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THE EU-LAC COOPERATION: NORM-SETTING, DEVELOPMENT, AND SOCIO-SPATIAL DIFFERENCE. A POSTCOLONIAL CRITIQUE OF NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE

Abstract:

The aim of this work is to explore the concept and praxis of Normative Power Europe from a postcolonial perspective, by addressing the European imaginaries on Latin America and the Caribbean. The extensively held thesis by the NPE scholars and practitioners is that the European Union externally promotes the set of values that it practices internally, acting as a normative power (Manners, 2002; Diez and Manners 2007; Manners: 2008). The increasing usage and popularity of NPE has, nevertheless, attracted criticism in recent years (Merlingen: 2007; Mayer: 2008; Hyde-Price: 2008; Bachmann and Sidaway: 2009; Onar and Nicolaïdis: 2013; Staeger: 2016), with a wide range of scholars pointing at the limits and roots of NPE. However, postcolonial criticism of the EU as a normative power remains limited, although the EU's external relations with the former colonies of the European powers are addressed, drawing attention to the continuity and persistence of colonial power relations and racism in the EU's foreign policy. Hence, this article focuses on the Strategic Partnership's Cooperation for Development pillar and questions the postulated discourse of historical and cultural links, which ignores the context they were created in. It argues that the European Union continues to position itself globally as a universal source of knowledge and an exceptional power, building its global identity on the continuing disregardance of the existing epistemological pluralities, and being driven by selective self-reflection. Acting through the means of the Development Cooperation Instrument and through the Latin American Investment Facility, the EU positions itself as a generous aid donor and a norm-setter, without taking into account the international socio-spatial differences.

Keywords:

Normative power Europe, postcolonialism, difference, decolonialism, European Union

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