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Security, Community, Protest:Local Impacts of Military Bases in Cold War Italy

- Archives - Archives Générales 2006 - 2022 - 2007 - N° 8 Juillet/July 2007 - International - United Kingdom, INTERNATIONAL FASLANE
ACADEMIC BLOCKADE AND CONFERENCE 26-28 JUNE 2007 -

Date de mise en ligne : Saturday 30 June 2007

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Les images d'angelle

This paper aims to provide an approach to the study of local impacts of military bases and public responses to them. It will focus on the causes, contents and effects of protest that is engendered by the presence of military bases. The analysis will focus on two historical case studies, both situated in Cold War Italy: the Camp Darby base near Livorno in Tuscany in 1952-1963, and the Sigonella base on Sicily in 1978-1985. The paper proposes hypotheses on the interactions between local responses to military bases, national security debates, and foreign policy formulations.

Theoretically, the paper aims to contribute to the literature on "critical security", which proposes alternative notions of security to the ones employed by policy-makers or in mainstream academia, and understands security in terms of public experiences and from a bottom-up perspective. Protest is understood as resulting from changes in public understandings of security, or changes in the boundaries of what is perceived as the security community, the site of shared interests.

The paper furthermore aims to contribute to the social history of the Cold War, and how the Cold War affected local politics, political identities, and social movements in the West European context. It will look at the ways in which national security consensuses are constructed and deconstructed and the moments at which this happens. In this regard, questions of change and continuity from the "first" to the "second" Cold War will be addressed.