

Political Geography Specialty Group



2023 PGSG PRECONFERENCE-- ABSTRACTS

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[Institute of Behavioral Science](#)

**University of Colorado at
Boulder**

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Abstracts are listed in session order.

9:20-10:35 Session I: Geostrategy & Regions

Rallying to Russia: Milorad Dodik and the Invasion of Ukraine

Emina Muzaferija (Virginia Tech)

The onset of the war in Ukraine interrupted the flow of Bosnia and Herzegovina's latest political crisis. Milorad Dodik, in particular, has been challenged by this rupture. After the initial efforts to claim a position of neutrality and block Bosnia and Herzegovina from 'taking a side' in the Russo-Ukrainian question, Dodik embraced Kremlin's war cause as just. From the outset, the war has served as both an obstacle and a prod to his politics. This paper explores instances and ways in which Milorad Dodik's secession plans and political discourse have been disrupted, molded, and changed by the war in Ukraine.

Between Land and Sea: Classification and Anatomy of "Amphibious" Powers

Shintaro Hamanaka (Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO))

While there have been substantial discussions on land and sea powers, we know little about "amphibious" powers in the rimland. Based on the empirical assessment of behaviors of eight states in the Eurasian rimland (Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, India, Iran and Turkey), this study investigates amphibious characteristics of rimland states and proposes classifying them into three categories. Lungfish states can behave like both sea powers and land powers at one point of time, just like lungfish that have both lungs and gills. Salamander states

try to play unique bridging role upon embarking on international cooperation, just like salamanders without lungs and gills that uniquely rely on skin breathing. Frog states change their modes of behaviors depending on phases, just like tadpoles/frogs that have gills/lungs. This study identifies geographic and non-geographic factors that affect the classification and behaviors of amphibious powers. The world becomes safer, when rimland states (lungfish states and frog states) behave like sea powers; they should be encouraged to embark on open liberal cooperation with fellow sea powers, playing the anchor role of the sea power-led system in the rimland/continent.

A Crisis of Influence: American Sphere of Influence Geopolitics During the Cold War

Jasper Schneider (Virginia Tech)

American Geopolitical Culture strongly rejects the concept of spheres of influence, but great power competition often dictates a tacit acceptance of rival powers' privileged zones of control. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union sought to maintain a sphere of influence along its border, and on multiple occasions resorted to the use of force to maintain control over foreign states. How did the United States react to the Soviet use of force in sovereign territory that fell within the Soviet privileged spheres of influence?

This paper looks at three case studies, the Hungarian Revolution, the Prague Spring, and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, and provides an analysis of the American foreign policy response, and the geopolitical and cultural values that informed policymakers' decision-making. Despite the limited interventions pursued by the United States, the United States constantly sought to undermine Soviet efforts to maintain a sphere of influence. In Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the United States prioritized long-term strategies on a global scale to weaken the Soviet Union in lieu of tactical interventions in opposition to the Soviet use of force. In Afghanistan, the United States continued to maintain its long-term strategies, while taking advantage of unique local factors to place additional strain on the Soviet Union. Across all three case studies the United States consistently pursued strategies that sought to weaken the Soviet Union as a whole, rather than just target individual spheres of influence.

Northeast Asia in Regional Perspective

Alexander Diener (University of Kansas)

Northeast Asia is a regional imaginary of limited capture among both academics and the general public. As a result, ongoing tensions relating to island claims, sea rights, borderlands, population mobilities, and resource access are too rarely considered from a Northeast Asian regional perspective. The region's parameters are also highly debated, with some conceptualizations restricted to Japan and the Korean Peninsula, while more expansive considerations include Russia, South Korea, North Korea, China, Japan, and Mongolia. This paper suggests that in addition to these countries, even maritime border zones in the Asia-Pacific and Arctic might be included as part of Northeast Asia's extent. In an effort to advance scholarly research on Northeast Asia, this paper brings into relief the region's unique history as an inter-imperial frontier and its role as an understudied European, Asian, and North American borderland. These broad themes require consideration of Northeast Asia as a site of mass migrations, increasing environmental fragility, tentative geo-economic integration, and enduring geopolitical contestation.

One Railway, Many Environmental Problems: Scalar Politics of a Belt and Road Infrastructure Project

Xiaofeng Liu (The University of Hong Kong)

This paper examines the scalar dynamics pertaining to the environmental governance of the Yuxi-Mohan section (YMR) of the China-Laos railway, a flagship connectivity infrastructure under the aegis of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Although studies have inspected the overseas consequences of the transboundary project, its domestic environmental and social effects remain underexplored. This paper develops a scalar politics framework integrating scale mismatch and rescaling to examine the politics within the environmental governance of the project. Cases including biodiversity conservation, land cover restoration, and water supply resumption were investigated through fieldwork, interviews, and archival analysis. It is argued that environmental conflicts of YMR arise from scale mismatches between ecological and institutional dimensions, between the extent of problems and responsibilities, and across different bureaucratic levels. Unexpected, indirect environmental and social impacts pose additional challenges owing to ambiguous responsibilities and complicated scale mismatches. The challenges are exacerbated by asymmetric power relations between local governments and railway companies, as well as contradictions between high international pressure and limited local capacities. While railway companies and environmental authorities typically rescale inward and downward to sustain governance within their own systems, local communities employ upward and outward rescaling strategies to seek more effective solutions. The research contributes to theoretical discussions on scale mismatches in environmental governance and provides practical implications for improving the sustainability of infrastructure projects by enhancing monitoring and establishing responsive mechanisms.

Camels Without Borders: Evaluating the Mediating Role of Livestock in the Climate-Conflict Nexus

Sarah Posner (University of Colorado Boulder)

Rural households in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) of Northern Kenya are predominantly dependent on livestock rearing for their livelihood. The region is characterized by prolonged drought periods which have become more frequent and severe due to climate change. Camel rearing is an adaptive strategy increasingly adopted by households due to their resilience to drought periods compared to other livestock. Research has shown that multispecies pastoralism offers income diversification that allows herders to better cope with economic, political and ecological instabilities (Megersa et al, 2014, Rahimi et al., 2021). What is less understood are the impacts of these newly acquired resources on current structures and dynamics that shape propensity to engage in conflict as well as how diversification changes over time as a dynamic process (see review by Loison, 2015). While camel rearing offers a climate resilient livelihood strategy, their presence on the landscape may magnify or perpetuate existing tensions due to peri-urban herding strategies which heightens tensions over perceptions of territory that across ethnic, livelihood, political, and cultural divides. Using Isiolo County as a case study, a major zone for camel keeping in Kenya, this paper argues the security aspect of livelihood diversification must be considered within adaptation and coping strategies in response to a changing climate. A longitudinal analysis of panel data uses mediation analysis to evaluate

the indirect causal relationship between perceived changes in drought and support for the use of violence, specifically the role of camel ownership.

Opening the black box of urban climate planning: Embedded autonomy and city diplomacy in Los Angeles

Benjamin Weinger (University of California-Los Angeles)

In a moment when social movements and political actors are appealing for massive federal climate interventions, urban governments are proposing purportedly ambitious plans to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts, promising both economic growth and protection from ecological threat. Yet they are not undergoing this planning alone. Urban governments are embarking on concerted efforts to promote their climate plans on the world stage, joining forces with global institutions and networks to forge cooperation and knowledge sharing. In this presentation I discuss twelve months of participant observation in the Los Angeles Mayor's Office where I have been "opening the black box" (Müller 2012) of urban climate planning by probing the practices of city-level actors, their formation of networks, and the social forces shaping what Evans (1995) identifies as the "embedded autonomy" of the state, or the city government's internal organization and relationship with economic agents. This project analyzes the roles and relationships between organizational actors in climate change politics, branching out from the Mayor's Office of the City of Los Angeles as the nexus of urban climate governance coordinating a host of consultancies, think tanks, law firms, advocacy organizations, foundations, corporations, and urban networks.

Youth Climate Activism in the MENA Region and Global Climate Governance

Mark Ortiz (Pennsylvania State University)

In a recent Ted Talk, Neeshad Shafi (2022), the co-founder and executive director of the Arab Youth Climate Movement Qatar, describes the lack of representation of youth from the MENA (Middle East & North Africa) region in the global climate politics conversation. Shafi (2022) highlights how local and global media reports ignore activists from the region even as they lionize activists from the Global North. In preliminary research conversations with activists and movement leaders in MENA countries, virtually all have mentioned themes consistent with Shafi's account and have indicated a need for greater scholarly research which amplifies the unique perspectives and work of climate activists in the region.

This paper draws on interviews and an online survey conducted with MENA youth activists and movement leaders who participated in the UN COP 27 climate negotiations in Egypt in November 2022. Through these methods, this paper aims to: 1.) characterize the contextual challenges which intersect with climate impacts in the region by centering youth voices; 2.) describe how youth climate activists and movements from the region engage within spaces of global climate policymaking and what limitations exist; and 3.) broaden the scholarly and public discussion of youth climate activism by shifting the emphasis to youth perspectives from a most impacted region.

References:

Shafi, N. (2022). Climate Action: Time for Arab Youth to Lead. [YouTube] [Video]. TedxYouth@DPSMIS. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDs0m7dVrmA>

9:20-10:35 Session III: Spaces of Exclusion & Inclusion

Left Behind by the State: The Politics, Narratives, and Meaning of Industrial Decline in Zonguldak, Turkey

Mehmet Eroglu (Michigan State University)

In 1940, the Republic of Turkey nationalized the Zonguldak coal basin, a decision driven by the desire to fully utilize the country's most vital energy resource. The state invested heavily in the region over the following decades, hiring more miners, adopting advanced technologies for coal extraction, constructing factories, and modernizing key transportation systems such as roads, railroads, air cable cars, and a harbor. To make coal mining more appealing, the state also provided a range of amenities for miners and their families, including social housing, schools, movie theaters, and a food allowance. By the 1970s, the Zonguldak region had become a hub of import-substitution industrial activities, the country's ideal for self-sufficient progress and prosperity. However, with the onset of rapid neoliberalization in Turkey in the early 1980s, the then-current government and following ones abandoned state-led industrialization investments, leading to the loss of Zonguldak's main economic activity. Following the state's gradual withdrawal, Zonguldak has faced unemployment, poverty, population decline and aging, and a loss of political importance. Drawing on oral history interviews, this paper gives voice to the people of Zonguldak to examine how they have interpreted, experienced, and reacted to this state-led deindustrialization. In order to do so, the study engages with several historical and contemporary events, including the 1990 miner's strike and ongoing illegal coal mining activities in the Zonguldak mountains. The narratives of Zonguldak residents provide insight into changing relationships between the state, capital, and society in Turkey from the 1980s to the present day.

The Multiple Social Realities of a Refugee Camp System: Reflections from the Serbian Archipelago

Jessica Collins (Macquarie University)

In response to the post-Agambenian turn in Camp Studies, there has been a range of research on the modern refugee camp. The camp has been conceptualized as a political technology in the management of migration. In addition to this, there has been an increasing awareness of refugee agency and the politicization of the camp by its residents. However, limited attention has been paid to the social differentiation across camps and the subsequent varying experiences of the camp. This research draws upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted on and within institutional refugee camps in Serbia, a so-called 'transit country' along the Balkan Route. Across Serbia's established archipelago of institutional camps, fieldwork demonstrates that there is no singular reality of the refugee camp, as different demographics of refugee residents have experienced a different camp archipelago. On the one hand, this occurs in response to the assignment of camps to refugees on the basis of nationality, family status or age. For example, unaccompanied and refugee children face a complex system of governance and are often moved between camps and institutions according to the ever-changing management of this demographic. On the other hand, camp residents who are physically immobile, face different experiences of daily life within the camp system compared to some of their fellow residents. Ultimately, depending on who you are,

the Serbian camp archipelago and its nature is constantly shifting and to fully understand the complexity of the camp system further exploration of these multiple social realities is needed.

A Welcoming City and Hospitable Residents? An Analysis of Private Hospitality in Bologna, Italy

Elisa Sperandio (University of Arizona)

Private hospitality –sometimes referred to as family hosting or homesharing– sees private citizens hosting migrants for periods ranging from short-term (a few weeks to 6 months) to medium- and long-term stays. Though private hospitality has roots in long-established practices like child fostering and short-term health stays, contemporary private hospitality in Italy dates back to a 2008 program initiated in the city of Torino. Since then, and with renewed strength and urgency in the 2010s as Europe faced a so-called “migrant crisis,” private hospitality has grown. This paper focuses on the urban approach to private hospitality in Bologna, Italy, a city with a progressive reputation and a vocal commitment to implementing and innovating programs of migrant reception. I draw from ethnographic fieldwork carried out in Bologna in 2022. As the growing body of literature on private hospitality highlights, this type of initiative can provide a more robust safety net for migrants, opening new professional and social opportunities. However, private hospitality can also reproduce narrow notions of migrant deservingness, present itself as an apolitical and “human” solution to housing crisis, and even forge new and onerous affective boundaries for migrants to navigate. After providing an overview of the history and contemporary state of private hospitality in Bologna, I look to the contested interventions of resident hosts, migrants, and practitioners engaged in homesharing. I examine how individuals and collectives complicate apolitical retellings of citizen involvement in reception, to instead advocate for political change at the local and national level.

On “Exception” and “Example”: From Inclusive Exclusion to Exclusive Inclusion

Md Azmeary Ferdoush (University of Eastern Finland)

Giorgio Agamben’s analysis of the relation of exception — inclusion of something solely by its exclusion — has been one of the most influential theoretical interventions in political geography especially, in the study of borders, camps, citizenship, state, and sovereignty. “Exception” is overwhelmingly applied to explain the treatment of a people or space who are excluded from the sovereign protection but remain included within its punitive mechanisms i.e., state of affairs that are inclusively excluded. In this fashion, however, what remains overlooked is the idea of “example” which Agamben hinted but did not treat in-depth. For Agamben, example functions as exclusive inclusion, contra exception. Taking this as the point of departure, in this paper, I call for a deeper analysis and wider engagement with “example.” Focusing on the treatment of Rohingya refugees and the former border enclaves in Bangladesh, I contend, viewing spaces of exception concurrently as spaces of example opens up avenues for further dialogue. It offers novel grounds for analysis where spaces and people are not just put in relation to the sovereign in terms of exception but also through example. In other words, it enables an understanding of how the same state of affairs are often interchangeably treated as “exception” and “example”

provided it serves the sovereign — a missing link not paid due attention in the scholarship of geography.

10:50-12:05 Session IV: Imaginaries & Practices of Territory

Infrastructural Affects: Making Territories with Roads and Towns across Himalayan Frontiers

Galen Murton (James Madison University)

To what degree are Chinese claims to territorial control across Himalayan borderlands contingent on Beijing's identification of Tibet as an inextricable part of the People's Republic of China? And how does the development of roads, border towns, and other built environments trouble Sino-Indian tensions across the region? Taking these questions as a starting point to examine contemporary life in shifting territorial spaces across Himalayan borderlands, this paper approaches critical geopolitics in Asia through two analytical frames. First, I conceptualize the 'Tibetan Frontier' to historicize the high degree of regionality and fluidity of boundary-making practices in Tibet at the turn of the 20th century; these spatial histories are fundamental to current disagreements over post-colonial borders throughout the broader Himalayan region. Second, I propose 'infrastructural affects' as a heuristic to critically examine the lasting legacies of the Simla Accord in geopolitical terms; I use several cases of road and town building across the McMahon Line and Line of Actual Control to highlight how infrastructure development continues to function as a territorial device across Himalayan frontiers.

"Russia's Border Doesn't End Anywhere": The Ever-Changing Manifestations of Territory in the Nationalist Rhetoric of Vladimir Putin

Fedor Popov (University of Colorado Boulder)

The infamous quote by Vladimir Putin well reflects the paradox of the territoriality of the Russian Federation. Russia is a rare example of stable and relatively strong sovereign state which borders not only have been repeatedly changed as declared (annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and of four Ukrainian regions in September 2022) and de facto (the loss of Kherson area in November 2022) but also have long been addressed as rather accidental if not temporal (the concepts of "Russian World" and "near abroad"). In these settings the never ending quest for unifying national idea that occupies Putin's mind for decades seems pointless: it is hard to put desired national (group) borders in congruence with the political ones if the latter are vague and fluid.

The paper addresses the evolution of this assumed quest within its territorial dimension: it explores how Putin refers to the territory (the actual/desired territory of Russia and neighboring countries as well as the concepts of territory/borders in general) in his statements, speeches and publications since 1999 to the present day when constructing state-focused nationalist discourse. It has been hypothesized that this discourse lacks consistency in a fundamental manner: the use of territorialized nationalist rhetoric turns out to be retroactive and meant just to find viable explanations for the changes as fait accompli. It has been also hypothesized that the public opinion remains unresponsive to these fluctuations and tends to accept any explanation if it is proposed by the state authorities.

Denmark's a Prism: Geographic Perceptions of the Danish Realm

Erik Breidinger (University of Arkansas)

The Kingdom of Denmark is remarkable in many ways. It is widely regarded as one of the most peaceful, developed, and democratic states in the world. However, the Kingdom also maintains political ownership of two other distinct nations and their homelands from periods of colonial and imperial expansion: The Faroe Islands and Greenland. This research will study how individuals in Denmark and the Faroe Islands perceive their political and cultural relationship as it relates to territorial autonomy. The study will also contribute to a larger body of research on autonomy regimes, or the range of options in which autonomy – the authority to operate a delimited territory independently – can be balanced between central states and their peripheral territories. Using mental mapping techniques, in-depth interviews, and participant observations, this project will generate a comparative analysis of individual perceptions of the Kingdom and how those perceptions inform public approval of existing and proposed autonomy regimes, which have been a key item of contest within the Kingdom since the Second World War. Mental mapping allows individuals to create a tangible version of their internal perceptions of external systems. Respondents in Copenhagen and Torshavn will be tasked with drawing the Kingdom of Denmark from memory with pencil and paper. Those maps will then be coded, aggregated, compared between the two populations, and supplemented by the study's other methods. With assistance from the University of Copenhagen and the University of the Faroe Islands, fieldwork will begin in Copenhagen, Denmark and Torshavn, Faroe Islands in Fall 2023.

The War in Ukraine: Challenge or Affirmation of the Territorial Norms of the Modern State System?

Alec Murphy (University of Oregon)

A good deal of the commentary about the Russian invasion of Ukraine casts it either as a return to the geopolitical dynamics of pre-twentieth-century periods when great powers periodically seized adjacent territories whenever they had the raw power and inclination to do so or as evidence of the declining relevance of the territorial ideas and practices that developed along with the modern state system. What these perspectives overlook is the extent to which the territorial norms that developed along with the modern state system are implicated in what has happened in Ukraine and the reaction it has generated. Three features of the Russia-Ukraine conflict attest to the inertia of those norms: the discursive ploys the Putin regime has advanced to justify the invasion, the nature and breadth of the global response to the invasion, and the spatial imaginaries that shape thinking about possible outcomes. A brief look at each of these provides insights into the influential role that the modernist territorial imagination continues to play in the Ukraine crisis—and beyond.

10:50-12:05 Session V: Political Geographic Histories & Institutions

Geopolitics of Decolonization: Carnegie Endowment's Diplomatic Training Program 1960-73

Jonathan Harris (King's College London), Ruth Craggs (King's College London), & Fiona McConnell (University of Oxford)

Recent trends in geopolitics towards the study of everyday agency have sharpened focus on the seemingly mundane connections and practices often overlooked in research focusing on international relations and diplomacy (Kuus, 2011; Jones, 2020). One such focus is the production and transmission of knowledge, in and through educational spaces and practices. It has long been argued that modern education is a powerful tool of statecraft for the making of citizens (Taylor, 2009) and geopolitical subjects (Müller, 2011), but less well-explored is the role of education at the interface of states, for example in international training programs.

This paper draws on the case study of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Fellowship program, which from 1960-73 provided international, bilingual training for diplomats of 'newer states' - former colonies that gained independence after 1945. Trainees were recruited from across the Caribbean, Africa and Asia to study in New York and Geneva, before the program shifted to Yaoundé and to Nairobi in 1973. Through archival research in three continents, and interviews with trainers and trainees on these programs, we argue that the spaces and practices of training were inherently geopolitical. The programs influenced social and professional norms and networks, in turn shaping state-building and international life. As a result the pedagogies, curricula and spaces of these courses can usefully be understood through the prism of (geo)political tensions related to decolonization and the Cold War. Moreover, the paper sheds light on lived experiences of education during formal decolonization and suggests ways these might inform efforts to decolonize education today.

Political Geographies of the Construction of Colonial Knowledge of Space and Place in Mengjiang: In the Field with Keijō Imperial University's Man-Mong Research Group and Tada Fumio

Robert Winstanley-Chesters (University of Edinburgh) and Adam Cathcart (University of Leeds)

This paper examines the place and function of Political Geography as an academic and research discipline at Keijō Imperial University, the primary higher education institution of Korea during the Japanese occupation of 1910-1945. It does this firstly through the prism of the work and field research of Tada Fumio (多田文男), a leading geographer connected to the university, and secondly through the writings of the university's Man-Mong Research Group, focused on researching Manchurian and Mongolian spaces and places. Both the work of Tada Fumio and the work of the research group at Keijo Imperial represent Political Geography and geopolitics' role in the processes of colonial expansion and the co-option and appropriation of knowledge through research collaborations between institutions of the Empire. In particular the paper considers the research newsletters produced by the Man-Mong Research Group, and the research reports of field trips to Mengjiang/Inner Mongolia after its conquest in 1939/1940, by the collaborative team of Korean and Japanese Geographers, led by Professor Tada Fumio. These documents were collected through archival study at the Janggseogak archive in Seoul and other institutions, and shed light on the construction and analysis of Political Geography during the colonial period as well as on the relational and collaborative processes of academic exchange, specifically in the field of Geography, between Korean and Japanese academics during the Korean colonial period

Letters from the Ashes: Nationalist Symbolism on Post-Yugoslav Postage Stamps

Anton Gosar (University of Primorska)

The symbolism of 1,975 postage stamps of 10 entities that have between 1987 and 2010 temporarily or permanently emerged on the territory of former (socialist) Yugoslavia were analysed in “Stamps, Nationalism and Political Transition” (Brunn, S. D., 2023). Stamps singled out for their political (visual) expression can be grouped into four major categories: a) promoting contemporary politics, b) commemorating historical events, acts and people, c) showing religious images addressing those of a certain faith/nationality, and d) visualising art, science and sports for patriotic purposes. The pre-transition themes (Yugoslavia) have increasingly pointed out the successes of the resistance during WW2, the marxist ideology, including its representatives, and the federation’s international achievements (being also a constituting member of the 127 strong Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Post-transition images omitted events, achievements and people of the pre-(kingdom) or post-WW2 (communist) periods (with rare exceptions). The 19th century’s national revival, often inspired by religion and its representatives, have become favourite stamp images of the nation-states that emerged. Two entities (Kosovo and Bosnia and Hercegovina) resisted for several years to issue stamps with images of humans. In Croatia and Bosnia and Hercegovina several stamp printing houses existed. In the period of our analyses characters and currency used have changed several times. Alternating Latin and Cyrillic characters on stamps are still used in two countries, Serbia and (North) Macedonia. On Montenegro stamps naming of the country has become bilingual: Crna Gora - Montenegro; stamps issued in Kosovo had used 3 languages to name the country. The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro (2003- 2006) has had stamp values in two currencies (Dinar and Euro), the currency of Kosovo changed from the German Mark (DM) to Euro (€). Other countries, with the exception of Serbia, where Dinar is still in use, switched values on stamps to own national currency or to Euro. Soon after the South-Slavic integration idea failed on nation-state’s stamp images a new dream-entity sprang up - the European Union.

Recording and Preserving the History of the PGSG

Kenneth Madsen (The Ohio State University at Newark)

The Political Geography Specialty Group first met in Los Angeles thirty-five years ago in 1988 ahead of the AAG meeting in Phoenix. In that year the USSR began to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, Benazir Bhutto became Prime Minister of Pakistan, and a Libyan bomb brought down a Pan Am jet over Lockerbie Scotland. Political Geography Quarterly (precursor to today’s Political Geography) was on its seventh volume and Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy (later Politics and Space) was on its sixth. Geopolitics would not start publishing until 1996. PGSG’s history is less consistently preserved than are major historical events or journal publications, but there is value in knowing our institutional origins and how we got to where we are today. Over the past two decades a digital archive of our past has slowly accumulated on the PGSG website and this continues to grow as we move forward in time and older information is re-discovered [public service announcement: if you can fill in missing gaps from memory or have any PGSG historical documents sitting in rusting file drawers or on retired laptops, please get in contact with me!]. I will be representing PGSG on a panel discussion held during the AAG that is organized by Jorn Seeman and entitled “Recording and Preserving the History of AAG Specialty Groups.” At this PGSG session I will present some preliminary details assembled about PGSG’s institutional history and what has been done to document and preserve that information.

Geo-Setting Research in China: Idea, Agenda and Approaches

Zhe Zhang (East China Normal University) and Zhiding Hu (East China Normal University)

In the past 12 years, geo-setting research has become one of the key points in China's geopolitical research, gathering many China's geopolitical research groups and promoting the revival of China's geopolitical studies. Based on the latest developments and trends of geopolitics and geo-setting research, this paper focuses on the idea, agenda and approaches of geo-setting research in China. Centered on the interactive practices of multiple geo-actors, its idea regards the geo-setting as the "information" or decision-making dataset for their interactive practices, which also results from their interactions. Thus, geo-actors' decisions or actions can be made under complete information, incomplete information, or even when true or false information cannot be distinguished. Under this new thought, its agenda generally includes three items: (1) the analysis of geo-setting elements (including fundamental, relational and structural elements); (2) the spatio-temporal process and mechanism of geo-setting; (3) the design of geo-setting technical system. In order to integrate different fields, various scales and multiple actors, this paper takes the conflict in northern Myanmar as an example to present three approaches of geo-setting research, namely, cross-field interaction, cross-scale coupling and multiple geo-actors' game playing. Under current complex situation of once-in-a-century changes and COVID-19 pandemic, clarifying the idea, agenda and approaches of geo-setting studies is of great theoretical value and practical significance for accurately and scientifically analyzing the current complex situation and proposing China's response strategies.

Rebel Regions: The Spatial Effects of Civil War Fighting on Political Party Formation and Election Performance in Kosovo, 2001-2021

Carl Dahlman (University of South Carolina)

Recent analyses of Kosovo's compound transition have focused on whether Kosovo's democratic institutions are becoming more reflective of "European style electoral politics," where social cleavages are more salient than ethnic cleavages in mobilizing voters (Wise and Agarín 2017). This paper argues that while it is appropriate to compare Kosovo to 'normal European democracies,' most analyses fall short by not properly exploring the geographical dimensions of the country's political institutions, namely the regressive impulses of parties that depend on often highly localized regions of voter support. The regionalization of party support tends to rely on voter mobilization strategies that reinforce pre-war social divisions and clientelist politics, exacerbating inter- and intra-ethnic rivalries. Following a review of the relevant literature, this article provides an historical political geographical account of political party formation in Kosovo before then conducting a spatial statistical analysis of the regionalization in intra-ethnic political competition as one of the more overlooked yet highly salient features of Kosovo's democratization. The article concludes by examining whether recent electoral shifts towards urban parties, and renewed prosecution of key KLA leaders, may provide the basis for a more stable electoral scene.

Using CubeSat Imagery to Monitor Internally Displaced Person (IDP) Camps in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

Lauren Herwehe Kim (University of Colorado Boulder)

Since October 2017, the Cabo Delgado province of northern Mozambique has experienced a conflict that has led to the deaths of 3,000 people and displacement of nearly one million. The insurgents who initiated the conflict cite economic and social grievances, particularly related to multinational corporations developing ruby and natural gas resources with little benefit to local communities. There is scant information on the location and characteristics of the internally displaced person (IDP) camps that host the individuals uprooted by this conflict. This is likely due to a combination of factors including the remoteness of northern Mozambique, the rapidly changing situation on the ground, and the fact that over 90% of the displaced have relocated to towns and cities rather than IDP camps (ACLED, 2021). While a body of literature exists on using remote sensing to track IDP camps, most studies use imagery from traditional large satellites (e.g., Sentinel-2 and Worldview). There is little literature that uses newer miniature satellites or cubesats. This study explores if and how we can track the location, size, and growth of these IDP camps with remote sensing imagery at various spatial resolutions. Specifically, I present an effort to track the development of two IDP camps, Corrane and Nangua, using and comparing the utility of remote sensing data from both traditional satellites and cubesats and employing methods of visual identification, radiometric comparison, image differencing, and unsupervised and supervised classification.

No Alternative: A Taxonomic Explanation for the Increasing Commonality of Negotiated Settlements to Civil Wars

Francis Naylor (University of Colorado Boulder)

Barbara Walter identified the puzzle of civil wars being unable to achieve negotiated resolution, with most being resolved on the battlefield. In recent years, the data has reversed course, with negotiated settlements becoming a common resolution to conflicts. Recent work by Howard and Stark suggest that the solution to the commitment problem, blamed by Walter for the lack of settlements historically, is found in third party guarantors to settlement agreements in more contemporary cases. An alternative explanation is that this is simply an analytic reality resulting from a shifting taxonomy of civil wars. Kalyvas offers a useful taxonomic space with the conceptual dimensions of symmetry and conventionality. Battlefield resolutions are more likely in the presence of some kind of asymmetry or conventionality to civil war, yet concurrent to the uptick in negotiated settlements there is an uptick in civil wars which are symmetric and unconventional. The main mechanism for resolving such symmetric unconventional conflicts is the negotiated settlement, as battlefield resolution is effectively impossible. This challenges the assumption that the recent uptick in negotiated settlement is a result of a solution to the commitment problem or information asymmetry, and is demonstrable using the same datasets, specifically the Correlates of War and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program Conflict Termination Dataset, originally leveraged by Walters and Howard & Stark respectively.

2:45-4:00 Session VII: Democracy, Difference, & Polarization

Rethinking Democratic Inclusivity and Taking the Boundary Problem Seriously

Chris Lizotte (Oxford Brookes University)

One of the late Clive Barnett's many considerable contributions to political geography is an analysis of dominant trends in critical geographic thinking that share an understanding of politics

as “ontological,” that is, as being constituted by particular and identifiable energies and qualities that are always in danger of being lost or covered over (Barnett, 2012). As such, authentic democracy is seen as a priori radical democracy, which is itself understood as being entirely concerned with contestation and conflict; questions of consensus-building or decision-making are usually seen as moments of (usually violent) hegemonic closure (see also Barnett, 2004).

This paper builds on Barnett’s advocacy for a phenomenological, rather than ontological approach to politics that focuses on communicative and deliberative understandings of political activity. I suggest that Barnett’s focus on the phenomenology of spaces of democracy and justice suggests an avenue for confronting the problem of delineating a legitimately democratic political community, sometimes summed up in the phrase “boundary problem.” I argue that thinking phenomenologically can offer a way to work against the global phenomenon of entrenching political polarization expressed as often in affective terms as in ideological ones. The most effective political spaces – in other words, the most just and the most morally justifiable – must not only facilitate gleaning and expressing claims of injustice, but also the assembling of the most inclusive possible public that can receive, debate and validate these claims.

Crooked Lines: Perceptions of Gerrymandering from Public Participation in Colorado Redistricting

Gabriella Subia Smith (University of Colorado Boulder)

Gerrymandering is commonly understood as the manipulation of maps in order to skew political representation favoring politicians and political parties, often diluting minority voting power. However, across the United States, persistent histories and narratives of political corruption and malfeasance have led many people to conflate gerrymandering and redistricting as one and the same. Coloradans are no exception. During Colorado’s latest redistricting, the state’s independent redistricting commission invited feedback from the public in the form of online comments, map submissions, and oral hearings. Across nearly 2500 online comments, Coloradans revealed a wide variety of understandings and accusations of gerrymandering in the 2021 process. While Colorado’s redistricting was widely considered to be a “success”, state Democrats and advocates for the Latinx community believe that the new districts were unfairly drawn along lines of race and political partisanship. In a state that is increasingly shifting from purple to blue, the number of competitive districts gives Republican politicians a five-point advantage relative to voting patterns in recent elections. Furthermore, even as Colorado’s Latinx population has grown to nearly a third of the general population, there is no district with a Latinx majority or plurality despite significant concentrations of Latinx voters in key areas around the state. This paper looks at narratives from public participation and news reporting throughout Colorado’s 2021 redistricting to analyze how people think about gerrymandering and what these perceptions mean for redistricting in the state, the feasibility of drawing a “fair” map, and possibilities for more equitable representation in the future.

Jurisdictional Integration, Equity, and Political Representation: Lessons from South Africa Stefan Norgaard (Columbia University)

In the United States, local jurisdictional lines maintain durable inequalities (Briffault, 1990: 361; Tronstine, 2018). Wealthy communities use municipal, school-district, and public-service

boundaries for what Tilly (1998) calls “opportunity hoarding,” while low-income communities are consequentially prone to becoming what Wilson (2008: 555) calls areas of “socially concentrated poverty.” Indeed, hyper-local spatial inequality is a persistent and strong driver of inequality of opportunity—and service-provision—in American today (Chetty et al., 2020; Anderson, 2022).

There may be political energy to ameliorate these inequalities. Progressive American political leaders, driven by movements and activists, aspire toward a racial and socio-economic reckoning. For such a reckoning to be substantially redistributive, local-government re-scaling might be required. Thus, I ask: what are the promises and risks of jurisdictional re-formulation?

To answer this question, I look to South Africa, which has experimented with comprehensive jurisdictional re-scaling through consultative and participatory Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). Post-apartheid IDPs attempt to explicitly un-do the “geography of apartheid” and have been measured through quantitative, qualitative, and case-study methods (Harrison, 2011; Todes, 2004; Todes et al., 2010; Thebe, 2016). Based on five months of dissertation fieldwork in Mahikeng, North-West (formerly Mmabaho and Mafikeng in Bophuthatswana), I find that new local-government and district-level jurisdictions can indeed cut across prior racial and economic fault-lines. Yet newly formed local governments can lose institutional memory, state capacity, and communities of common interest. These communities shape residents’ sense of political belonging and hold governments accountable. Future research should explore the implications of jurisdictional re-scaling and local-government legitimacy.

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Rethinking Peripherality

Noah Dasanaïke (Harvard University)

This article deconstructs the concept of peripherality into several dimensions and estimates the effect of these dimensions on support for the radical right. More specifically, I propose physical,

social, and economic dimensions of peripherality, drawing heavily from Bourdieu's types of capital, and outline measures through which they may be estimated. I then elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of, and provide several motivating examples for, each dimension. Finally, I draw on these separate dimensions of peripherality, and my respective proposed measures for each, to estimate the effect of different dimensions of peripherality on cross-national, cross-temporal support for national populism in Scandinavia and right-wing backlash in the United States. In doing so, I demonstrate that the extant literature both on urban-rural cleavages and peripherality more broadly, as well as on the geographical origins of support for the radical-right, are severely restricted by a certain operationalization of 'peripheral' and on the unique bounds of their own case settings.

2:45-4:00 Session VIII: Imaginaries: Past, Present, & Future

The Networked Imaginaries of the Far-Right: Spatializations, Translations, Hybridizations
Jason Luger (Northumbria University) & Max Martin (Northumbria University)

This paper presents the political/cultural far-right as a networked field of imaginaries (rhetorical constructions and symbols, idylls and philosophies, images and affinities) that take contextually specific spatial formations in particular settings and contexts. As ideologies and philosophies travel across virtual networks (flowing multi-directionally, from East and West to North and South), meanings and interpretations shift and become translated via locally-situated knowledges, forming complex hybridizations. Conceptually, the paper follows from Castells (1996) depiction of the 'network society' as a potentially radical force, and from Hardt and Negri's (2004) framing of 'the swarm' as an unstable entity which takes shape quickly and surprisingly and can just as easily disperse.

Drawing from empirical data including offline and online ethnographic and situated observation, as well as critical textual and visual analyses, the paper fills a gap in understanding the way that the contemporary far-right spatializes in a geographical sense (Ince, 2019; Luger, 2022) and also addresses the lack of recognition of far-right signposts as they mutate and quickly shift from one context to another. Substantively, the paper argues that networked and co-created constructions such as memes, T-shirt logos, slogans and specific brands are both created by far-right networks, but are also given meaning by these networks, taking on politically-charged significance and also sanitized of politics between one network 'node' and the next. Thus, the network society is easily appropriated by right-radicalisation, and thus prone to catalyse various spatial and aspatial 'swarms', which carry significant societal implications.

Roads, Political Imaginaries and State Building

Katharine Rankin (University of Toronto) & Nadine Plachta (University of Toronto)

This paper is the introduction to a planned special issue on "Roads, Political Imaginaries and State Building," which comes out of a workshop by the same title held at the University of Toronto in October 2022. The workshop convened research projects exploring the ethnographic dimensions of road and infrastructure development in Asia. The paper will make the case for ethnographic scholarship capable of drawing out how road building articulates cultural politics, state projects and geopolitical dynamics in distinctive ways across Asia, with a focus on insights

that can be derived from places positioned as “remote” or otherwise marginal to centres of state power. In so doing the paper draws on developments in infrastructure studies, anthropology of the state and political geography to make three basic arguments as follows: [a] ethnographic studies of roads embedded in their Asian contexts can furnish important insights on state-society relations and competing political imaginaries of development; [b] exploring how infrastructure informs the way people think, build and inhabit shared futures can open up political possibilities for social and ecological transformation; [c] roads scholarship lends itself well to addressing the politics of knowledge production in international research teams, broaching the ethics of engaging with policy and practice, and experimenting with innovative and creative modes of representing state-society relations.

Geography and the Colonial Encounter: World-Writing, Poetic Translation and the Ethics of Elsewhere

Reema Cherian (University of California, Davis)

Taking geography as part of a poetic tradition of world-writing, I examine geography’s potentialities for addressing an uneven geographic present and imagining alternative geographic futures by attending to the question of translation in encounters with other ways of being in the world.

These meditations centrally inform my research of state violence in the Kashmir Valley, which elucidates the relationship between hegemonic and contrapuntal imagined geographies. Against common understandings highlighting conflicts, I draw out the shared epistemologies, promises and limits of these interventions. Through a conversation about archival practice, genealogical method, and the question of context, I hope to foreground how the geopolitics of knowledge production, embodied in epistemological assumptions about scale, place, and space, shape aspirations to imagine otherwise, and thus, are also a matter of ethics.

Future Museums: Narrating Nationalist Techno-Futures in Germany & the UAE

Natalie Koch (Heidelberg University & Syracuse University)

Nationalisms are famously Janus-faced: in glorifying the nation, they simultaneously look backward and forward. Scholars have examined the backward-looking orientation of nationalism in many contexts, but far less attention has been given to the future in nationalism studies. This talk examines the future through one of the best known sites of constructing nationalist mythologies about the past – the museum. Drawing from ethnographic observations at two future-themed museums – the Museum of the Future in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Futurium in Berlin, Germany – I show how the techno-futures narrated in these sites are defined by specific nationalist tropes specific to their context. While there are important differences between the German and Emirati nationalist scripts employed in these sites, key similarities shed light on how people are taught to become nationalist subjects emotionally bound to the nation through feelings of pride and aspiration for the future.

Sub-National Border Closures During Covid-19: Shifting Borderscapes of Governance and Resilience

Andrew Burrige (Macquarie University, Australia)

This paper examines how sub-national Covid-19 border closures have affected governance and resilience of border communities in the Australian state of NSW. Border closures and changing governance of services, communication of rules, and management of mobility have shifted Australians' awareness and understanding of taken-for-granted internal borders.

As Radil et al argue, growing reliance on both national and sub-national borders to manage the Covid-19 pandemic, necessitates examination of "how bordering may become ever-more central to understanding our post-Covid-19 world". The NSW Cross Border Commissioner notes that along NSW borders there are 29 LGAs with approximately 620,000 residents, while "(m)ore than 2 million Australians live close to a NSW border." The implementation of state and territory Covid-19-related border closures since March 2020 has therefore had significant implications for interstate and community-level cross-border mobility. The legal and sociological implications of these closures transcend immediate pandemic management at the local and state level, in particular affecting the resilience of communities within border regions, such as their adaptation to rapid closures with indistinct timeframes for reopening.

Within this presentation, I reflect on preliminary findings from a case study of communities located within the Jervis Bay Territory, the smallest mainland territory of Australia, which closed its borders with NSW several times throughout 2020-2021. This territory is subject to multiple-levels of governance, including the Australian Federal Police, federal Department of Infrastructure, Australian Capital Territory government, Parks Australia, and the Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community Council (WBACC), while also being a site of the Australian Defence Force.

Utopia of Hope at Bhasan Char Island: Rohingya Refugees' Political and Ecological Carcerality in the Nation-state's extension

Sharif Wahab (Indiana University Bloomington)

Bhasan Char Island is the latest addition to the nation-state's effort to confine refugees and migrants using earth and water. The governance of the island renders the complexities of territorializing ocean space where the state aims to bound, border, and demarcate land to manage its population. Since 2018, the government of Bangladesh has promoted the island as an ideal habitat for Rohingya refugees. Contrary to such promotion, more than five thousand Rohingyas have escaped from the island since the relocation started in December 2020. In this paper, I use ethnographic evidence to answer the question - what is the embodied experience of getting trapped in a highly securitized territory? This paper reveals how the nation-state expands territorially by containing the displaced population. Combining discourse analysis on whether an island could offer a long-term residence for the refugees and fieldwork on this newly emerged island, I zoom into the everyday lives of the refugees and aid workers residing on the Bhasan Char island. This paper shows the ways in which the residents negotiate their political and ecological carcerality against the nation-state's expansive territorial practices.

Waiting All Night Long: Sea, Emotions and Memories from Ordinary Lives of Matsu Islands

Kai-Yang Huang (National Taiwan University)

Since early 19th century, the representation or mode of geopolitical from aristocratic elites to political leaders has influenced the spatial characteristics of thinking about world politics in different epochs (Agnew, 2003). Nowadays, geopolitical discourse is cultural-turned and the focus has shifted from think tanks and bureaucracy to the popular world (Ó Tuathail & Dalby, 1998). However, past research not only paid more attention to formal geopolitics and its practice, but also the so-called "popular" level also presented only the aspect from the first world. Those concerns did not take into account the life of ordinary people who actually lived on the front lines of borders.

Matsu is no exception. As the front line of the civil war between the Kuomintang and the CPC, previous studies shows the spatial resources and military deployment of Matsu's geopolitics (Li, 1996), which is under the keywords of "Cold War", "battlefield" and "militarization". However, it is impossible to know how the ordinary people, who are the actors of the bottom-level practice state, imagine their position in this geopolitical situation. Therefore, this article focus on the emotion of "local geopolitics," or everyday geopolitics, from the processual dynamics of "borderscape" (Brambilla, 2015), hoping to explore the emotion writings as the indicator to human mind thinking from Massumi(1995) to the ocean which inevitably see every day by two communities, local fishermen and guerrilla defenders. Based on the three memoirs, this paper argues how Matsu is imagined the concept of borders in the memory of offspring generation in the battlefield society built by the state.

The Carceral Geographies of Mass Immigrant Surveillance: How SmartLINK is Enabling ICE to Scale Up Its Electronic Monitoring Program

Austin Kocher (Syracuse University)

Electronic monitoring, also called e-carceration, is a form of carceral power that incorporates GPS ankle monitors and other technologies to monitor people within the criminal justice system. However, since 2004 ICE has used electronic monitoring technology through ATD program to monitor immigrants who are awaiting civil immigration court hearings or who have a deportation order. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's electronic monitoring program known as 'Alternatives to Detention' (ATD) is increasing rapidly, raising new questions about the future of the immigrant detention system as well as new concerns about the agency's expanding role in immigrant surveillance. As this paper demonstrates, the quantitative growth of ICE's ATD program can be attributed to the agency's reliance a new smartphone-based application called SmartLINK which has allowed ICE to overcome previous barriers to scale. Yet even more than increasing ATD enrollment numbers, SmartLINK also represents a next- generation surveillance technology that enables ICE to regulate immigrants' social lives through a regime of technological compliance that extracts personal and biometric data, particularly from people of color, and raises serious concerns about the intersection of data capitalism and the carceral state.

**4:10-5:40 Session X: Morrill Panel: Leveraging Political Geographic Theory for
Federal River Water Governance**

Panelists:

Srinivas Chokkakula (Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi/University of Massachusetts-Amherst)* *2023 PGSG Richard Morrill Public Outreach Award Winner

Eve Vogel (University of Massachusetts-Amherst)

Ellis Adams (University of Notre Dame)

Trevor Birkenholtz (Pennsylvania State University)

Marc Muller (University of Notre Dame)

James Wescoat (MIT)

In federal (interstate) river basins, trans-jurisdictional coordination within countries is crucial for pursuing the goals of water security, infrastructure development, environmental restoration, and social inclusion and justice, and for addressing emerging risks such as climate change. This is most critical for the 28 federal democratic countries including the USA and India. Geographers' political-geographic and political-ecological insights are needed to inform successful governance of these transboundary waters. Existing work on transboundary waters is often dominated by interests about international transboundary water sharing and dominated by the disciplines of International Relations and Law. This literature suffers from the weaknesses associated with 'Territorial Trap' (Agnew 1994, Furlong 2006). Geographers have contributed to highlighting these weaknesses and have offered promising directions for theorizing the problem using critical approaches from political ecology and critical geopolitics (Furlong 2006, 2008). These were acknowledged and welcomed by scholars from International Relations (see Warner and Zeitoun 2008, Warner et al 2017). Yet the geographic scholarship failed to advance theorizing in a consistent manner and there was little application of their ideas to inform praxis about transboundary river water governance. This panel seeks to revisit this problem and opportunity and consider a coherent response from geographers towards robust theorization and its relevance to praxis. How can institutions be built that can endure in a deeply federalized system while also remaining accountable to multi-scalar social and ecological interconnections and impacts?