

Accumulation, Securitization, and the Politics of Rule

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Symposium Abstracts

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From Optimism to Exhaustion? Aid and Security in an Uncertain World

In the early post-Cold War years, the belief that development assistance could be used to achieve international security goals was a cause for optimism among liberal states. In recent years, however, following setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan, the so-called development-security nexus has entered a deepening malaise. With growing violence directed against aid workers, there has been a marked turn to risk-management among aid agencies and a retreat into fortified aid compounds. The talk examines the political and subjective implications of this 'bunkerisation'. It is argued to reflect a retreat from attempting to fundamentally change the external world in favour of the adoption of resilience strategies associated with the care of the inner self. From this perspective, the fortified aid compound becomes a therapeutic structure providing respite from the real and imagined traumas beyond its walls. It poses the question whether the seeming intensification of the liberal way of war also signals the exhaustion of the liberal project?

Killian McCormack, MA ESD Candidate, NUI Galway

Extrajudicial Security for the “Worst of the Worst”: Scripting the Extreme ‘Other’ in *Joint Force Quarterly*

This project analyses the discursive production of the extreme ‘Other’ – the risky ‘Other’ of the US homeland, and the ‘unlawful combatant’ and detainee of the ‘war on terror’ – in the US Department of Defense’s flagship journal *Joint Force Quarterly*. It examines how this imperial discourse legitimates the extrajudicial and biopolitical security practices of the ‘war on terror’ at the border of the homeland and in the conflict zones of the war. It will deal with the Orientalist representations that drive enhanced security in the west, along with representations that necessitate the manipulation of law in the furtherance of military objectives. These micro-scale security practices will be located within the broader economic and political project of the ‘war on terror’, whilst the trajectory of the extreme ‘Other’ discourse, and how it pertains to this broader effort, will be examined. Ultimately, it will be argued that the imperialist discourse of the extreme ‘Other’ justifies and rationalizes the micro-

scale biopolitical securitization measures of the 'war on terror', which are integral to this broader hegemonic project.

Naomi Campbell, MA ESD Candidate, NUI Galway

Is the Gate Open or Closed? A Trans-National Exploration of Belonging within Community Gardens

As many suburban towns across the world become increasingly modernized and urbanized, the threat of community alienation and atomization comes to the fore. Throughout the social sciences, community gardens are widely portrayed as 'spaces of inclusion' within the suburban landscape. This paper investigates the inclusive practices of two suburban community gardens which span the Atlantic Ocean; Ireland (County Wicklow) and the United States (California). The focus is on the 'landscapes of belonging' that are afforded by the physical settings and social practices within the community garden and the wider suburban communities. In total, nineteen community garden members were interviewed using a semi-structured interview technique. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic coding within a grounded theory approach and a theoretical framework of political ecology was employed. Results revealed social and political practices amongst garden members centred on individualization within the Californian community garden. This was also reflected in their relationship with the wider community. In contrast, the social and political practices of the County Wicklow community garden were largely underpinned by aspirations of the communal movement. Findings lay grounds for concern as to the validity of the premise that community gardens are created as a 'landscape of belonging' for society at large.

Tommy Rush, MA ESD Candidate, NUI Galway

The Popular Geopolitics of Wrestling

'In the sport of wrestling, what is displayed for the public is the great spectacle of 'Suffering, Defeat and Justice' (Barths, 1972 pp.29).

This paper examines the television program *The World Wrestling Entertainment* as a medium for producing a geopolitical narrative that allows the re-scripting of American hegemony in a patriotic hyper- male, by rescaling the American nation through the body and performance of Hulk Hogan. Through his battles with 'other' wrestlers set against a geopolitical backdrop and heightened by melodrama, what is found in the ringside drama are characters inspired by racial stereotypes, political antagonisms and contemporary political interests. Examples include: The Iron Sheik (Iranian), Sergeant Slaughter (American turned Iraqi sympathiser at the start of the Gulf War) and his Iraqi and Arab-American friends General Adnan, Colonel Mustafa, Mohammad Hassan, and Khosrow Davari. In the fight between 'good' and 'evil' these

characters engage in battle with the 'The Real American,' Hulk Hogan. Hulk is portrayed as the embodiment of the American nation, and in particular of an American hyper- male, patriotic identity. This is a performance which allows for the emergence of U.S hegemony in geopolitical narratives and contributes to the American geopolitical narrative by being ultimately defensive in nature. An important conceit of the American geopolitical narrative is that America only acts in the name of security, not empire. I argue that Hulk Hogan is portrayed as a reluctant warrior but not a reluctant patriot. In order to elaborate on how this narrative is performed the character of Hulk Hogan will be deconstructed focusing on his wrestling attire, music, verbal exchanges with these 'other' wrestlers and his performance in the ring.