

Winner of the 2014 PCCBS Book Prize

Jordana Bailkin, *The Afterlife of Empire* (Berkeley: UC Press, 2012)

In this absorbing study of post-war decolonization, Jordana Bailkin recasts the origins and meaning of the welfare state. Critically interrogating the National Archives associated with welfare, Bailkin persuasively shows the ways in which decolonization was as much a social process as a diplomatic one. She perceptively illuminates the enduring afterlife of empire among policymakers, experts, and the public at a crucial period between 1958 and 1962. In a bi-polar world, Britain sought to preserve its global influence through the development of new members of newly independent nation-states, especially in non-aligned West Africa. This project, as Bailkin richly documents, generated new knowledge about the capacities of migrants, as social scientists actively participated in shaping their transition to this new world order. Grounded in the politically freighted notion of lifecycle, these discourses and policies--ranging from the meaning of educational success or failure, mental and physical health, to marriage practices and parenting skills--stereotyped and pathologized the migrant experience. At the same time they forced reexamination of what it meant to be British, for native-born people as well as newcomers. Thus they not only underscored the global concerns that inflected the making of the welfare state but also animated the contentious national debate about Britain as a multicultural society.