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# Alternatives

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## **Abstracts**

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# Space, Subjectivity, and Politics

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David Howarth\*

This article questions the more exaggerated claims of a free-standing “spatial heuristic” in explaining, justifying and criticizing social practices, not least because the category of space remains undertheorized and conceptually indeterminate. Building upon the work of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, Ernesto Laclau, and others, the article clarifies the category of space, showing precisely how and why it is important for understanding politics, subjectivity, and ethics. It calls for the envisaging of “spaces of heterogeneity” that are compatible with radical democratic demands for equality and a “politics of becoming,” and that can form the basis of a post-structuralist conception of cosmopolitanism. **KEYWORDS:** ethics, politics, space, subjectivity, time, radical democracy.

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# International Politics of Exception: Competing Visions of International Political Order Between Law and Politics

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Jef Huysmans\*

Both political leaders and academics often claim exceptional times. But what does it mean to speak of exceptional politics in international relations? In one sense exceptionality is a descriptive category referring to a radical change in the systemic conditions of international politics. In this article a different notion of exception is examined. It refers to a particular method of conceptualizing the nature of international political order. The exception defines political order by means of constitutional-legal reasoning in which different understandings of the nature and status of international law and its political transgressions describe competing visions of international political order. The focal point of this international politics of exception is not the traditional distinction between liberal and realist views of international politics but the constitutionalist triad of normativism, decisionism, and institutionalism. **KEYWORDS:** exception, international law, normativism, decisionism, institutionalism.

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# The Global Visa Regime and the Political Technologies of the International Self: Borders, Bodies, Biopolitics

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Mark B. Salter\*

This article examines the micropolitics of the border by tracing the interface between government and individual body. In the first act of confession before the vanguard of governmental machinery, the border examination is crucial to both the operation of the global mobility regime and of sovereign power. The visa and passport systems are tickets that allow temporary and permanent membership in the community, and the border represents the limit of the community. The nascent global mobility regime through passport, visa, and frontier formalities manage an international population through and within a biopolitical frame and a confessional complex that creates bodies that understand themselves to be international. The author charts the way that an international biopolitical order is constructed through the creation, classification, and contention of a surveillance regime and an international political technology of the individual that is driven by the globalization of a documentary, biometric, and confessional regime. The global visa regime and international borders are crucial in constructing both international mobile populations and international mobile individuals. **KEYWORDS:** borders, visas, biopolitics, migration, exception.

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# The Problem with Normality: Taking Exception to “Permanent Emergency”

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Mark Neocleous\*

This article challenges the increasingly prevalent idea that since September 11, 2001, we have moved into a state of permanent emergency and an abandonment of the rule of law. The article questions this idea, showing that historical developments in the twentieth century have actually placed emergency powers at the heart of the rule of law as a means of administering capitalist modernity. This suggests we need to rethink our understanding of the role of emergency measures in the “war on terror” and, more generally, to reconsider the relationship between the rule of law and violence. **KEYWORDS:** emergency powers, state of exception, Benjamin, Schmitt, rule of law.

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# Mastering “Irrational” Violence: The Relegitimization of French Security Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Bruno Charbonneau\*

The global context of the 1990s imposed constraints on French security policy in sub-Saharan Africa, but it has also offered new opportunities to reauthorize and relegitimize French military cooperation, military intervention, and repositioned forces after the fiasco of the Rwandan genocide. It is argued that the post-Rwanda French military doctrine of the mastery of violence has relegitimized French hegemony by identifying violence as the enemy to be contained, controlled, and eliminated. The “new” military cooperation (symbolized by the program of RECAMP [Renforcement des capacités africaines au maintien de la paix]) has in fact redefined the French “right” of military intervention in Africa instead of promoting the formal objectives of security and development. **KEYWORDS:** France-security policy; France-Afrique; RECAMP; mastery of violence; military cooperation.