

# Abstracts

## Session I: Climate and Arctic Politics

### **Climatic Changes and Sustainable Security**

Seyed Hadi Zarghani

Department of Geography, Ferdowsi University of Mashhad

[h-zarghani@um.ac.ir](mailto:h-zarghani@um.ac.ir)

*Weather has constantly played an important role in life and human existence throughout history, so that some scientists have considered the rise and fall of past civilizations completely under the influence of climate changes. Although due to tremendous achievements in the field of science and technology, this deterministic view is less accepted and confirmed by scientific societies, but at the present time again life and human existence has been affected by climate and climatic changes as well. Then, because of the destructive effect of human activities, we see the onset of climatic changes, which have undesirable effects on human life and have caused environmental security and human societies to face with severe threats, on global, regional and local scale. Warming of the earth and its negative consequences on human societies, animal life and biological resources; the onset and persistence of droughts, the occurrence of destructive storms and floods, prevalence of epidemic and contagious diseases, reduction of water resources, escalation of conflicts and quarrels over water and food resources are examples of basic challenges which have been created mainly due to the recent climatic changes. They also have seriously threatened human society's security in different political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. In addition to explaining climatic changes, the article attempts to investigate and analyze the role of these changes in sustainable security in human societies through descriptive- analytical method.*

### **Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience, and the Politics of Catastrophe in Jamaica**

Kevin Grove

Department of Geography, Dartmouth College

[kevin.j.grove@dartmouth.edu](mailto:kevin.j.grove@dartmouth.edu)

*The ethical imperative to save humanity from the impending catastrophe of climate change has, with limited exceptions, pre-empted critical reflection on the cultural and political dimensions of resilience-building initiatives. Progressive-minded scholars and practitioners have uncritically adopted the language and techniques of population control. The field of disaster management offers a case in point. Since the 2005 Hyogo Framework, disaster management has focused on creating "cultures of safety" characterized by populations that proactively mitigate their disaster risks in order to secure existing socio-ecological order.*

*Against this apolitical instrumentalism, I draw on fieldwork conducted with Jamaica's national disaster management agency to show that community-based resilience programs create novel forms of risk that enable populations to be governed in ways that extend and intensify global liberal governance. Resilience operates through what I call, after Deleuze and Guattari, "adaptation machines", diffuse and decentralized mechanisms that target, modify, and appropriate marginalized populations' inherent adaptability in order to sustain neoliberal development. At the same time, my analytical focus on the constitutive excess of adaptive capacity problematized by adaptation machines highlights subversive possibilities for resilience not only to environmental change, but also to the socio-ecological catastrophe of global neoliberalism.*

## **Engineering the North American Waterscape: The High Modernist Mapping of Continental Water Transfer Projects**

Benjamin Forest and Patrick Forest  
Department of Geography McGill University  
[benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca](mailto:benjamin.forest@mcgill.ca)

*Starting in the late 1950s, at least fifteen separate proposals to radically alter the North American waterscape emerged. These proposals typically sought to bring water from northern regions (especially in Canada) to southern ones in the United States and Mexico through canal construction, the massive alteration of river flow, and (in some cases) nuclear excavation. This study analyzes the cartographic strategies used in support of re-engineering the continent's water flow. The project maps promoted a specific political agenda that sought to redistribute North America's water resources by transcending political boundaries and physical barriers. Furthermore, conventions of cartographic representation, particularly the need for generalization and simplification, worked to reinforce and heighten the original modernist, engineering ethos. This led to representations that de-emphasized political communities and boundaries, that both assumed and hid nuclear technology, and that ultimately removed water from the natural environment by treating it as a purely abstract resource.*

## **The 800-Pound Polar Bear in the Room: Sovereignty as a Leading Theme in Canadian Arctic Policies**

Alan Grove  
Department of Geography, University of British Columbia  
[Groveaj1@gmail.com](mailto:Groveaj1@gmail.com)

*The Arctic is often cited as a key part of the Canadian identity, both in federal policy documents and by political commentators. Any challenge to the claims of Canada in the region is taken as a direct challenge to its identity as a Northern nation. This paper focuses on sovereignty as a leading theme in the history of the Canadian Arctic, and how that continues to today. I argue that a militarized and political understanding of sovereignty eclipses more nuanced understandings of the situation in the Arctic. The realities of the Canadian Arctic cannot be handled simply through means of military presence or political stagecraft, but require alternative visions. Examples from the past and present are used, from the parliamentary reaction to the 1969 voyage of the SS Manhattan through the Northwest Passage to the future viability of the Northwest Passage as a major shipping route when compared to the North Sea Route. Political sovereignty is the primary concern for the federal government, while the alternatives are pushed to the background despite their potential to have more impact in the Canadian Arctic.*

## **SAR coverage issues in the NW passage and solutions**

David Schwartz  
Department of Geography, California State University at Long Beach  
[danthonyschwartz@gmail.com](mailto:danthonyschwartz@gmail.com)

*The Arctic is undergoing drastic changes due to climate change which has also created new opportunities and concerns for the states and organizations in the region. The concern of this paper is how this warming affects shipping activities in the Northwest Passage of the Canadian Arctic. These activities range from shipping to environmental tourism based cruises, as well as individuals challenging the Passage themselves. This warming has increased the use of the Passage by these operators and has stressed Canadian search and rescue resources (SAR) with an increased risk of loss of life due to the inability to provide direct rescue ability. Through the course of this paper the exact forms of this increased use will be highlighted to show what form it will take to show what exact stresses will be placed on the SAR system. This will be used to show what shortcomings are in the SAR system in place in terms of capability and ability followed by*

*what short-term measures can be made to solve these deficiencies. Taken together, the whole system will be shown with the hope that a potential problem will be averted before the system is faced with a situation that could overwhelm it.*

## **Session II: Border Enforcement**

### **Ungoverned and Uncivilized: Border Walls and the Discourse of Security**

Reece Jones

Department of Geography, University of Hawai'i

[reecej@hawaii.edu](mailto:reecej@hawaii.edu)

*Despite predictions of an increasingly borderless world through globalization, the countries that are often described as the oldest democracy in the world, the largest democracy in the world, and the most stable democracy in the Middle East built a combined total of 5,700 kilometers of security barriers on their political borders over the past decade. Drawing on ethnographic field research in the United States, India, and Israel, this presentation analyzes the discourses of security that justified the construction of these barriers and argues they were based on similar representations of ungoverned territory and uncivilized people on the other side. In all three cases, the border walls legitimate and intensify internal exclusionary practices. The walls legitimate exclusion by providing a material manifestation of the abstract idea of sovereignty, which brings the claim of territorial difference into being. It intensifies exclusionary practices because the continued presence of "the other"—whether immigrants or potential terrorists—inside the state's territory after the construction of the barrier suggests that even more forceful measures will be deployed in the future.*

### **Security in the Americas: Border Enforcement in Latin America**

Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary

Institut de Géographie Alpine, Université Joseph Fourier

[Anne-Laure.Amilhat@ujf-grenoble.fr](mailto:Anne-Laure.Amilhat@ujf-grenoble.fr)

*The security discourse has become a predominant narrative for border analysis in North America. In the meantime, Latin American borders continued to be seen through the integrative process which was impacting the whole continent, with the implementation of multiple commercial alliances. This vision has been nuanced showing that continental integration is by no means equivalent to effective borderlands dynamics. On the reverse, many traditional exchange flows are being slowed down by the new effectiveness of border controls, aiming at reducing migration at a regional level. In the past two years, some presidential narratives have gone far beyond, offering to countries such as Chile or Costa Rica to "smartly" close their borders. The presentation will present a first analysis of these barrier politics in Latin America, trying to establish links with the narratives and policies which dominate in the North. The case-studies of the Atacama desert (Chile / Bolivia) and the San Juan river (Costa Rica / Nicaragua) serve as a basis for the demonstration.*

### **Organized Crime, Illicit Geographies and the Spatiality of Illegal Behavior**

Peter D. A. Wood

Department of Geography, Florida State University

[pdw10@my.fsu.edu](mailto:pdw10@my.fsu.edu)

*This paper addresses organized crime, social deviance and the relationship between poverty and illicit behavior by engaging with analysis of urban governance and geography as a means for broadening the scope of geographical inquiry in these realms. Cities are commonly viewed as breeding grounds for illicit markets and criminal groups, and these cities*

*come into existence due to a variety of influences. By acknowledging the political, legal, social, economic and cultural components to places and flows it is possible to improve the likelihood that geography as a discipline can contribute more to discussion of organized crime and illicit activity. The inherent spatial nature of topics such as narco-trafficking, arms sales, digital piracy, prostitution, smuggling and other often illegal acts is apparent, which gives promise to the idea that progress in political geographical discourse can effectively deal with such issues. Further exploration of the spatial components to criminal processes can propel understanding of politically sensitive foci while simultaneously benefiting from such explorative measures.*

### **Captive bodies: The Topology of Kidnapping on the U.S. Mexico Border**

Jeremy Slack

School of Geography and Development, University of Arizona

[jeremys@u.arizona.edu](mailto:jeremys@u.arizona.edu)

*Kidnapping is an increasingly popular and violent way to extract money from people. In recent years Mexico has experienced a particularly difficult kidnapping epidemic across social, racial and gendered landscapes. I will begin with types of kidnapping in Mexico, focusing on my research with the kidnapping of undocumented migrants. I draw on interviews from recently deported migrants along the U.S. Mexico border from 2008 – 2011 (n > 1500). I will analyze these interviews and surveys about people's experiences being kidnapped to better understand the different clandestine spaces of kidnapping as bodies are moved back and forth across the border, generating a topography of kidnapping which blurs the distinctions made by political boundaries. This landscape spans from the isthmus of Mexico to the border zone, all the way to migrant hubs such as Phoenix, Arizona, but also highlights the relational topology of kidnapping that blurs geopolitical boundaries and Euclidean space. The process of collecting and holding bodies for profit is one of the most drastic and terrifying by products of the hyper-securitization of the U.S. Mexico Border.*

### **Session III: Migration**

### **Europe's Security Strategy and the Securitization of Migration: A Better World for Whom?**

Nannette Abrahams

Department of Human Geography, University of Frankfurt, Germany

[abrahams-ccesay@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:abrahams-ccesay@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

*Europe's self-defined "responsibility" as a global player to "preserve peace" and strengthen "global security" in order to create "a better world" based on "core European values" has been advanced strategically since the establishment of its Common Foreign and Security Policy in 1993. In order to understand the "Realpolitik" that follows such strategies this paper explores the underlying assumption of security. Since the end of the bipolarity of the cold-war period the dominant concept of national security has been challenged (Bailey 1975). Security in a post-9/11 world has been re-defined along the lines of so called "transversal threats" (among which illegal immigration is placed next to terrorism). That formerly separated fields of internal and external security are increasingly merged. Critical European security studies call this transnationalization of security and its convergence of internal and external security through cooperation and through re-structuring of its agencies "securitization" (Didier Bigo 2000). Based on securitization theories this paper will do a document analysis of relevant strategies in order to evaluate how security and insecurity is constructed in the context of the externalization of European migration policies (Security Strategy 2003, Implementation Report 2008, EU Internal Security Strategy 2010, Global Approach to Migration 2006).*

## **Police, Immigrants, and Immobilization: The Role of Traffic Enforcement in Immigration Enforcement in the U.S. South**

Mat Coleman

Department of Geography, The Ohio State University

[coleman.373@osu.edu](mailto:coleman.373@osu.edu)

*In order to contribute to the emerging mobilities research paradigm in human geography, I explore strategies of immobilization levied at undocumented immigrant mobilities in the U.S. south. The paper, which is a review of recent fieldwork findings, looks specifically at the use of traffic enforcement by law enforcement agencies who possess the power to make arrests based on immigration status – or, alternatively, who incarcerate with law enforcement agencies who have that authority. The findings are very much in agreement with Cresswell et al on the problem of how mobility is structured: rather than mobility subject to regulation in the spaces in between places, we note the implosion of an immigrant immobilization regime into the very networks of immigrant mobility that make up cities in the so-called “nuevo new South”.*

## **Fragmented Migration: New Forms of Mobility at a Time Of Restriction**

Michael Collyer, Department of Geography, University of Sussex

[m.collyer@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:m.collyer@sussex.ac.uk)

*Political transitions in North Africa during 2011 reinforced earlier migration patterns and created new forms of movement. In some cases greater individual freedoms have allowed people to leave the region more easily, yet this has been balanced by more intensive controls, even within the EU where controls between some Schengen zone states were briefly reimposed. Tensions between greater freedom and continued or refined restrictions have been apparent for some time in North Africa, though the period of political turmoil during 2011 has re-emphasised these patterns and highlighted the uncertainty of policymakers, particularly in Europe, to respond. This paper draws on recent fieldwork in southern Tunisia and Egypt with migrants leaving Libya. A distinctive feature of this migration was the high proportion of third country nationals amongst those forced to flee Libya. Greater attention to the impact of migration controls on the movement of individuals highlights the malleability of space in a migration context, particularly across the Mediterranean.*

## **Session IV: War and Violence**

### **Kill or Capture? Apprehending the Battlefield through Interfaces of Control**

Richard Nisa

Department of Geography, Rutgers University

[rnisa@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:rnisa@rci.rutgers.edu)

*Recent scholarship has focused on the ways in which an array of new military technologies have redefined the nature of the battlefield, shortened the kill chain, and laid claim to the production of so-called precision warfare. More often than not, these studies concentrate on one side of the kill/capture dualism that fills the pages of military doctrine and strategic analyses: the use of deadly violence. In this paper, I explore the shifting spatiality of the other side of the slash, paying close attention to the ways in which the changing geographic imaginaries of the battlefield have altered the spatiality of apprehension. Capture is a productive spatial process, quite literally making something—the prisoner of war, the civilian internee, the unlawful combatant (and the attendant administrative processes for each)—that must be managed, moved, and cared for. Yet despite its significance as a spatial threshold, capture remains largely absent from*

*studies of wartime violence. Countering this trend, and making the space of apprehension visible as an interface of control, I trace the connections between several battlefield tactics used in the conflict in Afghanistan, describing how the performance of capture has been designed and managed as a specific site of intervention.*

### **'Race', Space, War, and Tropicality in Colombia**

Sara Koopman

PhD Candidate, Department of Geography, University of British Columbia  
[sarakoopman@gmail.com](mailto:sarakoopman@gmail.com)

*What 'race' means and how it functions varies across time and place. Others have argued that race is regionalized in Colombia, and region racialized. But this regionalization is also naturalized. Race' is not 'natural,' but I will argue here that in Colombia it is 'naturalized' through persistent colonial imaginaries of tropicality that also work to racialize certain spaces of 'nature.' The lowlands are imagined as black, the highlands as white. Despite claims to be a 'mestizo' nation, there continues to be a strong idealization of and pressure to 'whiten' in Colombia. Afro-Colombian and indigenous people have long been the poorest in the country, but they have become even more so through the current war, which is driven by desires for capitalist development and 'modernity' - imagined as white. Some brave Colombians resist these scripts.*

### **It Could Be And Could Have Been Otherwise: Repoliticizing Mexico City's '68**

Nicholas Jon Crane

Department of Geography, The Ohio State University  
1036 Derby Hall, 154 N. Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210  
[crane.61@osu.edu](mailto:crane.61@osu.edu)

*This paper proposes a non-Euclidean mode of engagement with a well-known massacre in Mexico City neighborhood Tlatelolco on 2 October 1968. Commentators on the massacre tend to treat "Tlatelolco" as the given historical geographic unit for Mexico City's '68, its "context" – where and when the city's '68 took place and from which it therefore naturally takes its significance. The approach proposed here questions the obviousness of "placing things in context," the boundary-making move that inaugurates much field research in geography and its cognate disciplines. I suggest that this spatial-temporal circumscription of Mexico City's '68 forecloses its contemporary political relevance, and that posing Tlatelolco as the container of '68 undergirds a depoliticizing Euclidean inquiry into the unrest of that year. Against the imposition of representational closure endemic to that mode of inquiry, I ask, how and to what effect might one restore contingency to Tlatelolco? Drawing from Foucault and Rancière, I suggest that, with a non-Euclidean orientation to archival and ethnographic research, one can denaturalize inherited exclusions from "the field," reveal overlooked connections through which existing social formations emerged, and – calling their durability into question – thereby make politics possible.*

### **Special Authorities as States of Exception**

Daniel Rogers, CUNY Hunter College  
[danielgrogers@gmail.com](mailto:danielgrogers@gmail.com)

*Territorialism—the naturalizing and reifying of existing geopolitical units—undergirds contemporary theories and practices of sovereignty. Subnational political units are justified according to the same logic, yet they complicate and in certain cases problematize it. They have not received due attention as elements of the nested hierarchy of the global political system. In the U.S., the individual states have persisted as semi-sovereign political units even as metropolitan regions have surpassed them as economic and cultural units. This mismatch has spurred the growth of new geopolitical entities dubbed by some "special authorities." In metropolitan regions divided by more than one state—as is the norm*

*in the Northern U.S.—special authorities such as the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey have succeeded in overcoming physical and political barriers to suture urban regions with transportation infrastructure.*

*Yet despite their undeniable ability to “get things done,” they exemplify the contradictions between the contemporary political rhetoric of representation and the reality of unchecked power. Composed of unelected officials, they have quietly circumvented state constitutional limits on debt and taxation, financing their projects through tax-exempt bonds and toll revenue. Often borne of interlocking fiscal, infrastructural, and political crises, they have outlasted their initially temporary mandates through legal and political maneuverings. I will explore in this paper the extent to which they can be considered as “states of exception,” in both the temporal and spatial senses. Though their quotidian endeavors seem banal compared to the world-historical and violent acts of nation-states, I will argue that for similar reasons they should spur us to scholarly and political action.*

## **Session V: Geopolitics, Geoeconomics, and Resources**

### **Methodological Implications of Studying Think Tanks as Geopolitical Actors**

Ievgenii Rovnyi

Department of Human Geography, Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main

Robert-Mayer-Strasse 6-10, 60325 Frankfurt am Main

[rovnvi@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:rovnvi@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

*The paper contends that think tanks are crucial to understanding contemporary practices of geopolitics and thus deserve more than a passing mention in the critical geopolitical school of thought. After a brief discussion of think tanks? slippery and elusive character, the focus of the presentation shifts to the methodological implications of studying these organizations. I dwell in particular on the possibilities and limitations of, on the one hand, doing discourse analysis of the enormous think tank output and, on the other hand, engaging with think tanks through fieldwork as lived experience, emphasizing how these research strategies are fundamentally intertwined. The presentation thus seeks to contribute both to a more conceptually rich understanding of think tanks and to a further sophistication of the methodological research agenda of critical geopolitics.*

### **Willing the Metaregion into Existence: Strategy, Ideology, and Discourse around the Black Sea Region**

Corey Johnson

Department of Geography, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

[corey\\_johnson@uncg.edu](mailto:corey_johnson@uncg.edu)

Ulrich Ermann, Leibniz Institut for Regional Geography

*The construction of metaregions such as the “Black Sea Region” (BSR) is invariably messy, a project involving many actors working toward often divergent ends from different starting points. In the case of the Black Sea, as the European Union’s gaze extends further eastward, Russia reasserts in its “near abroad,” and Turkey becomes an ever more powerful regional actor, the Black Sea has become a convergence zone of sorts. But it is also a space in which regional cooperation in environmental, economic, political, and energy arenas appears largely elusive. This is certainly not due to a lack of initiatives. The term “Black Sea,” while obviously connoting a body of water, for strategic purposes increasingly represents a sort of cultural-political neutral zone where regional geopolitics plays out. One need only look at recent discussions of various options for transporting Caspian and Russian energy to markets in Europe and beyond*

*to observe this. In this paper, we perform a textual analysis of policy documents and conference proceedings devoted to the BSR. The paper provides a critical overview of attempts to construct this metaregion and contextualizes such attempts in critical regional studies literature. We propose ways in which progressive regional cooperation efforts often mask the interest-driven politics of key actors.*

## **Purifying the Neighboring Economic Spaces of the EU: EU Harmonization Policies in the Republic of Georgia**

Rachel Naylor

Department of Human Geography, University of Frankfurt, Germany

[naylor@em.uni-frankfurt.de](mailto:naylor@em.uni-frankfurt.de)

*My topic explores EU harmonization processes and policy adoption in the Republic of Georgia, one of several countries in the EU's "ring of friends"—countries, with a shared purpose to be cooperation partners with the EU and to integrate into the EU's single market, that occupy neighboring spaces and are thus geographically posed to be implicated in the securitization of border regimes as a transit or point of passage into the flow of goods and people. Certain EU policy regimes undertaken (or are promised to be undertaken) in Georgia seek not only to operate as modes of surveillance and regulations to protect Europe from the flow of illegal or illicit goods or people, but also operate as the legal mechanism to guarantee (the performance of) financial mobility. As the EU works to "purify" the economic space in the "ring of friends" in harmonization with EU standards, the disparity between the political rhetoric and formal agreements to adopt EU policies—and the rise in foreign direct investment, a key objective to the Georgian government—and how they actually reflect economic development in this "emerging market" is explored in my research. The study of the political dimension of the investment climate nurtured by the EU and Georgia posed by the ostensible rise in FDI targets and in Georgia's place in the rankings of international benchmarks over the recent years shows the performative character of the seemingly successful transition to a "free market" economy, linked to democracy-building in postsocialist space.*