
Alternatives

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Abstracts

Indeterminate Geographies of Political Violence in Southern Thailand

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Geographies always contain more than they claim to represent, and there is always a politics involved in this excessive representation. This article examines how such indeterminate geographies structure popular, academic, political, and nationalist understandings of the current wave of political violence in southern Thailand. **KEYWORDS:** indeterminate geographies, spatial representation, violence, Thailand

Global Justice Meets Local Civil Society: The International Criminal Court's Investigation in the Central African Republic

Marlies Glasius*

As a new justice institution, the International Criminal Court (ICC) needs to gain legitimacy not just with states but also in civil society, both at the global level and in the societies in which it intervenes. This article, based on interviews, NGO documents, newspaper articles, and participatory observation, looks at civil-society relations with the ICC in relation to its most recent and least publicized investigation—that in the Central African Republic (CAR). It charts the role of civil-society organizations, local and international, in the opening of the investigation, and it discusses the initial responses to the investigation of civil-society figures and victims in the CAR. It finds that unlike in any of the other situations, the ICC's involvement in the CAR has been largely instigated by local civil-society figures and that, as a result, it operates in a quite receptive context. However, the slow pace of investigations and trials, the meager outreach to date, and the court's probable lack of capacity to provide victims with physical and material security are long-term challenges for its ability to meet local expectations of justice. **KEYWORDS:** International Criminal Court, global justice, civil society, war crimes, sexual violence, Central African Republic

A Model for Homeland Defense? The Policing of Alterglobalist Protests and the Contingency of Power Relations

John Gibson*

This article analyzes the policing of the protest against the Free Trade Area of the Americas agreement in Miami in November 2003. Specifically, it uses the case to develop a theoretical understanding of the contingencies, weaknesses, and unpredictable consequences of ostensibly repressive applications of power in transnational summit spaces. It then evaluates participants' modes of resistance to critique ongoing assertion among academic and activist circles concerning the unity of activists in alterglobalist space, in favor of a view of power relations as constitutive of complex forms of social identity, and which require greater reflection on the part of activist circles in order to translate the experience of repression into a source of activist commonality. **KEYWORDS:** alterglobalism; power, resistance, analytics, violence

Wilson Victorious? Understanding Democracy Promotion in the Midst of a “Backlash”

Michele Acuto*

Many authors have issued anxious warnings about a disturbing “backlash against democracy”—this in spite of the growing affirmation of democracy as an international standard against which other systems are measured. This article considers the role of democracy promotion, which is understood as activities aimed at assisting in consolidating, disseminating, and advocating democratic governance in this context. The theoretical framework in which the promotion debate occurs is highlighted in order to show how the concept of “democracy” is socially constructed and interpreted in different ways by the various promoters. The article examines the main targets of this activity (state structures and civil societies) and compares two major supporters of democracy (the European Union and the United States). On this basis, claims about a “democratic rollback” are challenged by reference to hybrid regimes that contrast the idea of democracy with that of civilization. The backlash is better understood as resistance to some of the methods of promotion and some promoters, rather than as being against democracy itself, and the article holds that the best way to promote good governance worldwide is through an oblique, cosmopolitan or European-style democracy that fosters the multiple and processual grounds on which democratic polities can flourish. **KEYWORDS:** democracy, backlash, good governance, European Union, United States

The Politics of Activation: Technologies of Mobilizing “Multiethnic Suburbs” in Sweden

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Since the 1990s, the idea of “mobilization from below” has become a salient feature in Swedish debates on “multiethnic suburbs.” In this article, the idea of “mobilization from below” is analyzed in three different policy areas—democracy, urban, and education policy. Following Michel Foucault and his theories of power and governmentality, the ambition of “mobilizing multiethnic suburbs” is analyzed as particular “technologies of government” creating citizens as “active” and “responsible” subjects. In the urge to “activate” citizens, it is argued, a neoliberal agenda has gained momentum in Swedish politics, further emphasizing the role of individual responsibilities and initiatives against public arrangements and interventions. **KEYWORDS:** responsibility, activation, partnership, multiethnic suburbs, Sweden.
