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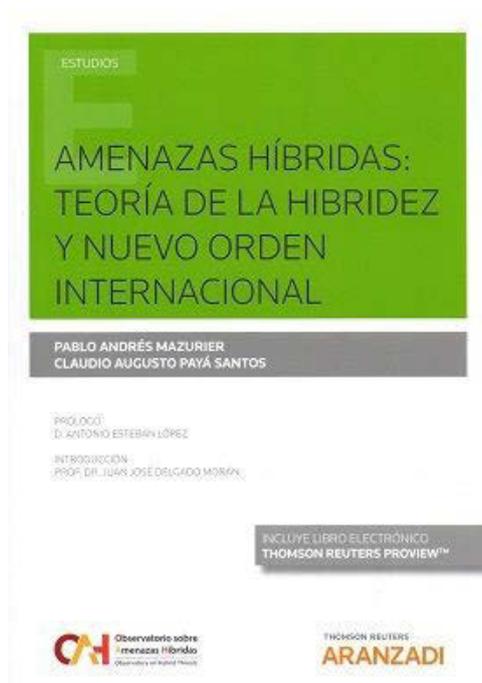
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Book review

AMENAZAS HÍBRIDAS: TEORÍA DE LA HIBRIDEZ Y NUEVO ORDEN INTERNACIONAL Pablo Andrés Mazurier y Claudio Augusto Payá Santos. Navarra: editorial Aranzadi, S.A.U. 2018, p. 246.

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The veil has been drawn back. The end of certainties has arrived. The illusion of a solid, predictable and easily controlled world has vanished. The nature of international reality has changed dramatically, not only in the midst of an unprecedented process of asymmetrical globalisation of capital, but also as a result of the exercise of two forces that drive a transcomplex world: *chronopolitics* and *techno-strategy*. These two forces constitute the basis of the theory of dromology proposed by Paul Virilo, as the study of the acceleration of historical transformations, and the concepts of time, virtuality, cyberspace and consequently of the image that man has of himself and his sense of being in the world. The fusion between technology and speed is a fact; borders, limits and materialities have also vanished; the different subjects of the international world seem to be suspended, as if the law of gravity had disappeared, and are immersed in a process of high uncertainty and strategic myopia, as they are deprived of the tools to explore and know a contingent reality, in its present and future state.

For the above reasons, the change in the ontological nature of the world has forced experts and academics involved in different disciplines and fields of knowledge located in different parts of the planet to challenge their perspectives and try out new models, reinventing nomenclatures and languages; re-dimensioning conceptual categories and innovating analytical routes, through a continuous metacognitive exercise of evaluation of the production of knowledge with respect to phenomena such as hybrids, which have unleashed an intricate epistemic and methodological journey aimed at decoding and revealing the emerging rationalities and their frameworks, whose nature is not linear but rhizomatic. Thus, since the beginning of the twenty-first century the hybrid phenomenon in matters of security such as defence and intelligence – without being either new or an exclusively Anglo-Saxon production – has unleashed an intense debate and academic production with diverse accents and – why not say it? – political-ideological interests across an asymmetric range of countries considered as powers – including emerging powers – as well as less developed countries.

A complex web. The woven threads guarantee an articulate dialectical montage and its intended aim

Undoubtedly, the web presented to us by the notable and experienced Spanish academics Pablo Andrés Mazurier and Claudio Augusto Payá has been spun from beginning to end with manifest rigour, the result of solid training and interdisciplinary scientific practices. Undoubtedly, it is this factor that allows the reader to immerse himself in the provocative reflections about the proposal of building a highly significant body of knowledge, derived from the subject in question, the hybrid phenomenon as an all-encompassing paradigm that can explain the dynamics of today's world, which is metaphorised by the authors, as “...a kind of mist that hovers over the structure of certainties in the modern world, making its specific determination, its vision and dynamics as a whole, and its operability, impossible” (page 102).

Thus, the dialectic strategies of the entire book in its different parts are not linear, but rather, starting from its theoretical core – hybridity – they respond to a texture based on abductive thought, through which the authors are permanently and carefully weaving all their theoretical-conceptual positions and incorporating different nuanced foundations with relevance, sufficiency and acceptability. This leads to a permanent questioning: a well-founded critical position that has allowed Mazurier and Payá to move with scholarly competence in diverse textual and contextual dimensions, to approach the subject in all its complexity, accepting innovative elements of discussion, which are derived from the arguments developed, such as the meaningful historical discussion and development of the phenomenon, the correlation of case studies, a contrasted analytical dynamic and advances in the discussion of wars, conflicts and more comprehensively of the hybrid world as a component of globalisation. All of the above is amply demonstrated by the use of extensive, updated and multidisciplinary literature that highlights the parameters of consistency and sufficiency of the discussions and findings.

A transcendental element – which few authors who have worked on the subject have developed – consists in establishing the onto-epistemic starting-point for the consolidation of the guiding dialectic thread. Although the development of the various questions discussed in subsequent chapters is apparently linear, the presentation of theoretical and methodological discussion is systemic and developed in loops, taking the arguments from a critical standpoint to progressively develop subsequent arguments with new meaning values and, in the form of a spiral, affecting the intelligibility of the key concepts, the analytical categories and the results of what is proposed. Thus, the semantic content of the text is enriched, transcending a simple phenomenological study of hybridity towards the proposal of its implementation in state multisector policy and its adaptation to current local-global institutional architectures.

The entire analytical process has been woven together according to various constraints: the definitional, political, economic, pragmatic, social conditions of the hybrid world that sway in a pendular movement between the domestic and the international, showing the political component as the driving force of all these reflections, which from beginning to end do not disregard the ethical responsibility of states and different non-state actors of the international system in their interagency development to move intelligently in the dynamics of conflict in the hybrid world, recognizing that in the midst of this “...new global context, the superpowers will continue to struggle for greater shares of dominance, increasingly resorting to hybrid logic to implement and manage progressively more complex, interconnected and specific dynamics of hybridity for each actor and social context” (page 224).

Thus, in *Chapter 1, Approaches to the Concept of Hybrid Threats*, the selected threads allude to the evolution of hybrid threats, conceptual plots, the insights in contemporary discussions, and above all the differential emphasis between purely military – the ones most written about – and social positions. The characterisations of hybrid as an adjective of strife, threats and types of war have been highlighted with great precision, expanding it as a paradigm enveloping nature in the present global world. It explores

the vision of Chinese doctrine, the Russian stance, the American military perspective, the NATO doctrinal notion of hybrid threats, the positions of the European Union and the multidisciplinary perspective of the Spanish Higher Centre for National Defence Studies, and finally the view of the issue in France. However, one thing that is missing is an understanding of hybridity or hybrid threats in the Latin American region; I refer in particular here to the work carried out in the Estudios de la Cultura Canclini (1989), Mignolo and Walsh (2018). In Estudios de la Comunicación (Manucci) 2010; Estudios Sociales, Boaventura de Sousa (2010) whose contributions are valid and relevant to the understanding of hybrids; it goes without saying that both in Brazil, Saint-Pierre (2003), and in Argentina, Massoni (2017), and in Colombia, Massé (2003) are becoming increasingly important and must be considered in the context of the region itself and not, – as has all too often been attempted – by using analytical prostheses that do not correspond to our realities; all of which does not imply disregarding lessons learned from other latitudes.

Similarly, Chapter 2, *Institutional and Operational Development to Combat Hybrid Threats*, weaves a thought-provoking review of the academic material on the levels of European institutional development to deal with this type of threat and a detailed study of operational theories for the management and deterrence of such threats as well as defence measures against them through collaboration between the EU and NATO. The different operational frameworks are discussed with great wisdom and precision, demonstrating the efforts made to seek consensus, interagency actions that constitute institutional innovations, and *cooperative networking*, supported by operational theories that serve as a guide for the assessment of the use of the instruments of power based on the vulnerabilities and opportunities of the different actors in the international world, all of which refer to various publications produced by contemporary experts.

The weft becomes more intricate with the appearance in Chapter 3 of *The Guidelines for a Hybrid World Theory*, which I consider to be the cornerstone of this whole argumentative construction. Thus, from an interdisciplinary approach, a number of theoretical and empirical elements are called into play, constituting a true analytical line of thought on the issue, given that the contemporary interdisciplinary debate on International Relations, Political and Sociological Studies has been established, with authors such as Michel Foucault, Zygmunt Bauman, Ulrich Beck, James Rosenau, Manuel Castells, among others, involved in the contemporary debate on the global world. This transdisciplinary crossing rightly enriches the political-epistemic horizon of hybridity, its logics and potential variabilities, revealing the different materialities that make up this new paradigm – the organising principle of a system of thought – and its relevance as a reflective neo-focus, theoretically rigorous and also methodologically feasible.

Following this substantial chapter, comes Chapter 4, *Open Societies in a Hybrid World*, systemically following on from its predecessor, with an in-depth characterisation of the new style of societies with their own multi-agent dynamics without true central control, which calls into question the traditional concepts of state-centred democratic systems, demonstrating the counterweight of open democratic societies

and their vulnerabilities – global and local threats – and the proposal for governance in their integral dynamics, generating specific capacities, raising awareness, strengthening and emulating values and community building dynamics as strategic survival mechanisms in a hybrid world.

Finally, by means of a systemic thematic study, Chapter 5, *The Global Map of Hybrid Conflict*, places special emphasis on making the dialectic content of the hybrid phenomenon intelligible in its entirety, and explores countless aspects in order to study the panorama which fosters the development of “... all the threats or maximizing variables of hybridisation related to human development and the environment” (page 169). The authors allude to strategic variables, chaos, geopolitical tensions between Russia and the West and the emergence and consolidation of China as a superpower, among others, as modelling factors with a significant impact on global governance, characterised by tensions and discontinuities that permanently require governments to change, redefine and rearticulate their institutional architectures and their mechanisms for inter-state links in various fields: political, economic, commercial, security and cultural. A relevant point in this chapter is the allusion to the geopolitics of fear and its potential mechanisms of resilience and protection to guarantee the sustainability of democracies and the axiological commitment of all actors as a collective co-responsibility for the common welfare of survival in this new paradigm.

One final counterpoint...

Unpredictability, contingency, diffuse configuration, mutant flows and interactions, fog nodes, loss of objectivity, deficits in domestic and global governance, convergences, emergencies, disruptions are some of the interweaving nuclei of meaning of the entire discourse built within the framework of comparative contexts and challenging the institutional and framework discourse on which it is based.

Moreover, the masterful weft of this book provides a transversal appreciation of the multiform and transdisciplinary nuclei of global reality. This also favours understanding from the South, supporting decentralisation and de-simplification in the epistemic production on hybridity by those historically situated as co-transformers of the phenomenology of today's international world, with flows, mutations, unsuspected speeds, and high uncertainty. In fact, all this dynamism implies transcending our understanding of hybrid beyond that of a legitimising, instrumental commodity of meaning, utility and added value to the economic dimension of our countries towards achieving the circulation and knowledge of new hybrid rationalities. Finally, this involves situating, from a relational framework inscribed in an ethical-collective commitment of the actors of the international system and social responsibility towards the search for a cognitive sensibility - more than pure fiction - the entire “hybrid” paradigm, which, as a socio-cognitive construction derived from a permanent problem-solving process and multiple meta-points of view, becomes a new magnifying glass to

conceptualise and impact through strategic actions on the hybrid phenomenology. In this sense, this scholarly publication constitutes a necessary guide in this process.

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