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Papers

***The 2015 Greek Bailout Referendum: Crisis of Representation, Social Discontent and Democratic Legitimacy under the Troika Regime.***

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The 2015 Greek bailout referendum brought Greece in direct confrontation with its creditors and laid bare the major power imbalances that shape decision-making process at the EU level. Despite the popular rejection of the bail-out terms with a resounding 61,3%, the SYRIZA-ANEL government was not only forced to capitulate to the Troika’s initial demands but to accept an even stricter MoU that provided for the inclusion of all state assets, excluding cultural heritage, into a privatization fund. This marked an unprecedented constriction of national sovereignty by the part of an EU member state and stood as a warning sign for the mounting tension between democratic legitimacy and the European integration process in its current form.  In this context, we aim to illuminate the impact of these events a) on Greek citizens’ perception vis-à-vis the legitimacy and function of national democratic institutions, and b) their level of political engagement in the post-2015 period, i.e., electoral participation, party identification, overall political awareness and so on. In terms of data, we rely on survey findings, 10 focus groups and 110 semi-structured individual interviews.

***This is a Crisis, not a Change: The Power of Narratives for Climate Action***

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Climate activist Greta Thunberg made headlines with her call at the 2019 World Economic Forum, among other occasions: "I want you to panic. I want you to act as if the house is on fire." Since then, more than 2,300 municipalities worldwide have declared "climate emergencies," including capitals such as Amsterdam and Tokyo. Policy change requires a change in the narratives that underpin people's understanding within society, including how individuals organize, evaluate, and communicate information. In this sense, narrative theory informs us why behavior is constrained and why some policy strategies are more likely than others. The aim of this paper is to reflect upon climate crisis narratives in conjunction with political authority and the choice of policy instruments.

By using crisis narratives, environmental groups hope to encourage joint climate action ("power with"). Historically, however, emergency laws have been used primarily to suppress class struggles and prevent popular mobilization ("power over"). This legacy is at the root of concerns about emergency declarations, and these concerns have gained new momentum with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rising energy prices. The paper discusses the two alternative pathways based on literature review. Facing multiple crisis, can we expect an expansion of authoritarian rule?

***Schmitt’s Theory of Democratic Judgement***

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In this paper I turn to Schmitt’s under-studied 1931 radio broadcast, ‘Hegel and Marx,’ to apply a Hegelian corrective to the usual understanding of Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction. First translated in 2014 by James Furner and Max Henninger, it has since received little attention. Taking up Robyn Marasco’s (2023) provocative emphasis on Schmitt’s existentialism, and Jason Frank’s (2016, 2021) turn to enactment, I reread the friend-enemy distinction through Schmitt’s existentialist commitment. I find an emphasis on judgement, specifically a Zerillian-Arendtian democratic judgement, rather than decision. I also find a concern with constituting world-historical actors that clarifies Schmitt’s infrequent citations of left-revolutionary thinkers like Marx—citations previously examined by, for example, Ellen Kennedy (1987). This re-reading is friendly to Mariano Croce and Andrea Salvatore’s (2023) move away from reading Schmitt only through the lens of the state of exception and reinforces the urgency of the turn to democratic enactment. This paper finds that Schmitt’s friend-enemy distinction is a resilient challenge for democratic theory. Democratic judgement alone is not a safeguard against populism in times of crisis: we need a new theory of popular power qua action.

***The Power of Critique in the Time of Emergency***

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In this paper, I contend that ‘crisis’ moves in the groove of neo-functionalism, providing impetus for reform, and thereby sustaining the extant order of things (De Vries 2023). In place of ‘crisis’, I propose to view the present conjuncture as ‘the time of emergency’. The time of emergency is Kairos – a moment within the arc of history that is both existential threat and emergent possibility.

Using the register of ‘emergency’ as a contextual frame, the paper builds on the contributions of Saar (2010, Power and critique), Haugaard (2010, Power and social criticism), and Honneth (2010, The critique of power), with the aim of exploring the power of critique through the work of Saidiya Hartman (2008, Critical fabulism), and Christina Sharpe (2016, Wake work).

Informed by Foucault’s method of historical ontology, this way of practising critique is staged at the intersection of aesthetics and politics, and operates within the time-space of ‘the interval’ (Hartman 2008). At once the ‘no longer’ and the ‘not yet’, the interval is a generative manifold of power relations. Whatever emerges from within this manifold is/will be conditioned by the very power relations that are its condition of existence. At stake is what can be accomplished through critique that spans the power of imagination and the power of refusal.

***Crisis and Constitution: 9-11 and American Democracy***

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The crisis of 9-11 altered the fabric of American politics, and in doing so challenged the very Constitution that the world has come to see as sacrosanct. It led to the creation of new executive institutions, broadly expanded surveillance on American citizens and created the Patriot Act that broadly rolled back civil rights across the national landscape. This paper attempts to explain how the political system in the U.S. was altered by this terrorist attack in New York, and in doing so proceeds to propose some generalizable ideas about how crises can challenge democratic institutions.

***Political Power in Crisis***

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This article explores different modes of crisis in the exercise of political power. Crisis is conceptualized in terms of moments when what should be a routine exercise of power by the powerful either fails or has such high costs associated with it that the power resources of leadership are seriously undermined.

Following Weber, there are two significant sources of political power: coercion and authority. As ideal types, there exist three primary styles of leadership, as follows: kleptocratic, whose main power resource is coercion; authoritarian, whose main power resource is authority; and democratic, whose main power resource is also authority. Where authoritarianism and democracy differ is in how these leaders legitimize their authority, through contrasting practices of the third and fourth dimensions of power. Reflecting their different sources or practices of power, these ideal types of leadership experience contrasting modes of crisis in the effectiveness of their power. For the kleptocrat, autocrat and democrat the solution may be for leaders to change their power resources or practice. So, for instance, in a moment of power crisis democratic leaders may choose to hold on to political power by becoming an autocratic or kleptocratic leader. Crisis results in cycles of power leadership style – as suggested by Machiavelli and Pareto.

The article is richly illustrated with current examples, including populist challenges to democracy (theorized as democratic leadership reverting to authoritarian-cum-kleptocratic style) and other current affairs, including Israel’s power crisis response to Hamas’ attack of October 7th.

***From Economic to Structural Power: China’s Financial Statecraft after the 2008 Crisis***

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The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 prompted not only transformations among market actors, but also within the international system. Amidst the first talks about decoupling between the West and the “Rest”, China sought to launch its first initiatives in the field of financial statecraft independently from the United States and its key allies in the North Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific. They are the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), and the New Development Bank (NDB). While the literature has already explained that those initiatives were put forward due to the lack of power of emerging powers in international financial institutions (IFI) like the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, there is still a gap in explaining how it was possible for Beijing to successfully attract allies to support its plans. Based on descriptive data and diplomatic statements, this paper reconstructs the process through which the BRI, the AIIB, and the NDB successfully emerged as international institutions. We argue that China managed to convert its growing economic power as the main pole of manufacturing in the globalization age into structural power, which is defined as the capacity of shaping norms that contribute to global order. The contribution of the paper is therefore twofold. In theoretical terms, it provides contributions to understanding how new actors acquire power after crises. In empirical terms, it offers evidence to make sense of China’s rise well before the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and the world-wide disruptions it caused in political-economic terms.

***Renewable Energy, Biofuels, and Nuclear: Explaining the Energy Diplomacy Strategies of Emerging Powers in the Global Energy Crisis***

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The global energy crisis and worldwide responses to this threat reveal the changing landscape of global energy governance. In the context of the US–China and US–Russia confrontations, emerging powers such as the BRICS nations developed an energy diplomacy that either exerts influence bilaterally or fosters multilateral cooperation. While existing literature suggests that geopolitical concerns affect the selection of recipient countries, other aspects of energy diplomacy in emergencies are yet to be explained. This paper focuses on Brazil, a promising market in the energy transition, as a case study to clarify whether supplier countries could influence recipient countries. Through a comparative analysis of China (renewable energy), India (biofuels), and Russia (nuclear), this paper identified those countries' relative advantages in research and development (R&D), manufacturing, and distribution and analyzes the various energy diplomacy strategies in terms of the type of technology transfer, manufacturing location, and global supply chain. The results show that all countries aim for complementarity through strategic partnerships with other countries and organizations to compensate for their weaknesses, that the competitive energy diplomacy of the emerging powers in the face of confrontations has accelerated energy supply, and that they also utilize existing multilateral frameworks to enhance their credibility.

***Blood Gambit: How Autocratizing Populists Fuel Ethnic Conflict to Reverse Election Setbacks-Evidence from Turkey and Israel***

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There is a growing literature on the relationship between populism and autocratisation. Through a comparative study of Turkey and Israel, we contribute to this literature by highlighting a specific strategy that autocratising populist incumbents in ethnically divided societies utilise when they face election setbacks. A “blood gambit” entails fomenting violent conflict to keep the opposition divided along ethnic fault lines, while creating a rally-around-the-flag effect to help the incumbent secure a victory in a renewed election. After failing to secure a parliamentary majority in June 2015, Erdoğan ended the Kurdish peace process and engineered repeat elections amidst heightened nationalist fervour and renewed conflict with the PKK. These elections gave the AKP a majority and marked the beginning of its alliance with the ultranationalists. Following Israel’s March 2021 elections, Netanyahu increased state repression of Palestinians, which triggered interethnic violence and renewed confrontation with Hamas. The violence threw a wrench into coalition-building efforts between ideologically and ethnically diverse opposition parties. The comparison of Israel and Turkey as two countries with different majority religions, ethnic compositions and socioeconomic levels shows that “blood gambit” is not a parochial strategy. Our analysis also demonstrates that the outcomes of these strategies are shaped by differing institutional and political contexts, namely, the extent of executive aggrandisement and the level of party fragmentation.

***Outermost Regions as Geostrategic Assets of the European Union: the Azorean Case***

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Over the last few decades, regions have been increasing their competences and powers, within the framework of the European Union, albeit linked to their respective States. Although recognised in the Single European Act (1987) and in the Treaties of Maastricht (1992) and Amsterdam (1997), it was through the Treaty of Lisbon (2007) that their participation at European level has grown in prominence. Today, the ‘ultraperiphery statute’ is legally enshrined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU. Academic research on the outermost regions’ strategic position in EU foreign policy has grown over the years, although this issue continues to be overlooked in literature. Outermost regions play a key role in EU geostrategic missions and policies. Through a qualitative analysis, this article assesses the power that these regions bring to the EU, as well as their potential, focusing on the Azores, whose geostrategic relevance has been exploited for centuries, including by great powers. Located in the middle of the North Atlantic, this Portuguese Autonomous Region contributes to the EU relevance in several areas: strategic location, environment and biodiversity, and space. It is concluded that the Outermost Regions play a growing geostrategic importance in several areas, including the Azores.

Keywords: Azores; European Union; Geostrategy; Outermost Regions.

***AI and the Crisis of Information***

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The rapid progress in Artificial Intelligence has indeed opened up new possibilities and raised concerns at the same time. One major concern is the proliferation of falsehoods and misinformation. AI-powered bots and algorithms can generate and spread fake news, making it difficult for people to distinguish between fact and fiction. Another significant issue is the bias that can be embedded in AI algorithms. If the data used to train these algorithms contains biases, such as international relations prejudices, they can perpetuate and amplify these biases in decision-making processes and power concerns. Addressing these concerns is crucial to ensure that AI is used responsibly and ethically. It requires careful attention to the data used for training, algorithm design, and ongoing monitoring for biases and potential harms. Additionally, promoting diversity and inclusivity within the AI development community can help mitigate these issues and ensure that AI systems are fair and unbiased. As AI continues to advance, it is essential to have ongoing discussions and regulations to ensure that its benefits are maximized while minimizing its potential dangers.

***Transformative Power in Just Sustainability Transitions***

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