach of nationalism and the volume is innovative as it applies this constructivism not only on culture and politics, as is mostly done, but also on the economy.

It has already become clear that the volume offers a broad perspective on »economic nationalism«, even if not all the contributions have the same length or analytical depth. In many articles much attention is paid to concepts which are critically examined. The interdisciplinary character of the book, written by historians and social scientist is stimulating. There is a certain disequilibrium in the sense that more attention is paid to ideology and ideas than to the real impact of economic policies inspired by some type of nationalism, but this might be a theme for further research, for which this book can serve as a good starting point since it has mapped and analysed critically what the prospects of interdisciplinary historical research at the crossroads of economy and nationalism are.



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