
Alternatives

Global, Local, Political

Volume 33 Number 3 July–Sept. 2008

Abstracts

Is Consensus a Genuine Democratic Value? The Case of Spain's Political Pacts Against Terrorism

Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet*

This article considers the history of the Spanish political pacts against terrorism and the political contexts in which they have been implemented since the beginning of the 1980s. This socio-historical approach is necessary in order to understand the current Spanish unanimous repudiation of terrorism. It suggests that these political pacts helped build a consensus that has frozen the political field in Spain. Such a perspective takes into account some of the arguments of the CASE manifesto “Critical Approaches to Security in Europe” related to the need to proceed through meticulous examination of the logics of exceptionalism and decisionist politics that neutralize politics.

KEYWORDS: Spain, political pacts, democracy, consensus, ETA, terrorism, political violence

Forget Equality? Security and Liberty in the “War on Terror”

Claudia Aradau*

The “war on terror” has triggered intense debates about the role of security and liberty, the trade-off between security and liberty, the meaning of security and the power of civil liberties. Nonetheless, while security has been closely dissected either as a governmental or exceptional practice, liberty has been largely shrouded in silence. Rather than contesting practices of security, liberty appeared degraded, a fetish, justifying restrictions and regulating conduct. This article unpacks the conditions of possibility for the degradation of freedom in the “war on terror,” and argues that freedom degenerates when its relation with equality is severed and it is instead tied up with security. Rather than the dichotomy liberty/security, I consider the triadic relationship with equality and the implications of the double demise of equality: On the one hand, the demise of equality from theories of security (starting with Hobbes); and on the other, the demise of equality in contemporary social and political thought. **KEYWORDS:** liberty, security, equality, terror, political theory

Citizenship as Capital: The Distinction of Migrant Labor

Harald Bauder*

As subordinate workers, migrants and foreigners are an essential labor force for industrialized economies. The author extends Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of capital to suggest that citizenship constitutes a key mechanism of distinction between migrant and nonmigrant workers. From this perspective, citizenship is a strategically produced form of capital, which manifests itself in formal (legal and institutional) as well as informal (practiced and cultural) aspects. Both aspects of citizenship can render migrant labor more vulnerable than nonmigrant labor and often channel migrants into the secondary labor market or the informal economy. The author presents examples from Germany and Canada to illustrate how legal and cultural processes associated with citizenship facilitate economic subordination and exploitation of migrant labor. The value of conceptualizing citizenship as a form of capital lies in integrating processes of inclusion and exclusion into a framework of distinction and in locating the strategic nature of citizenship with the motivation of reproduction. Based on the situation of migrants in the labor market, the author proposes that the logic of distinction and reproduction is an important underlying force in the construction and transformation of the concept of citizenship.

KEYWORDS: citizenship, migration, labor, capital, distinction

Diagnosis, Intervention, and Cure: The Illness Narrative in the Discourse of the Failed State

Mary Manjikian*

Failed-states discourse rests on an illness narrative. As the failing state battles against invasion by the terrorism “virus,” the United States serves as physician, diagnosing, treating, and sometimes “curing” the patient. The well state exists in a dominant power relationship vis-à-vis the sick state and the sick state has no voice in decision making regarding its future. Just as sick people have less autonomy than those who are well, sick states have less sovereignty than healthy ones. An uncooperative patient may be deemed incompetent and treated without his consent. Constructivist and feminist analyses of the medical process can shed light on and help in our creation of a revisionist/feminist analysis of the failed-state paradigm. **KEY-WORDS:** medical, narrative, failed states, intervention

Western Europeans and Others: The Making of Europe at the United Nations

Norbert Götz*

This article examines the emergence of the so-called Western European and Others Group as well as that of the caucus of European Communities at the General Assembly of the United Nations based on a study of documents from Nordic foreign ministries in the period 1945 to 1975. It shows that the global entanglement of Western Europe both stimulated and inhibited the development of closer subcontinental collaboration during the Cold War, and it demonstrates that a European core was necessary for facilitating common political action. The hesitant and reactive evolution of Western European collaboration at the United Nations, the arbitrariness of its geographical scope, and the alienation of its members provide a key to understanding European identity in the second half of the twentieth century. **KEYWORDS:** United Nations, bloc politics, Western Europe, foreign policy, identity
