

# 2019 PGSG PRECONFERENCE

## Abstracts

Presenter: Mia M. Bennett The University of Hong Kong

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Title: **Tracing Development from the Frontier: The Rise of Alaska Native Corporations in Government Contracting**

Abstract: The 1971 Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act established 13 Alaska Native Regional Corporations and over 200 Alaska Native village corporations. Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs) manage their businesses, lands and resources, and finances to benefit the Alaska Natives they represent, known as "shareholders." Several ANCs have transformed into corporations with global reach. The biggest, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, has nearly as many employees (12,000) as shareholders (13,000), with offices worldwide. The expansion of ANCs is partly due to Alaska Native leaders' entrepreneurialism. Yet it also emerges from ANCs' ability to leverage the 8(a) Business Development Program, a U.S. federal government initiative to assist businesses majority-owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals by awarding government contracts without bidding competitions. The success of ANCs and their subsidiaries in obtaining billions of dollars in government contracts for activities ranging from clean water provisioning in South America to developing U.S. Navy missile systems suggests a need to critically rethink how development relates to Indigenous peoples. Occasionally, they can reconfigure existing political and economic structures that generally work against their favor to their advantage, even if in limited ways. To conceptualize development processes originating "from the frontier," using government data on ANC contracts, I address two questions: First, what are the main patterns in ANC 8(a) contracting? Second, what contradictions exist between ANCs' contracts and their goals of promoting sustainable and equitable development? Answers to these questions will provide theoretical and empirical insights into Indigenous entrepreneurialism and the "right to development."

Presenter: Anna Casaglia, University of Trento

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Title: **Who deserves to cross? Humanitarian corridors in the shifting management of the Mediterranean frontier.**

Abstract: Recent literature on borders and migration management critically analyses the idea of the humanitarian border beyond the obvious utility of interventions aimed at saving human lives. These approaches highlight the double risk of depoliticising border control and making death at borders acceptable (Walters 2011). In the case of the Mediterranean frontier, the political implications of border control are set aside by technicalities regarding search and rescue operations, maritime boundaries, "places of safety", and so on. This way, policies are presented as neutral and necessary procedures, while their political character is overlooked. On the other side, humanitarianism compensates the social violence of the border regime often without contesting it. These processes have direct consequences on migrants by depriving them of their political subjectivities and by denying an understanding of mobility as a practice of resistance.

In addition, the "humanitarian reason" (Fassin 2012) creates new hierarchies of rights based on different forms of vulnerability. Within this framework, this paper takes into consideration the humanitarian corridors established by Italian non-profit and religious organisations together with the Italian government. These corridors, with the explicit aim to deter dangerous journeys and fight trafficking, grant a legal entry on Italian territory with a humanitarian visa to people in "conditions of vulnerability". The presentation will critically analyse this endeavour in the context of the shifting Mediterranean border regime.

Presenter Shiuh-Shen Chien, National Taiwan University

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Title: **Sovereignty Expansion and Border Conflict through Volumetric Infrastructure – case of China**

Abstract: The 21st century has witnessed the China's international ambition, evidenced by the rising conflicts between China and its neighbor border countries. Existing literature on non-conventional security issues tends to focus on some territorial infrastructure such as establishment of border barriers and control stations in order to control and manage cross-border flows like citizens, migrates, ground water, drugs and alike. However, in recent years, China develops volumetric infrastructure to expand its sovereignty power by activating engaging in three-dimensional spaces like airspace, subterranean space and oceanic space. Cases in point include: (1) China opened a new air-route known as M503 over the Taiwan Strait, (2) China set up its jurisdiction checkpoints in some underground levels within Kowloon high speed railway terminal in Hong Kong, and (3) China made large-scale land reclamation around disputed reefs and shoals in the South China Sea. In this paper we discuss three kinds of politics to support construction of volumetric infrastructure: ideology of state's power in adjusting nature, rhetoric to historically rationalize the expansion, and technology that materializes infrastructure in the volume. Together, the case of China presents the concept of "volumetric expansion of sovereignty power", in which the state can develop unilaterally without making proper international negotiation, creating great anxiety in related counterpart countries as a consequence.

Presenter: Patrick Cleary, Geography Ohio State University

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Title: **Looking through the Inverted Periscope: Arrighi, Galeano, and Zapatista World Systems Theory**

Abstract: In its writings, the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) have constantly sought to theorize the the world system. Most writing in the Anglosphere has upheld Zapatismo as an exemplary instance of radical political practice but ignored its significant contributions in theorizing capitalism. I argue for a reading of Zapatismo not just as a model of resistance, but as a contribution to world systems theory which offers a unique analysis of critical geopolitical economy. The core of EZLN analysis is that the permanent untethering of capital from discipline by nation-states has caused a systemic crisis with catastrophic results. The 'Storm' introduced in Critical Reflections in the Face of the Capitalist Hydra I is a synthesis of this analysis.

To elaborate, I examine the Storm alongside the descriptions of systemic crisis and transition posited by Giovanni Arrighi. The historical model of Arrighi shows that capitalism has evolved through systemic crises of hegemony into ever larger cycles of accumulation. Each moment of transition between cycles is characterized by financialization, in which finance capital seeking refuge from excess competition detaches from the previous hegemon and migrates towards a new hegemon. Arrighi argues that the current systemic crisis is a period of transition from American to Chinese hegemony. Zapatista analysis is comparatively less optimistic about this transition. Reading Arrighi together with Zapatismo presents radical and productive new modalities of analyzing the present crisis and theorizing the possibility of a noncapitalist future.

Poster: Jonathan Craig University of Oklahoma

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Title: **“The landscape of collective action: Examining the concentration of opposition to Norman’s University North Park”**

Abstract: Norman's University North Park is, in many respects, a prototypical modern development: A set of retail shops and hotels in a vaguely new urbanist mold funded by public money via tax increment financing (TIF). However, the approval of this development by the Norman City Council in 2006 presents a classic example of a collective action problem: Its biggest proponents were representatives of the University of Oklahoma, particularly its fundraising arm, the OU Foundation, who held ownership of the 585-acre plot of land for which the development was slated. While opposition existed, it was not able to sufficiently coalesce around a counter to the OU Foundation's case. In 2017, a second phase of the development was proposed to the council that included a new basketball arena for OU and the local high schools, again funded by public money. This time, however, it faced significant political opposition, largely organized by social media, from the council and the public and was eventually withdrawn. Using this political economic context as a basis, this research examines the changes in the local economic and political landscape that allowed this opposition to coalesce. This will be accomplished by examining the discourse on each of the city wards' Facebook groups, and linking their concerns to relevant data. The end result will be a picture of what the opposition's concerns were, and what they might mean for alternate development policies.

Title: Christoph Creutziger, University of Muenster

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Title: **Mapping of emotions in geopolitics**

Abstract: Even 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, East and West are still defining geopolitical concepts. Since the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia, patterns of deterrence and provocation are widely visible. Russia tests new long-range missiles - NATO countries practiced an Article 5 collective defense scenario in Norway in the biggest military exercise since the end of the Cold War (2018). A "New Cold War" is declared in the discursive field, Military budgets are rising and there is little criticism. Does it start all over again? In this paper I will examine this question not only from the perspective of critical geopolitics but target the emotions. For it is not predominantly the old difference in systems that is at the center of the conflict's actualization. The revival of Cold War ideologies works above all emotionally. Ideas of good and evil must be emotionally connectable in order to convince. Russia remains part of the imagination of “the other” to produce the self as "the West". The politics of Russia is once again told as the personal story of one man: Putin. His biography and his body are subject of emotional explanations. People in Europe can hate Trump but love American pop culture. This won't work with Russia. In times of fake news and simplified truths it is important not to ignore emotions. This paper will therefore discuss methods for examining and interpreting emotions within a discourse-oriented political geography. It is based on linguistic research of social media, newspapers and political speeches.

Presenters: Kathryn K Davies, NIWA; Kelly Ratana, NIWA; Kimberley Maxwell, Victoria University of Wellington; Caine Tiapa, Manaaki Te Awanui; Shaun Awatere, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research.

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Title: **Identifying social values for decision making in the coastal and marine areas of Aotearoa New Zealand**

Abstract: Ecosystem service research is dominated by economic interpretations of value, but the inclusion of hard to measure values such as intrinsic or relational values in ecosystem service approaches enable the work to express more of nature's contributions to people and other elements of wellbeing. An understanding of these broader social values in relation to coastal and marine areas is particularly lacking around the world; economic activities and commercial interests primarily populate decision-making seascapes. The inclusion of a range of values in coastal and marine planning efforts is likely to align these efforts with a broader set of social values and therefore may improve decision making, although other barriers to implementation remain. To encourage the inclusion of 'intangible' and other hard-to-measure values in decision-making processes, we have developed a short face-to-face questionnaire with a spatial component that can be used to rapidly collect social values for analysis. This research revealed that there was good agreement on key coastal and marine values and threats for case study areas, but with some gendered distinctions. A significant portion of respondents emphasized the relational, rather than economic, values that they associated with coastal and marine areas. Although the method was developed and tested in Aotearoa New Zealand, we believe that it could be adapted and applied to other coastal and marine areas around the world. The method can provide a baseline set of shared values associated with coastal and marine areas, which can then prompt more targeted discussions, deliberations and negotiations with stakeholders.

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Title: **Acts of belonging: The choice of citizenship in the former border enclaves of Bangladesh and India.**

Abstract: After almost seventy years of protracted negotiations, Bangladesh and India exchanged all their border enclaves in the summer of 2015. Nearly 55,000 enclave residents living in these small pieces of lands, both in Bangladesh and India, were given the option to choose their state of citizenship. An overwhelming majority chose to stay where they were and opted for a change in their citizenship. Drawing on the choice of the former Indian enclave residents in Bangladesh, this paper explains why they overwhelmingly chose a citizenship of the host state, as opposed to a state that they 'belonged' to. The paper offers the concept of acts of belonging to explain their choice of citizenship. It analyzes how the disconnection of almost seventy years from their home state and dependence on the host state for daily survival influenced their acts of belonging and eventually their decisions for a choice of citizenship. In so doing, the paper offers a framework that demonstrates how acts of belonging work both as a means and an outcome of spatial socialization, a process that is mediated by social memory and regional identity. In conclusion, it argues that acts of belonging can be fruitfully applied not only to understand the choice of citizenship but also in broader political geography.

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**Title: Species Selection: Sport Hunting in Lebanon**

Abstract: Robust analyses of farmers' crop selections have unmasked an underlying political economy. Yet such analysis has not been applied to species selection among sport hunters. Under the guise of seemingly neutral and scientific rationales, sport hunters in Lebanon, like farmers elsewhere, have developed an elaborate code that employs similar rationales. Despite a national moratorium on sport hunting (1995 to 2017), there was little to no impact on the ubiquitous practice of killing birds. Instead, hunters developed species selection rationales that appear to be based in ecology, but serve a range of political positions. In particular, the politics of Lebanese national identity leads hunter to not shoot birds that are endemic to Lebanon and hunt migratory birds based on their understanding of the species' local ecological role and population numbers. While ostensibly biological, scientific, and politically neutral, this code developed alongside the reining political concerns about Lebanese unity and salient public concerns about the environment. This poster comparatively points to a number of endemic and non-endemic bird species and discusses how each species' perceived characteristics is used as a reason to kill or not kill the bird, and how these rationales serve configurations of Lebanese identity.

Presenters Amelia Arden Green Mount Holyoke College; Sara Salazar Hughes University of Southern California

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**Title: The Ecological Impacts of Israel's Conflict Infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territories**

Abstract: Israel's "conflict infrastructure" in the occupied Palestinian Territories has been a topic of research, particularly in political geography, for some time (Brown, 2010; Gregory, 2004; Shafir, 2017; Till et al., 2013; Weizman, 2012). The components of this complex "matrix of control" (Halper, 2000) include checkpoints, observation towers, segregated road systems, settlements, the separation barrier, surveillance cameras and drones, roadblocks, identity cards, and permits, among others. As Halper (2000) notes, since 1967 Israel has used this conflict infrastructure to paralyze the Palestinian population without "defeating" it or even conquering/annexing much territory—maintaining the illusion that this is a "temporary" military occupation. These "conflict's tools" (Pullan, 2013) have severe implications for Palestinian life, and for the conditions of possibility for their social, political, and economic future. Less researched, though, are the numerous ecological impacts of the conflict infrastructure. Though Israel brands itself as a world leader in "green" technologies and climate change adaptation, the occupation itself results in a whole host of negative environmental outcomes: checkpoints result in traffic bottlenecks, increasing smog and pollution; the separation barrier runs through areas of environmental protection, violating Israel's responsibility as environmental steward; underground aquifers are polluted in a number of ways, including sewage run-off from hilltop settlements; the Israeli military builds bases and uproots trees for security purposes, damaging otherwise productive land. This working paper examines the ecological dimensions of the occupation, challenging Israel's long-held assertion that they are "making the desert bloom" by appropriating Palestinian land.

Presenter Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen, Clark University & Yale University

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Title: **Informal spaces and neoliberal carcerality: West African migrant experience in Morocco**

Abstract: The criminalization of migrants excludes them from rights frameworks and heightens their vulnerability. In Morocco, this process articulates with blackness to render sub-Saharan migrants visibly illegal, so that are phenotypically marked as bordered subjects. At the same time, border enforcement strategies that re-route migrants to urban informal settlements rather than formal detention centers push them to the edges of the legal landscape of migration management that includes the asylum application process, temporary legalization, or human rights oversight. The strategy of re-routing has two paradoxical effects: first, migrants living and working informally are obscured from the legibility of the state and humanitarian actors. Estimates of the number of undocumented sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco vary widely, and their exclusion from the formal migration management system limits migrant access to services and legal claims. Second, the strategy of pushing migrants back from the border into urban areas moves them literally to the center of social space where they are hyper-visible outsiders. This paper draws from 11 months of fieldwork to analyze this paradox. I argue that, in Morocco, racialization of migrants and informality of their spaces are effective carceral techniques of neoliberal governance, where policing of irregular migrants is devolved to the populace. The Moroccan case is not unique, but characteristic of the practices across the Mediterranean. This suggests that current failures to adequately deal with the influx of refugees across the Mediterranean region are not only the result of sheer migrant numbers or diminished state capacity, but reflect a shift in mobility management from liberal humanitarianism to neoliberal biopolitics.

Presenter: Joshua Hagen, Northern State University

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Title: **The City as a Composition: Geographies of Memory, Identity, and Belonging**

Abstract: In his book *The City as a Work of Art*, urban historian Donald J. Olsen posited “that the city, as the largest and most characteristic art form of the nineteenth century, has something to tell us about the inner nature of that century.” This presentation tackles Olsen’s observation as a starting point for thinking through the recent spate of displacements and replacements of public monuments, place names, and other markers of memory, identity, and belonging. If we accept Olsen’s analogy of the city as a work of art, we can further conceptualize the city as a type of composition. The idea of “the city as composition” weaves together fundamental concerns intrinsic across the arts, literature, and geography, including attention to location, form, proximity, sequence, flow, and diffusion. The city as composition also frames public spaces as palimpsests; places subject to continual processes of rewriting, revision, reorganization, and reinterpretation. Monuments, memorials, and place names are among the most prominent of the various commemorative markers scattered across the urban landscape serving as repositories of memory, identity, and belonging. Cumulatively, these places of memory and memories of places condition public discourses and counter discourses and in the process contour geographies of inclusion and exclusion. This presentation provides a conceptual framework for thinking through contemporary agitation regarding the (re)composition of public space, memory, identity and belonging, and in doing so, highlights how attention to the geographies of semiotics, performativity, and affect.

Presenter: Ali Hamdan, UCLA

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Title: **The Production of Space in Civil War: Contractors as Petty Sovereigns in Syria**

Abstract: Convention holds that civil wars signal the breakdown of sovereignty, where sovereignty is articulated as a state's monopoly over violence within a delineated territory. If considerable work has debunked this notion, geographers have done little to think through war as a distinctive moment in the re-articulation of sovereignty with space or, more specifically, how this is shaped at a variety of scales. This paper offers a preliminary consideration of how international development contractors (IDCs) emerge as important, if overlooked, actors who re-wire the ties between sovereignty and space in wartime. Drawing on Judith Butler's notion of the "petty sovereign," it explores 1) the position of IDCs in a geopolitical order ever more concerned with the "liberal problematic of security" (Duffield 2007); 2) how this position affords them relative autonomy; and 3) the kind of decisions they come to make over not only life and death, but also forms of governance and the production of space. By doing so, I hope to illustrate what war tells us about our changing geopolitical condition while attending to the currently noteworthy case of the conflict in Syria. This paper draws on semi-structured interviews collected during twenty-six months of multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in Turkey and Jordan between 2015-2017.

Presenter: Kathryn L. Hannum Kent State University

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Title: **Exploring the transnational nature of the Galician community in Buenos Aires, Argentina.**

Abstract: The Galician diaspora remain an important component of the social and political development of the Spanish region of Galicia. Two major waves of emigrants left the region of Galicia between 1850 and 1970, most destined for the Americas. Galician immigrants established mutual aid societies and social associations building a dense and multi-scale network of organizations. The retention of a diaspora base into the 21st century speaks to the strength of Galician institutions abroad. The largest concentration of Galician emigrants is in Buenos Aires, Argentina, colloquially known as the 5th province of Galicia. Building off preliminary fieldwork in Buenos Aires, this paper sketches the diasporic nature of Galicians in Buenos Aires. The paper concludes by presenting several points of inquiry regarding transnational connections between the two regions including, the posturing and blending of Galician and Spanish identities, micro-territorialism among Galician organizations, the impact of organizational failure, and visibility and promotion of ethnic communities in the city of Buenos Aires.

Presenter: Samuel Henkin, University of Kansas

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Title: **Southeast Asia's "obsession with rights": Authoritarianism, security governance, and cultures of impunity**

Abstract: Recent scholarly research on state power and governance regimes has drawn considerable attention to the social, political, and spatial dynamics of the rise in authoritarian forms of governance as a growing global phenomenon. While research on this "new authoritarianism" engenders a dynamism of epistemic inquiry in diverse modes of governance—authoritarianism, populism, fascism—the actual everyday practices continue to be undertheorized. Under the pretenses of a (global) security order whereby regimes use repressive (violent) actions, hyper-surveillance, and persuasive rhetoric, citizens' liberties are continually eroded in the name of security, stability, and law and order. As the 50th anniversary of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2017 passed, fundamental challenges of (elite) power consolidation and shortcomings of democratic governance proclaimed a guest list of "semi-authoritarian", "almost-democracies", and "unfree" states. This project is concerned with techniques of governance that dislocate democratic practices and processes and (re)shape the accountability and legitimacy of state power framed within greater discourses of "law and order" in Southeast Asia. It explores how security governance regimes in Southeast Asia employ state sanctioned violence—from lawful intervention in everyday spaces to unlawful killings—with ostensibly growing impunity. I examine how discursive and operative shifts in security-civilian relations blur juridical accountabilities and imbue the state with the legitimacy to pursue violent practices. It is a critical intervention in understanding state security politics that produce, enable, and give meaning to the productive capacities of violence in shaping spatialities of power in everyday life.

Presenter: Jacob Henry University of Hawaii at Manoa

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Title: **The Everyday Geopolitics of Humanitarian Mobilities and the Stubborn Persistence of Border Hegemony**

Abstract: How might the popular hegemony of borders—the liberal common sense that borders should exist, if a bit less violently—be disrupted? This paper approaches this big question by asking how international educational humanitarian volunteers who want a more just world and have space to reflect on border experiences, but are not emmeshed within open border politics come to (not) understand the violence of borders during their overseas volunteering. The volunteers witness differential mobilities—their own ability to flow contrasted with local friends' struggles—and are also charged with finding ways to "help," which surely would include greater mobilities possibilities. I use 'netnographic' methods to analyze the volunteers' online blogs which hold unprompted musings about borders and border experiences. I sort the border talk into three categories: entry, crossing, and exit. Entry narratives construct the availability of a humanitarian field and cite any friction in the crossing process as evidence of local incompetence, which legitimizes educational humanitarianism. Crossing narratives occur at overland border posts where the volunteers witness differential mobilities firsthand and are allowed to move even when they have the wrong currencies and paperwork. The exit category describes the narratives which emerge as the volunteers prepare to return to North America. They construct the host village as a static field which is totally segregated from dynamic home. While there is no shortage of border talk in the volunteers' blogs, they never publicly and explicitly recognize the injustice of immobility and border regimes. The popular hegemony of borders remains stubbornly persistent.



Presenters: Sara Hughes University of Southern California, Stepha Velednitsky University of Wisconsin-Madison

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Title: **Greenwashing Palestine: Zionist green technologies and the making of settler expertise**

Abstract: Israeli innovations in environmental technology are ostensibly aimed at sustainable resource management and climate-change mitigation. Indeed, Israeli popular discourse positions the country as a world leader in “green” technologies such as desalination, drip irrigation, and solar energy. Taking into account the historic and geographic context of Israel’s scientific development, we argue that Israel’s green technologies are fundamentally structured by the Zionist project of appropriating Palestinian lands. In fact, we argue that Israel is managing the ecology of historic Palestine to strategic effect. By promoting a “green” image and positioning itself as a global leader in sustainable technology, afforestation, and arid land management, Israeli leaders frame Israel as a responsible—and, by proxy, legitimate—steward of Palestinian lands. As such, Israel’s advancement of sustainability and climate change mitigation works to reproduce the settler state occupation of Palestine. In this paper, we analyze the use of “green” technologies, specifically in the areas of solar energy, water management, and waste processing, as mechanisms for land appropriation and dispossession in Palestine/Israel. This phenomenon, termed “greenwashing” by activists (Benjamin et. al., 2011), reflects a constellation of state, environmental, and settler colonial interests, and informs scholarly engagements with the political ecologies of state-making. Situated at the intersection of political geography/geopolitics, political ecology, and comparative settler colonial studies, our analysis asks how modern discourses around climate change mitigation and sustainable ecological management offer new opportunities for settler colonial state-making and consolidation of state power in contested territories.

Presenter: Mohamed A. Humran, Union of Arabian Academics

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**Title: Application of Political Geography & Geopolitics in Secondary and Universities education in the Arab Nation**

Abstract: As Yemen and the Arab Nation are going through wars, conflicts and challenges, the most important of which is the external political targeting of the geography of the Arab world, land and humanity. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct studies and scientific research identify the causes of these problems and changes. The importance of study: What the citizen is experiencing is an acceleration in internal and external threats in the Arab world. The impact of the problems and conflicts in the life of the citizen and security and stability. The study was conducted to reach solutions and treatments that can protect the lives of citizens and their personal rights and preserve the political map of the Arab nation from division. The solutions and solutions in the work in the implementation of local goals a& strategy and also applied in a modern educational way through the inclusion of the book in secondary education and universities in the Arab world. Objectives: To Learn the terms and concepts of geopolitics and its importance in the analysis of events , conflicts , changes and problems in the Arab world, its importance in the strength of the state and its association with a number of major sciences and understanding the role of geographers in the world and the Arab world in geostrategic planning and building a comprehensive strategy. 2- An instilling Arab values and culture among scholars and deepening the spirit of national loyalty to Arab soil and strengthening the principles of Arab nationalism and keeping them in line with the impact of international changes and the new world order. 3- The application of Political Geography & Geopolitics through the understanding of interactions and their effects represented in place and human , and strength political science and international variables. 3- To give students ability to understand the impact on foreign and domestic politics of the Arab nation , also an international relations and the importance and unification of foreign policy of the Arab nation through a single channel (one Arab institution) The foreign policy of the Arab world and dealing with the international community according to the modern Arab strategy through foreign policy. Study contents: It contains six sections: first, an introduction to principles of geopolitics and geopolitics, Secondly Arabian Nation Political Geography , achieving international balance; Thirdly , geographical problems in the Arab world, and four economic blocs and political and military alliances. We will talk about the definition of economic blocs and their relation to economic geography. We recognize the international relations and the new world order and recognize the concepts of international relations, war, the new world order, the geography of war, the foundations of the new world order and the classification of the political territories. Globally. And the sixth chapter entitled "The use and employment of geopolitics and Geopolitics for the Arab nation in building the modern strategy of the Arab nation. It aims to enable students to learn how to benefit from the geopolitical study of the Arab world and to employ them as an integrated political unit with a geographical area qualified to work in an institution And one to find logical solutions based on scientific researches , development and methodological basis based on correct data

Presenter: Malene H. Jacobsen University of Kentucky

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**Title: The Geopolitical Legalities of Refugee Protection in Denmark**

Abstract: This paper examines how refugee claims and legal status determinations are shaped by geopolitics. In the fall of 2014, the Danish government instituted §7.3 (a general temporary protection status) to the Danish Immigration Act as a response to the rising numbers of Syrian forced migrants arriving to Denmark. At first glance, this new protection status appears indicative of an expansion of refugee protection to a group of forced migrants who may not qualify as refugees under the refugee definition provided by the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 1967 Protocol. However, in this paper I argue that §7.3 signals a circumscription of refugee protection. Based on an analysis of the legal statute of §7.3 and related policy documents, I trace the shifting legal architecture of Danish refugee protection, paying particular attention to the implicit geopolitical arguments made in these documents. My analysis illustrates that making a distinction between biopolitical and geopolitical calculations surrounding refugee protection has been central to the Danish state's efforts to construct refugee protection as only a temporary solution to human displacement rather than a path to permanent residency and citizenship. These shifts have not only enabled Denmark to circumvent its obligations under the 1951 Convention but in doing so have changed the very meaning of refugee protection in Denmark. Bringing together insights from feminist geopolitics and legal geography, this paper contributes to existing geographical literature on Western states' governance of forced migration and the changing nature of refugee protection.

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**Title: Facebook Geopolitics: Digital Democracy and Privatized Governance in Myanmar**

Abstract: In Myanmar, Facebook is virtually synonymous with the internet. While the progressive liberalization of its telecommunications sector has led to new opportunities for economic development, it has also facilitated the platform's use in the spread of hate speech, especially against the Rohingya ethnic minority in the Rakhine state. Drawing on 30 semi-structured interviews with Myanmar civil society and government actors and the analysis of online popular media texts, we argue that Facebook geopolitics—or the rapid privatization of digital governance and democracy—has emerged in ways that are rapidly reshaping one of the corporation's newest digital frontiers. Having publicly admitted to failed efforts to prevent the spread of hate speech, Facebook has revealed how governing the platform in a country with limited governance capability and non-standard fonts has created unprecedented challenges for the corporation. As Facebook became the de facto internet and a primary source of news, the challenges of discerning 'real' from 'fake' news threatens Myanmar's fledgling democracy. Facebook's entry into Myanmar, supported by inexpensive smartphones from China and newly affordable data have reshaped the digital landscape that neither the corporation nor the state can control, thus heightening Facebook's unavoidable role in international geopolitics. Recent efforts to govern the digital space through the closing of hundreds of accounts linked to the military including several top generals reflects Facebook's prominence in international governance. This paper contributes to emerging work on the political geography of the internet and the privatization of digital democracy.

Presenter: Natalie Koch Syracuse University

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Title: **Food as a weapon? The geopolitics of “food security” in the Arabian Peninsula since 1973**

Abstract: On 4 June 2017, residents of Qatar rushed the country’s grocery aisles, stocking up on as much food as they could fit into their carts or their budget. Qatar had just been put under blockade by its regional neighbors – an effort spearheaded by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, but also joined by Bahrain, Egypt, Mauritania, the Maldives, Senegal, Djibouti, the Comoros, Jordan, Libya, and Yemen. In addition to cutting all diplomatic relations with Qatar, the blockade meant that its only land border – with Saudi Arabia – was sealed, and air and sea travel was cut off, as airspace and territorial waters were closed to all Qatari vessels and aircraft. All travel from the blockading countries to Qatar was also barred. With no domestic agriculture to speak of, Qatar’s air, sea, and land connections to the outside world are essential for maintaining its food supply. The country’s 2.6 million residents, many of whom flooded the grocery stores, were understandably concerned about their ability to secure food when news about the blockade broke. Eventually, new food supply chains were established, primarily with the assistance of partners in Iran and Turkey. The blockade continues today, but since its inception, the old notion of “food security” has made a resurgence across the Arabian Peninsula. As a geopolitical discourse, food security is intertwined with narratives about territorial sovereignty, national vulnerability, and the precarious integrity of food supply chains, which might become a site of attack in political confrontations. Yet the “food weapon” imaginary has a long history in the Gulf, especially since 1973, when U.S. President Richard Nixon threatened to use it in retaliation for the oil embargo imposed by OPEC members. “Food security” has been a central narrative in defining agricultural, water, and energy policies in the Gulf region since that time, but the interlocking narratives of sovereignty and security – and the material connections that underpin them – have shifted over the decades. This paper considers the evolution of these policies since 1973, as well as the regional implications of when the familiar “food weapon” threat became a reality for Qatar in 2017.

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Title: **The ‘Material Moorings’ of Welcome: Notes on the Everyday Practices of Constructing and Enduring Sanctuary**

Abstract: Geographers have begun to explore the concept of ‘immigrant welcome’ as a framework for understanding the tension between spontaneous social support for immigrants and refugees and their subsequent restriction and criminalization by states (Ehrkamp & Nagel, 2014; Gill, 2018). Overlooked in the emerging discourse on immigrant welcome is the rich literature in feminist geography that views the everyday practices of endurance, care, and social reproduction as essential to, but often hidden within, more traditional political and economic analyses of power (Marston, Katz, & Mitchell, 2004; Meehan & Stauss, 2015; Povinelli, 2011). By focusing on the ‘material moorings’ (Prieto, 2018) of welcome, I argue for more attention to the energy-intensive work that is often excluded from official media and academic accounts, yet which is essential to understanding what makes welcome function or fail. I draw upon one in-depth case study of a sanctuary church in Ohio, where a woman has been living for a year-and-a-half in public defiance of her deportation order. In addition to contextualizing this specific case within the broader policy and immigrant rights landscape, I focus on the spatial, material, and relational processes that participants implemented to (attempt to) construct a ‘welcoming’ environment as well as observe the ways that welcome fails to live up to its imagined potential. The case study provides important grounded insights into the material, relational, and emotional processes of enduring in sanctuary as a form of resistance to the US deportation regime and enduring sanctuary itself as an intensive socio-spatial form of existence.

Presenter: Christopher Lizotte University of Helsinki

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Title: **Taking back control? “Vulgar territory” and the populist challenge to the nation-state**

Abstract: Although scholars have done a great deal of work in excavating the assumptions, omissions, and dissimulations that are contained within the term “territory,” this has been largely undertaken from the perspective of the state. And yet, even as the contradictions of the state-territorial system are made ever more apparent under contemporary political and economic conditions, the popular response has largely been to double down on the borders of the nation-state. In this paper I lay out a case for recognizing the exclusionary territorial politics contained in contemporary populist movements as “vulgar territory.” “Vulgar” here has two meanings: first, its original Latin denotation, in the sense of it containing common, not scholarly, understandings of territory. At the same time, it represents the symbolic and material violence done in the name of upholding the exclusionary forms of territoriality that popular politics are increasingly turning to. Vulgar territory, I argue, fuses a simplistic formal definition of territory-as-sovereignty with emotional resonance so that it becomes an end in and of itself for groups seeking to address perceived and real losses. I outline three non-exclusive variations of vulgar territory: racialized, nationalized, and securitized territory, which illustrate some of the ways in which these formal and affective aspects of territorial thinking combine to produce acts of territorial exclusion, cleansing, and securitization. Finally, I conclude with some thoughts for how thinking through “vulgar” territory can help us begin to make sense of the wide array of challenges being leveled against the territorial state.

Presenter: Borjana Lubura University of Hawaii at Manoa

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Title: **The Popular Geopolitics of Rumor among Migrants along the Western Balkan Route**

Abstract: During the summer of 2015, in the wake of the so-called European Migration Crisis, German Chancellor Angela Merkel made a public statement welcoming migrants to her country. The welcome message resulted in millions of migrants starting their journey toward Germany and other EU countries. Merkel’s message initiated significant criticism from Germans and the European Union. To stop migrations, the EU closed the Western Balkan route in March 2016 where thousands of migrants became stranded in Serbia, a major country along the route. Additionally, the EU and Germany started online campaigns to deter migrants via their official websites (#RumoursAboutGermany and Frontex). As a result, migrants sought to make sense of these uncertain narratives through rumors that circulated in social media of how to best cross the EU border. These rumors resulted in thousands of migrants that switched their passages to Bosnia. I argue that migrants’ use of rumor was a strategic maneuver that enabled them to bypass German’s use of rumor as deterrence. Based on ethnographic data collected in Serbia and Bosnia during 2017 and 2018, and drawing on emerging work in the anthropology of rumor literature found, this paper contributes to ongoing conversations the popular geopolitics of rumor and political geography of social media within the broader context of human (im)mobility.

Poster: Kenneth D. Madsen The Ohio State University at Newark  
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**Title: The Battle over Border Barriers in California and Texas**

Abstract: Where are all those border walls and fences going that everyone seems to be talking about? In this poster I map out existing border barriers and plans for construction. Key to understanding the legal underpinnings of new barrier construction is also an overlay of the extent of legal waivers authorized by the REAL ID Act of 2005 and subsequent waiver proclamations by the Bush and Trump administrations. To reach agreement amidst the acrimony of the current political climate, Congress further mandated that border barrier construction not be allowed in specific locations in south Texas and – notwithstanding the waiver of many laws that often eliminates this step – mandated consultation and mutual agreement between the Department of Homeland Security and a handful of specific communities in Texas. All these elements are spatially situated by this poster to help us better understand the dynamics of border barriers construction and contestation on the ground. Whether any of these constraints can be over-ridden as part of the National Emergency declared by President Trump in February 2019 remains to be seen. The focus of this poster is on the two opposite ends of the U.S.-Mexico border where most construction is currently active and planned – San Diego, California and Starr, Hidalgo, and Cameron counties in south Texas.

Presenter: Aleem Mahabir University of the West Indies, Mona  
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**Title: A Missing Link in Development Discourse: Examining the Psychosocial Geographies of Hope and Exclusion in Beetham Gardens, Port of Spain, Trinidad**

While structural factors represent appropriate pathways for understanding social exclusion, research has often failed to take into account the psychosocial drivers that are a core feature of these exclusionary processes. By adopting an approach that is more inclusive of objective reality and representative of the multidimensional nature of exclusion, this study involves the application of a blended methodology, in order to examine both the underlying psychosocial factors, and the structural mechanisms that have perpetuated enduring socio-spatial exclusion of residents living in the urban enclave of Beetham Gardens, Port of Spain, Trinidad. The role of innovation and human agency in the management of marginalization is also explored, extending understandings of how psychological capital and hope can be incorporated into existing frameworks to curtail marginalization. The innovative blending of methodologies provides critical insight into possible ways in which structural factors shape psychosocial outcomes and neighbourhood character. Preliminary results indicate that residents of this urban enclave experience a state of exclusion, faced with stigmatization and ‘othering’ not only on a national scale via the expression of a collective consciousness that negatively stereotypes residents, but also, locally, as neighbouring enclaves vie for contested territory, excluding each other from free movement across their boundaries, resulting in problems accessing healthcare, transportation, jobs as well as social capital and extended networks. Analysis of residents’ psychosocial dispositions indicate that despite facing numerous structural challenges, most residents exhibit a great degree of resilience and potential for empowerment, which future community development initiatives should consider to optimize their success.

Presenters: Annika Mattissek and Linda Ruppert, University of Freiburg, Germany

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Title: **Discourses and materialities in current transformations of Germany's geopolitical role**

Abstract: The geopolitical role of Germany, its historical dependencies and future possibilities have received growing attention in the last years. In the context of rising international tensions, US officials in particular have claimed that Germany should take on a greater military responsibility within NATO in accordance with its economic possibilities. Within Germany such claims have been met by very different responses ranging from strong opposition towards any international military interventions to positions arguing for massive investments into military equipment. The latter have pointed out that in its current state of underequippement, the German military forces would be physically unable to live up to their NATO obligations. Politically as well as theoretically this raises the question, how discourses and materialities interact in the constitution of Germany's geopolitical positioning. In our paper, we develop a theoretical framework to address these questions drawing on assemblage theory. We argue that current transformations of Germany's geopolitical role need to be understood as the emergent outcome of interactions between discursive and material elements. In particular, drawing on examples, we will discuss how geopolitical discourses and the topologies and materialities of specific conflicts and risk scenarios play together in the constitution of military geopolitical possibilities and impossibilities.

Poster: Manuel Mendez Diaz Université de Rennes 2 (France) / Universidad Católica del Norte (Chile)

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Title: **Springs, “Donkeys” and Pumps. Entanglements of discourses and materialities in hegemonic waterscapes of the Atacama Desert, northern Chile (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries).**

Abstract: From the Political Ecology standpoint, Chilean geography has concentrated their efforts in the understanding of socio-environmental conflicts around water by studying the production of nature in the neoliberal period (started in 1973). This research aims to gain a deeper temporal understanding of the production of different materialities and meanings of water in the Atacama Desert. From a geo-historical perspective, and through the review of historical archive funds and terrain analyses, we examine the dynamics of discourses and technologies in the production of water as a resource in Tarapacá region (northern Chile) for the period between the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In general terms, it is proposed that the insertion of the Tarapacá mining (19<sup>th</sup> century) in the world capitalist circuit attracted several explorers and scientists whose install their modern discourses on nature/water. These discourses, started as an academic exercise, were installed in the political sphere and hegemonized through laws and norms (tacit and formal). In parallel, these news conceptions of water were materialized through the installation of cutting-edge technologies of extraction and conduction, leaving aside local thoughts and indigenous knowledge about water, dispossessing at the same time some local communities.

Poster: Cayton Moore University of Oklahoma

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Title: **Moving the Mark: discourse mapping the Middle East through computer-assisted text analysis**

Abstract: The Middle East is a common part of the American geographic lexicon, especially as the term features heavily in news media. What the Middle East entails geographically, however, has not been so clear. The myriad meanings of the term are likely a result of the nature of the Middle East as an analytical unit used by outside institutions with vested interest in the region. I examine four of those institutions (The United States Department of Defense, The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, The United Nations, and The World Bank) and their published discourse on the Middle East. The inclusion and exclusion of states from the region hints at the geographic imagination underlying these regionalizations and how they are reproduced. I performed discourse analysis using the Voyant Tools suite to explore a large corpus of publications, allowing for an exploratory approach to coding and discourse analysis. This combines close reading, integral to traditional discourse analysis with “distant reading”, which analyzes trends in a corpus much larger than would be efficient to code manually. I found that the boundaries of the Middle East differ little between the corpora, but issues that define the region vary, creating different core and periphery arrangements based on the publishing institution. In particular, the United Nations frames the region around “The Middle East Question” of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while military institutions emphasize conflict zones, similarly reducing Middle East to a unit of geographical analysis from without.

Presenter: Mary Mostafanezhad, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa

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Title: **Geopolitical Infrastructures: Anxiety, Rumor and China's Belt and Road Initiative in Myanmar**

Abstract: While geographers have addressed the materiality of infrastructure, we know markedly less about how infrastructures become enrolled in geopolitical discourse and practice. Emerging work in political geography demonstrates how residents' affective response to infrastructures are driven by geopolitical rumors of international investment that can threaten political support and the viability of projects. Focused on China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in Myanmar, I argue that infrastructures are material and symbolic entities that take shape within broader geopolitical anxieties over international investment. In their symbolic form, infrastructures reflect the ideals of progress, however unevenly distributed. In their material form, infrastructures produce new matter that shapes spaces of inclusion and exclusion. The symbolic and material coproduction of BRI infrastructures enables a political economy of governance that perpetuates ongoing China-Myanmar inequalities and triggers the circulation of rumor and engenders widespread anxiety among Myanmar residents. This paper contributes to emerging work on the geopolitics of infrastructure as well as a new framework from which to examine the sociality of BRI in Myanmar and beyond.



Presenter: Galen Murton, James Madison University | Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich  
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Title: **Blanks on the BRI Map**

Abstract: A variety of maps depict a usefully approximate but inexact network of roads, rails, searoutes, and other transport infrastructures to represent something called the BRI. In most cases, the lines that represent these corridors and networks do not seem to account for, adapt to, or accommodate the very real and challenging environmental conditions through which they pass. Taking the Highland Asia region of the Tibetan Plateau and Trans-Himalaya as a useful case study – and highlighting the region’s conspicuous absence from many BRI maps despite a host of BRI projects in the region as well as the area’s centrality to East Asian-South Asian connectivity – I draw attention to the risks inherent in building infrastructures across geologically shaky and geopolitically unstable landscapes. As Himalayan landslides and other natural hazards have increased in frequency since the 2015 Nepal earthquakes, BRI projects in the region both face and pose significant risks for a range of stakeholder populations. While infrastructure development in the Nepal Himalaya is but one example of the challenges (and hubris) contained within such a grand BRI project, I argue that attention to realities in the region provides a useful, real-world example that reflects other environmental hazards and ecological uncertainties inherent to producing the BRI in broader global contexts. These include, but are not limited to, South East Asian floods wreaking havoc on BRI dams in Laos to Indian Ocean tsunamis breaking Sri Lankan ports to Eurasian desertification disrupting resources to maintain railroads through Kazakhstan. Ignoring these geomorphological and geographical realities is highly problematic and it is incumbent upon proponents of the BRI to recognize and address such conditions.

Presenter: Orhon Myadar University of Arizona Ronald A. Davidson California State University, Northridge

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Title: **Geographies of Self, Displacement and Longing**

Abstract: Gil Won-ok was one of thousands of women who were used as sex slaves by the Imperial Army of Japan, and held in “comfort stations” across the Asia-Pacific region during the Second World War. Taken from her hometown of Pyongyang when she was a young teenager, Gil endured years of compounding violence in *displacement* away from her family and homeland. When the Imperial Japan formally surrendered in 1945, it marked the end to one of the deadliest conflicts in human history, relieving millions from the spectacular and banal violence they had endured during the war. However, the story of Gil’s displacement did not end when the war ended. Before she could secure a fund her way back to Pyongyang, her hometown, the Korean peninsula was divided, and she was prevented from returning closing any opportunity for her to return home. At age 95, Gil still does not know what happened to her family, and her longing and pain are vividly expressed in her poem written to her mother. This article considers Gil’s story of double displacement and longing in the context of the dialectical relationship between place and self --- or what Edward Casey calls “the geographical-self”.

Presenter: Samuel P. Nielson University of South Carolina

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Title: **Wallonia's Citizenship Integration Classes and Belgian Belonging**

Abstract: Nationalist ideology is typically internally unifying and externally divisive as states seek to create a more homogeneous state territory – meaning greater internal unity – out of culturally and economically diverse regions within it (Anderson, 1986). The state's legal structure may foster this sense of unity among the populace, such as in post-revolution France with all persons inside its borders seen as legal "citizens" of the republic despite persistent divisions (Weber, 1977; Yuval-Davis, 2004). Even among the most normal standards of internal divisions, Belgium stands out as legally and ideologically divided across parallel internal jurisdictions. This lack of legal or ideological coherence makes immigrant integration a particularly problematic issue. Integration presupposes a unified national 'host society' which newcomers can easily identify and to which they must adapt and conform. But what if the host society lacks even the semblance of coherence? What if there is no dominant societal identity that provides clear cues for migrants? This paper explores what it means for immigrants to integrate into a national society, especially one in which societal members deeply dispute the 'nation' as a legal-territorial and cultural entity. It adopts a critical perspective on integration that highlights negotiations between the migrants and members of what may be perceived as the dominant culture in Wallonia, Belgium's French-speaking region. It focuses on Wallonia's laws concerning integration and these laws' role in the integration process, and more specifically how the government transmits its integration messages to migrants in legally mandated citizenship courses.

Presenter: Mert Peksen The Graduate Center, City University of New York

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Title: **Geography of asylum in Turkey: Refugee protection, rights, and urban scale**

Abstract: With around 3.6 million Syrian refugees under temporary protection and around 400,000 asylum-seekers from other countries, Turkey is the country with the highest number of forced migrants in the world. Turkey still retains the geographical limitation clause on the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention and does not provide Convention refugee status to non-European nationals such as Syrians, Iraqis, or Afghans. Instead, it manages these refugee arrivals with ad hoc solutions, constructs multiple tiers of protection statuses (temporary, conditional, secondary), and creates a highly differentiated and limited asylum regime. These protection statuses bring strict limitations on the mobility of refugees within and through Turkey. Moreover, refugees' access to humanitarian services and social benefits is limited to the city where they are registered. Most often, especially non-Syrian refugees are deprived of their rights just because of residing in a city that is different from the one that they are initially registered at, and they are pushed to the edges of legality, even within the country where they are officially recognized as refugees. Based on ethnographic study of asylum in Turkey, my paper discusses the consequences of this multi-tiered asylum system for refugees, how different refugee groups tackle with the limitations of Turkey's asylum system, and how refugees and civil society actors in Turkey negotiate the boundaries of social membership in Turkish cities.

Presenter: Alex Pustelnyk Syracuse University

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**Title *The Scale of the State: National Neoliberalism and Property Formalization in Peru***

**Abstract:** In 1996, Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori established the *Commission for the Formalization of Informal Property* [COFOPRI] to formalize Peru's informal housing settlements. Backed by a \$36.1 million-dollar loan from the World Bank, COFOPRI utilized a standardized parcel system and a grant/grantee registry index to implement a low-cost, 'mass-titling' program at the national level. Despite being touted as a 'free-market' solution to Peru's housing deficit, COFOPRI required substantial financial support from the Peruvian government and frequently found itself in conflict with Peru's local municipalities over titling rights. In this paper, I argue that COFOPRI challenges the assumption that neoliberal states tend towards decentralization, a theory that's commonly known as state re-scaling (Armondi, 2017; Horak, 2013; Somerville, 2004). Through a careful historical analysis of the conflicts and agreements between COFOPRI and Peru's municipalities, I claim that neoliberalism does not determine the state's interactions across scales, but rather, historically specific power relations between various actors, including national and local governments, can heavily influence state policy. This requires a more complex analysis of state re-scaling that can account for how different power-geometries, power in relation to flows and movements, form in various places (Massey, 1993). Far from rejecting state re-scaling as a concept, this paper develops Neil Brenner's call to "excavate the diverse sources, forms, contradictions and consequences of state rescaling" in a myriad of ways (Brenner, 2004, 133).

Poster: Péter Reményi University of Pécs; Haris Gekić University of Sarajevo; Aida Bidžan-Gekić

University of Sarajevo; Dávid Sümeghy University of Pécs

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**Title: *An Introduction to the Electoral Geography of Bosnia and Herzegovina***

**Abstract:** The majority of experts label Bosnia and Herzegovina's political life as ethnicized and consider it its determinative aspect. As a consequence, and also due to the overcomplicated political system, only a few papers have been published on the electoral geography of the country. Our objective, while accepting the importance of the ethnic approach, is to uncover what other factors affect party performance and what, if any, territorial pattern, different from the ethnic one, can be drawn. We analyzed the results of the last three parliamentary elections (2010, 2014, 2018), and used the cleavage theory of Lipset and Rokkan, but added extra variables to the mix we thought could be useful in Bosnia and Herzegovina (e.g. ethnic fragmentation and polarization indices). We calculated Pearson correlation of social variables and party results to understand the social background of party support and used cluster analysis to define its territoriality. Our major results include that besides the 'ethnic rule' the classical social cleavages are also present in Bosnia and Herzegovina in a very similar way to the rest of Europe (e.g. social democrats are stronger in industrial areas, the liberals in urbanized regions, while conservatives in the countryside). This is also represented in territorial patterns: e.g. during the timespan of the research Tuzla or parts of Sarajevo (urban areas) were never won by conservative parties, while in the rural zone south of the capital was always won by them.

Presenter: Paul B Richardson University of Birmingham

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Title: **Sovereignty, the hyperreal, and “taking back control”**

Abstract: This paper advances new theoretical approaches to sovereignty in order to address one of the most pressing and challenging issues of our time – the disjuncture between populist images of absolute sovereignty and its practical, functional and material operation. The paper suggests a bridge between conceptual, post-modern conceptions of sovereignty and the challenges shaping national and global politics. Drawing on the work of Jean Baudrillard, it highlights the ways in which the operation of sovereignty has become conflated and confused with populist images / imaginaries of sovereignty. Through the lens of the hyperreal, sovereignty is seen as increasingly functioning beyond a delusionary parody and instead as an unverifiable truth. The sovereignty of the hyperreal, which is explored in the first half of this paper, foregrounds a theoretical disconnect between truth and falsehood, while the latter half attempts to connect post-modern interpretations of sovereignty with Britain’s efforts to exit the European Union and the negotiation of waning U.S. hegemony. Using the two case studies of “Brexit” and the “America First” Presidency of Donald Trump, the paper analyses political speeches and media accounts in order to explore how the hyperreal provides a logic for decoding populist sociospatial imaginaries of sovereignty, while also anticipating the fall-out from an eventual and inevitable realization of loyalty and obedience to an illusion.

Presenter: Sayaka Sakuma University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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Title: **Handling of the spoils of war and production of warfare space in Yambaru Forest, Okinawa**

Abstract: During the three-month-long Battle of Okinawa in 1945, over 200,000 people died. While most of the carnage and memorializing of the battle was in the southern part of the Okinawa Island, the stories of survival in the northern forest seem to be overshadowed in the public discourse of tragic war experiences. Fifty-nine years after the land of Yambaru was forcibly grabbed for military control, the US and Japanese governments agreed to return approximately half of the occupied forest land, 4,000 hectares, in 2016. While the number marks the largest land repatriation since the 1972 re-incorporation to Japan, the question remains: how are the values of Yambaru forest constructed and for whom? As the Japanese government works to nominate the returned area as a part of the larger national park for designating UNESCO World Natural Heritage site, the ways in which the land are valued under different state agendas – be it securitization or be it environmental conservation – shows different forms of territorialization. This presentation explores the forest area as a site of refuge during the ground battle, Jungle Warfare Training, and imagining the future of demilitarization of the island.

Benjamin Schrager Geography and Environment University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

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Title: **Sandwiched between anxiety and trust: Growing disconnection in food networks**

Abstract: In the Anthropocene, the impacts of food networks and the importance of eating good food have become increasingly clear or so many commentators would have us believe. This presentation puts forward a different way of looking at food networks, one that draws out the growing disconnect within food networks. Rapid technological change has altered not only the way that food is produced but also the mediums through which food stories spread and algorithms through which scientists quantify the impact of food consumption choices. Industrial food networks grow increasingly inscrutable even as anxiety emanating from industrial food reaches deep to the core of xenophobic nationalism. On the opposite end of the spectrum, consumers face increasing pressure to eat good food but mostly rely on embodied experience and intuitive understandings. I argue that our present food sandwich — riven by anxiety and trust — is best digested through situated relations and practices.

Presenter: Rebecca Theobald Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Colorado Colorado Springs

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**Title: GeoCivics as an Entry Point for Spatial Citizenship**

Abstract: Following the report of the Census Bureau to Congress with the first release of state data by December 31, 2020, the Census Bureau will transmit state redistricting files by the end of March 2021. At that time, the work of redistricting committees will begin in earnest. With powerful new mapping tools, even reasonable-looking districts can be unfair. Will community members be prepared to ask questions about how the lines on the maps are being drawn? While civics teachers use models to explore redistricting and gerrymandering, only recently have online mapping resources been widely available for creating congressional, state, or local district maps using real boundary lines and demographic data, conceivably increasing interest in and knowledge of local situations. In their volume, *Spatial Citizenship Education: Citizenship Through Geography*, Shin and Bednarz posit that being educated in geographic concepts and “doing geography” will develop citizens who have a broader understanding of the world. This paper explores selected approaches offered by the authors in *Spatial Citizenship Education* in light of the results of a pilot project offering instruction in apportionment and redistricting using National Geographic Giant Maps and online state redistricting lessons. Prior to March 2021, when the Census Bureau provides data to the states, there is an opportunity to educate students at the secondary and collegiate levels and to engage community members across the country in talking about this process. Could these educational activities also lead to additional ways to connect everyday activities to geographic inquiry, stimulating knowledge acquisition and evaluation?

Presenter: Daniel K. Thompson, Department of Anthropology, Emory University

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**Title: “The natural state of a Somali”: Racial Geographies, Anti-Urbanism, and the Ruinous Legacy of British Intervention in Ethiopia’s Somali Region**

Abstract: As geopolitical boundary-making unfolded in the Horn of Africa in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, British Somaliland administrators mobilized visions of the “natural” geographies of Somali nomads in order to undermine the Ethiopian Empire’s rule over its eastern frontier, as well as to regulate Somalis’ mobility and access to trade and employment. This paper re-assesses state-building in the Ethiopia-British Somaliland borderlands from 1890 until 1960 by examining how officials and local politicians spatialized and politicized ethnicity in ways that produced new patterns of political-economic articulation between social groups. The analysis conceptualizes the borderlands region as a stratified poly-ethnic system in which British and Ethiopian imperial officials struggled to attain supremacy over Somalis and over each other. Sustained inter-ethnic encounters were focused around geopolitical borders and at borderlands towns; borders, rather than firm dividing lines, were vague and selectively recognized when convenient. Haphazard British policies along the border and Somaliland officials’ anti-urban bias resulted in a concentration of trade and regional power in the Ethiopian town of Jigjiga. Drawing on archival records, Somali-language texts and 13 months of fieldwork in Jigjiga, I show how struggles over the management of ethnic and geopolitical borders produced Jigjiga’s initial agglomeration, and how the town’s nascent urbanism in turn produced new patterns of state-building that changed the nature and meaning of ethnic and geopolitical borders. In the 1940s, Jigjiga became the locus of British efforts to mobilize Somali nationalism, a movement that proved disastrous when the region was ultimately returned to Ethiopian sovereignty.

Presenter: Dustin Tsai Geography Graduate Group, University of California, Davis  
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**Title: Playing the Victim: How Post-War Nationalists Utilize Victimhood Narratives in Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia**

Abstract: History in the Balkans is a double-edged sword: when viewed holistically, the roles of attacker and defender have changed hands so frequently that any notion of a historical perpetrator or victim appear frivolous. However, history as taught and understood in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia today, is highly skewed and propagandistic. Through my interviews with young Croat and Serb nationalists, I identify a distinct pattern in which nationalists selectively invoke narratives of victimhood for how they choose to frame their own circumstances. These narratives are purposefully driven by state-owned institutions to indoctrinate young people into sympathizing with nationalist causes. I argue that perceived victimhood acts as a highly effective tool for politically radicalizing ordinary citizens into supporting nation-building projects; I further discuss various geographical cases where this phenomenon has played out. This paper draws from original research on youth nationalism in the Balkans and theoretically examines an underlying mechanism behind how contemporary nationalist movements operate, ranging from the rise of the European new-right to white nationalism in Trump's America.

Presenter: Gisselle Vila Benites School of Geography, The University of Melbourne  
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**Title: Political settlements, coalitions and territories: a framework to analyze the political economy of artisanal and small-scale mining**

Abstract: More than 150 million people in the world depend on artisanal and small-scale mining (ASM); however, up to 80% of these miners are informal. I argue that the formalization shortcomings cannot be explained only by a lack of resources or inadequate information for the definition of policies, but rather as a result of political interactions between the State, large-scale mining companies and artisanal and small-scale miners. I introduce a theoretical framework that connects political settlements theory, from political economy, with territorialisation processes, from political geography, in order to explain the spatial and political interplay in State responses to informality in ASM. Drawing from political settlements theory, I retrieve coalitions as mobilisers of institutional change in mining. While a coalition's sources of holding power are usually understood as economic assets and organizational capabilities, I bring forth territories as a distinctive dimension that problematizes the dispute of mining governance. Territories propose a dual relation with coalitions both as the material that mobilises identities and memories of belonging, but also as the subject of control through territorialisation processes. Central-state led institutional change in mining, and its resistance, develops a process to exercise control over territories, minerals and people, introducing new governance categories and legitimizing the intervention of some actors (e.g. large-scale corporations) over others (ASM associations). I illustrate the components of this framework with a review of ASM literature, with particular emphasis in Latin America, and field insights from the cases of Colombia and Peru.

Poster: Chase Womack Geography Department, University of North Alabama  
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**Title: China's Rise and the World's Response: How is Chinese Expansion Portrayed in Media?**

Abstract: This study examines China's expansion in the Pacific Ocean, especially in the South China Sea, and how this expansion is portrayed in local media. China's interventions in the Spratly and Paracel islands have the potential to cause regional and global disruption. What impact will China's continuing expansion have on global power relations? Using a content analysis of various broadcast, print, and online news sources, I will identify how the populations of these states have reacted to Chinese expansion. Does non-Chinese media reporting suggest that China's expansion an issue of concern? Or is this issue largely ignored? My results will indicate levels of awareness and concern in states inside and outside the region, and may help to understand why China has been able to occupy most islands of the South China Sea without facing any significant international response.

Presenter: Oren Yiftachel, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beersheba, Israel and Erez Tzfadia, Sapir College, Sdrot, Israel

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**Title: The Political Geography of 'Terra Nullius': The Planning of Urban Israel/Palestine**

**Abstract:** The paper draws attention to the resurgence of (internal) colonial practices in contemporary cities and the associated conflicts with minority urban groups. It explores the links between the concept of 'terra nullius' (emptied land – hereafter TN) and contemporary practices of planning and 'illegal' development and the making of 'gray space', suspended between approval and eviction. This angle is necessary to account for the emerging political geography of ethnocratic states, which often centers on urban flash points, typically overlooked by leading theories in the field. Such theories tend to underplay vital issues of urban land, law, migration and identity which – given the stability of borders -- have surfaced as central in the political geography of in the 21st Century. The conceptual arguments are examined against the working of the planning and land systems in Israel/Palestine, focusing on three large metropolitan regions – Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Beersheba. It shows how colonial land and planning systems are routinely manipulated by Israeli policy makers and courts. On the one hand, these institutions frame the spatial system as governed by a liberal 'free market', while on the other hand, and classify large tracts of indigenous land as 'dead', 'vacant' or 'abandoned'. This process contributes to the criminalization of indigenous Palestinian space and development and to pervasive house demolition. The paper focuses on the impact of 'urban terra nullius' on the varying degree of 'displaceability' and hence on the creation of 'creeping urban apartheid', increasingly typifying the political geography in urban Israel/Palestine, and urban regimes in contested cities...

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**Title: Hawaiian Youths Abroad: An Example of the Hawaiian Kingdom's Diplomatic Relations in The Nineteenth Century**

**Abstract:** Between 1880 and 1892, eighteen young Hawaiian nationals participated in the Hawaiian Youths Abroad program designed to train them to become the future leaders of the independent Hawaiian Kingdom. This program sent young men and women to study in various disciplines including medical practice, political science, engineering, and sculpture in six different countries around the world: Italy, Scotland, England, China, Japan, and the United States. King Kalākaua utilized diplomatic contacts and networks around the world to help place the HYA youth with experts in their respective fields. These networks and contacts were the result of decades of well-established and unprecedented relationships, diplomacy, bureaucracy, and infrastructure between the Hawaiian Kingdom and other nation states. This presentation will also detail the reimplementation of the program after a century-long hiatus, which began in summer of 2018, during which thirteen Native Hawaiian students from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa traveled to France and England to follow in the footsteps of the original participants sent to those countries in the late nineteenth century. The 2019 cohort will be traveling to Italy and England this summer to continue exploring the deep international relationships that the Hawaiian Kingdom created and maintained with other independent nation states during most of the nineteenth century.