



Political Geography
Specialty Group

2014 PGSG PRECONFERENCE

ABSTRACTS

University of South Florida Monday April 7 2013

Session I: Militarism and Diplomacy - Heron Room (3709)

Chair: Ken Madsen, Ohio State University

1. Frames of Law: Operationalising & Transnationalising the Battlespace

Craig Jones, University of British Columbia

Advanced militaries pride themselves on the fact that their wars have become “surgical, sensitive and scrupulous” (Gregory 2011), but they also increasingly boast of a series of judicial processes that ensure the conduct of their wars is “legal” and therefore – they hope – legitimate. But when war is represented as legal, and when a vast legal armature – technical, embodied, visual and reflexive – is put in place to secure such representation we witness the reality of war and its bloodied and fragmented materialities as conforming to and indeed producing a world made simple by law: the perfect war is a legal one. Might we not therefore rephrase Butler (2009) in asking whether our ‘frames of war’ are not also now frames of law? In this paper I offer a provisional answer, but argue that, lest we see law everywhere and to avoid reducing all war to law, the juridification of the battlespace requires a careful consideration of what is novel (and what is not) about the changing relationships between war, law and space. I ground all of this in what are two ostensibly divergent, though structurally related movements, both of which are at the helm of later modern warfare/lawfare: First, the ‘operationalization’ of the battlespace (Smith forthcoming) and the bid to regulate and secure individual operational conduct and second, the ‘transnationalisation’ (Benvenisti 2010; Gregory 2012) and deregulation of the battlespace (Megret 2012).

2. Plugged in: social media and the military

Alasdair Pinkerton and Peter Adey, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University of London

Online communications and social media technologies are creating more complex, spatially separated and unpredictable communities – creating opportunities for transnational communication and cooperation, and, equally, posing profound challenges for policymakers and security-related institutions such as the military. Media-aware home audiences, technology-savvy adversaries and plugged-in military personnel have contributed to the increasing ‘messiness’ of the military communications ecosystem, challenging long-established practices and protocols of media ‘control’. In the early 21st century, the UK and other international militaries are under increasing pressure to keep up with the pace of communications change and to adopt and implement new policies, procedures and guidelines to cope with operational and tactical implications of rapidly evolving social media technologies. These are not inconsiderable, or trivial, challenges, and yet there is growing evidence to suggest that online engagement policies and social media guidelines are unevenly

understood and given unequal treatment and seriousness across the military leadership. This paper draws on recent and ongoing research produced within an interdisciplinary team at Royal Holloway University of London and explores the shifting geographies of military-related communications in the era of social media. In so doing, we explore the apparent spatial collapsing and confusion of the ‘front line’ and the ‘home front’, issues of morale, operational security and the emergence (in the context of the UK) of social media ‘ninjas’.

3. Assembling Foreign Policy: Materiality and banal (trans)nationalism in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Jason Dittmer, Department of Geography, University College London

Banal nationalism, 20 years on, has become ensconced as a key concept in political geography, drawing attention to everyday practices and discourses that reproduce nationalism. This research extends this perspective to the state, considering the banal practices of mediation that produce foreign policy. While some work on this has been done (Kuus 2013; Neumann 2012), I go further by adopting assemblage theory (Dittmer, early online) as a lens to examine the emergence of both national and transnational agency. Empirically, this paper will report on the initial results of a larger study on the creation of the British Foreign Office and the moments in the 20th century when it was effectively enmeshed in larger circuits of materials and affects, enabling new agencies to emerge. The paper concludes with a reflection on how this approach pushes the concept of banal nationalism in new directions.

Session II. Urban Engagements – Sandhill Crane Room (3708)

Chair: Karen Culcasi, West Virginia University

1. (In)Visible Boundaries: The Negotiation of Urban Citizenship in the Uneven Housing Development of Nanjing

Sarah Tynen, Department of Geography, University of Colorado

The paper examines class antagonism and housing development through everyday experience of Chinese residents’ changing notions of the role of the welfare state, economic development, and the privatization of public land. The concept of the “right to the city” is challenged in the Chinese context through cultural notions of personal quality, self-responsibility, and a moral imperative of state welfare. I argue that a multiscalar approach to examining contested notions of urban citizenship through the everyday experience as contextualized in broader processes of global and state restructuring is crucial to understanding the political economy of urban redevelopment in post-socialist China. The paper focuses on the following research question: How do classed citizens in China (rural migrants, urban lower-class, and urban middle-class) negotiate rights to urban citizenship and access to space? Through an ethnographic study in two field sites—a gated community and a dilapidated old city neighborhood—I examine the everyday experience of urban redevelopment as it constructs classed citizens. Discourses that justify and naturalize social stratification are examined through qualitative analysis of personal narratives. I conclude that profound and complex socio-spatial divisions between and within socioeconomic groups are based on the restructuring of local state control and contestation over rights to urban citizenship.

2. Perspectives of Power Relations through Urban Development Projects in Tallahassee, Florida

Peter Wood, Department of Geography, Florida State University

The city of Tallahassee has recently initiated several redevelopment projects in its urban center and other areas, including low income housing zones and underused industrial districts. While these efforts have taken place throughout the city, some have affected the Frenchtown neighborhood, an area with historical ties to European immigration and, more contemporarily, a low income minority population in close proximity to university student housing complexes. This study analyzes interview data using Q methodology to assess how those involved with redeveloping Tallahassee perceive the distribution of political power impacting the Frenchtown neighborhood. Relatedly, concerns exist over the displacement of working class residents in Frenchtown. Using this definition of gentrification (Glass 1964) and expanded definitions (Lees et al 2008), this paper explores how public and private measures to develop Tallahassee are received as both overt and implicit forms of spatial control. These findings will be situated within research on urbanism and reurbanization in order to understand the indirect ways Tallahassee development policies are implemented (Buzar et al 2007). By placing Tallahassee into a broader framework of development in the U.S. South this study can enhance understanding of the theoretical and empirical contexts within which these trends are occurring (Lees 2007; Lees 2012).

3. Inducing the ‘Phantom Region’ of Central Germany – Governing through Spatial Organisation-in-Becoming

Roger Baars, Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany

Recently, the multi-dimensionality and temporality of regions as important aspects of region building processes (re-)emerged in academic debate (e.g. Cox, 2013; Crawshaw, 2013; Goodwin, 2013; Harrison, 2013). The shifting spatiotemporal organisation of regions can be illustrated by the unfolding interdependencies between spatial lexicons of place, territory, and network. Regions are continuously changing and always ‘in-becoming’ with each analysis being only a temporal snapshot of the current amalgamation of spatial elements at work. In the context of the Central German Metropolitan Region – a frail political alliance comprising the three German federal states of Thuringia, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt – this paper focuses on two interrelated issues. First, it aims to identify the role and motives of political stakeholders inducing multiple spatialities of the Central German Metropolitan Region. Second, it demonstrates how political actors inscribe and utilise the ‘phantom region’ to push their political agenda and to sustain political support. In other words, it will be shown to what extent the multi-dimensional ‘spatialities in-becoming’ are effective in political argumentation and governance.

4. The car and the *Folkhem*: Automobility and the Making of Modern Sweden

David Jansson, Department of Social and Economic Geography, Uppsala University, Sweden

The topic of this paper is inspired by an apparent paradox. In a country known for its *folkhem*, a philosophy and social project based in values of collective action and solidarity, the primary mode of transportation is that icon of individualism, the automobile. Indeed, the *folkhem* (literally, “people’s home,” referring to the welfare state and its complementary ideology) and the automobile system were established simultaneously during the 20th century. Given this coincidence, it is curious that the potential symbiotic relationship between

the automobile system (and “automobility”) and the *folkhem* has not been studied previously. These systems have profoundly shaped the relationship between the individual and the state as well as the (social and spatial) mobility of Swedish citizens. The paper discusses the potential roles of the individualistic mobility provided by the car in the construction of the collective project of the *folkhem*, and indeed in the construction of a modern Swedish national identity. The paper reviews the development of the *folkhem* and automobile system, focusing on their potential connections, and then considers what the literature on automobility has to contribute to the study of the car and the *folkhem*.

Session III: Political Geography of Borders - Heron Room (3709)

Chair: Reece Jones, University of Hawai‘i

1. Borders: Marxist Territories and Postcolonial Terrains

Paolo Novak, SOAS, University of London

Marxism and Postcolonialism are two influential approaches within the field of border studies. They both offer a radical critique of global hierarchies, capitalism, modernity, and contemporary systems of knowledge production, yet for the most part, they have neglected each other. The paper contrasts and articulates contributions by Marxists and postcolonial geographers concerned with the notions of space, scale, and territory, with the aim of contributing to a dialogue between these two epistemological perspectives. In particular, the paper sets in conversation Marxist concerns with the functional role of borders vis-à-vis capitalist accumulation, and postcolonial scholars’ sensitivity to the fluidity, situatedness and hybridity of the territories and identities defined by borders. It seeks points of encounter and potential articulation between these approaches by bringing to the fore the tension between the inescapable materiality of borders and the incompleteness of the spaces they define. The incompleteness of borders thus conceived simultaneously captures their world configuring functions and their fluid and situated social existence, as they concretely articulate with each other in context. Put differently, the paper argues that fruitful points of contact and articulation between Marxist and postcolonial border studies can be found by focusing our gaze on ontological as opposed to epistemological questions.

2. Towards a Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Boundaries and Frontiers in Zomia

Borislav Nikoltchev and Fred M. Shelley, Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability, University of Oklahoma

Zomia refers to the hilly regions of Southeast Asia, southwestern China, and eastern India. This area is characterized by relatively sparse populations and great ethnic diversity relative to nearby lowland regions. Throughout history, societies in Zomia have resisted political and economic control by more powerful lowland-based states and kingdoms. Since Asia became influenced by Western colonialism and the establishment of the modern state system, however, Zomia has become contested by nation-states assertive to control their territories. In addition, technological advances have made it easier and less expensive for lowland-based states such as Myanmar, Thailand, China, and India to gain access to highland territories that historically were difficult to penetrate. Despite these changes, resistance to state control continues in Zomia, especially in areas that are vast, isolated and close to international borders. The purpose of this paper is to investigate conditions that make international borders factors for Zomia’s more successful resilience. Borders create frontier regions that expand

deeply into the territory of the weaker state and enables legal and illegal activities that are transforming Zomia from predominantly agricultural societies into more economically diversified places with increased strength to resist the host states.

3. Developing Borders: Migration Management and Ukraine's Contested Future

Austin Crane, Department of Geography, University of Washington,

Investments in migration and border management are central to the EU's Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) instrument. Bordering four EU countries, the ENP for Ukraine has entailed carrot-and-stick relations of economic integration, pedagogical capacity building, and development assistance – all employed towards instilling 'EUropean' "standards and values" and promoting EU internal security. These conditionality-driven policies lie as the backdrop for the recent struggles in Kiev and across Ukraine. EU efforts at fostering a stable, cooperative neighborhood are now being challenged by Ukrainian leaders, ongoing protests, and Russian political-economic investments, revealing that Ukraine remains a contested borderland of geoeconomic and geopolitical futures. Such periods of contestation can reveal how spaces of control and accumulation are (re)produced and how borders are (re)drawn in relation to imagined geographies of difference. In this paper I draw on interviews with EU officials and migration and border managers in Ukraine, in addition to recent EU and Ukrainian press releases, to discuss the role of migration management within changing EU-Ukraine relations of development and security. I situate this discussion within an ongoing spatial project of border externalization, where EU investments of humanitarian aid and advice build Ukraine's capacity to manage the political exclusion of unwanted migrants from EU common space.

4. Urban Diplomacy, The Study of Function and Role of Cities as the New Actor in International Relations

Seyed Hadi Zarghani, Geography Department, Ferdowsi University, Mashhad

Mansoure Eskandaran, Political Sciences, Mashhad Islamic Azad University

Nowadays the major part of the world's population lives in the cities and the cities are considered as the main centers of development and growth of the human life. Additionally, along with the information technology development and communicational networks advancement, cities have changed into the main actors of global communication and world economy areas on the space of flows. Concentration of different areas in the cities indicates the rapid movement of the world towards the urbanization and more development of metropolises and their changes to the global cities and eventually to the world cities. In such space, we perceive emergence of new type of diplomacy in order to communicate and serve the interests of the countries effectively that is unlikely to be implemented by formal diplomacy and its actors. Public diplomacy therefore emerges on the globalization process as the form of diplomacy becomes more public and the newest form of diplomacy namely, city diplomacy is developing as the world moves ahead of urbanization and urban communications. This paper is to study function and role of cities as a new actor in international relations based on city diplomacy theory framework. It is worth to be mentioned that the method of this paper is documentary and descriptive-analytic method.

Session IV. Networks and neighborhoods Sandhill Crane Room (3708)

Chair: Darren Purcell, University of Oklahoma

1. Transnational Networks of Power in the Global Food System

Dereje Gultineh, Geography, Environment Science, and Policy, University of South Florida

Power is increasingly distributed across transnational networks. This is reflected in the international development sector, where networks are centered around dominant institutions such as the World Bank; as well as in social movements which seek to create alternative spaces by constructing “horizontal” alliances. The international development sector, which plays a leading role in the “global food regime”, promotes neoliberal principles (such as the establishment of international public-private partnerships) as a core aspect of food security programs. Meanwhile, the food justice movement, which advocates for “food sovereignty”, resists the dominant role of international institutions and corporations in decision-making processes that affect local food-systems. Instead, activists call for greater local control over natural resources, and production and distribution processes. Networks play a crucial role in the construction of both neoliberal and “alternative” food discourses, both as a space for constructing and negotiating discourses, as well as a platform for broadcasting a shared agenda. A case-study of the G8’s recent establishment of the “New Alliance for Food Security”, as well as the resistance to the G8’s new initiative by food justice networks, illustrates how power increasingly flows across wider, and more entangled, transnational networks in an effort to advance political and economic agendas.

2. Hegemonies of Solidarity: the Dynamics of Connection and Control in Fair Trade Coffee Production Networks in Chiapas, Mexico

Lindsay Naylor, Department of Geography, University of Oregon

Fair trade certification of coffee in the highlands of Chiapas creates important solidarity partnerships between coffee growing and roasting cooperatives, yet visions of how fair trade certified coffee should be produced come into conflict in farmers’ fields. Analyses of fair trade certification have examined whether or not fair trade is ‘working’ for farmers, yet they have rarely focused on the trade-offs of certification in the context of the geopolitics in-place. In this paper, I use the case of Maya Vinic, a cooperative that draws its membership from indigenous farmers living in self-declared autonomous communities in the highlands to examine the everyday politics of maintaining certification. For the cooperative, producing under the fair trade label has assisted with establishing important ties in the U.S. that provide secure sources of income and political networks for their movement for self-determination. Although such connections are significant to the cooperative, it comes at a cost; environmental and labor regulations—largely developed by groups in the U.S. and Europe—rule the everyday actions of the cooperative and its members. In this paper, I argue that while strong networks of solidarity are being built, fair trade certification extends external control mechanisms into coffee cooperative and community territories.

3. The End of a Regional Integration Narrative? External Perceptions of the EU in Times of Crisis

Veit Bachmann, Department of Human Geography, Goethe-University Frankfurt, Germany

The EU's role in the world has long been framed around a narrative of (more or less successful) regional integration and the ambition to project the "European model" abroad. Also its external cooperation partners long expected the EU to function as a model for regional integration, in particular in the Global South. With the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU has sought to provide an institutional basis for a more influential global role and for projecting its model externally. However, the establishment of both timely coincided with the emergence of the crisis in the Eurozone. Based on recent fieldwork in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi, I argue that the crisis in the Eurozone has led to a critical questioning of the functioning of the EU's model and severely undermined its credibility and geopolitical role. More so the entire regional integration narrative has come under strain, leading to renewed debates on the role of the nation-state, supranationality and a possible scalar shift from regional to national policy making.

4. Re-imagining the European 'neighborhood': Gas Pipelines and other Ties that Bind

Corey Johnson, Department of Geography, University of North Carolina at Greensboro

The classical formula of static, unmovable geography shaping geopolitics has recently enjoyed a remarkable comeback in popular accounts of Europe's relationship with its eastern neighbors. This resurgence of classical geopolitics raises a number of questions for geographers, including how best to respond. Ultimately, our responses are impoverished because of artificial lines drawn between urban and non-urban scales, when in fact networks and technologies shape and mediate spatial relationships at larger territorial scales in similar ways as they do in cities. In this talk I draw on my recent work in Europe on existing and planned energy infrastructure networks, particularly natural gas pipelines, to suggest more fruitful avenues for understanding the geographies of material, social, political, and economic interdependencies between the EU and its eastern neighbors.

Session IV. Geopolitics: From comedy to the Apocalypse Heron Room

Chair: Corey Johnson, University of North Carolina, Greensboro

1. Assessing the Humor of Late-Night Comedians' Arab Spring Jokes

Darren Purcell, Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability, University of Oklahoma,

Scholars of critical geopolitics, particularly those examining popular culture discourses, have recently turned their attention to the role of humor in producing and reproducing dominant worldviews and constructing new ones. Late-night comedians regularly mine newspaper headlines and nightly news leads for their monologue material. The role of late-night comedians in shaping the views of the audience has been explored elsewhere, and comedians continue to deny having an impact on any real politics, often resorting to the phrase, "it's only a joke." Despite this, political communication scholars have demonstrated that the jokes

reinforce knowledge and stereotypes previously held. Employing a dataset of late-night jokes covering the Arab Spring period, this paper explores prevalent theories of humor salient to the specific medium, the spatial patterns of references in the jokes, the media frames and the types of humor deployed to entertain and simultaneously draw a mental map of the region and its events for the late-night audience.

2. ‘America’s Finest News Source’?: Geopolitical Counter-cultures and The Onion Newspaper

Adam Levy, Institute of Behavioral Science, University of Colorado-Boulder
Edward C. Holland, International Studies, Miami University

This paper is about the geopolitical imagination of The Onion, a popular fake newspaper. Based on data that includes 1,300 international relations and conflict-oriented headlines and stories since 2001, we trace the construction of The Onion’s imaginary yet popular geopolitical vision. We focus on the macro-level patterns of headlines and summarize their enduring tropes, while also querying three conflicts in detail. Using these data, we deconstruct dominant narratives in The Onion’s coverage of war -- in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria-- to argue that storylines about conflict, quagmire, and veterans incorporate geography to confound the scripting of political violence (e.g. “U.S. to Fight Terror with Terror”) and peace-building (e.g. “Last Corner In Iraq Turned, Forming Dodecahedron”). Consistent with The Onion’s empirical sensibility (e.g. “Standard Deviation Not Enough for Perverted Statistician”), we also offer novel visualizations as evidence of these storylines and their political geography. We update the literatures within communications studies concerning political satire and revise popular geopolitics approaches to ask how satirical geographic visions of international relations and national security are made. In critical geopolitics terms, we offer a framework to interrogate how ‘alternative’ media use geography to reconfigure practical geopolitical imaginations for popular audiences.

3. A Geopolitics of Cold War Comics: Narratives of Identity & Ideology from Turkish popular culture

Kyle T. Evered, Department of Geography, Michigan State University
Emine Ö. Evered, Department of History, Michigan State University

Over the past two decades, some of the most inventive contributions to geopolitical research include studies that have progressed far beyond interrogations either of state-authored or of (pseudo-) scholarly perspectives to engage instead with geopolitical narratives as found in popular culture. Employing both constructivist and critical theory approaches, these works have been limited thus far to engagements largely with media derived from--and consumed by (as its principal intended market)--the English-speaking world. In this study, we expand upon this body of work by identifying and examining the comic book as produced and procured in Cold War-era Turkey. Though the “nationalist superhero” came to constitute a “tiny proportion of the superheroes in publication” in post-World War II America (Dittmer 2013, 7), we contend that the Turkish equivalent--as conveyed in both a primordial (i.e., Eurasian folkloric) manner and as an agent of the modern republic--endured as a mainstay throughout the Cold War period. Drawing examples from several of the foremost publications of these years, our work thus adds to this field in geopolitical inquiry while also contributing uniquely to the broad scholarship on traditions in Turkish national identity and ideology.

4. Competing Environmental Apocalypses: Post-Politics and the Possibility of a Radical Apocalyptic

Tristan Sturm, Department of Geography, York University

This paper was written in response to Swyngedouw's characterization of contemporary apocalyptic discourses as symptomatic of a "post-political condition", as well as in response to his own calls and those of others for the development of a more radical and emancipatory apocalyptic vision. This paper examines three contemporary apocalyptic discourses: Evangelical, secular eco-activists and scientists, and radical social theorists. While we find considerable evidence that a strong post-political tendency exists in each of these discourses, we also critique Swyngedouw for generalizing all apocalyptic discourses as post-political and techno-managerial reductions of democracy, antagonism, and alternative visions. In our examination of these three apocalyptic discourses we find a greater degree of heterogeneity, competition, and polarization than the characterization of "post-political" would suggest. We also find the post-politicization that occurs in each of these discourses differs from the others in discursive strategy and political intent. Most importantly for us, we find evidence in each of these three apocalyptic discourses of authors or groups of authors crafting systematic critiques of capitalism, championing causes of radical social justice, and collectively contributing to the emergence of a paradigm of radical apocalyptic discourse and politics.

Session VI. Conflict and Memory Sandhill Crane Room (3708)

Chair: Alec Murphy, University of Oregon

1. Peace, Power, Security and Space in Kurdistan, Iraq: a grounded transect

Till F Paasche, Soran University, Kurdistan Region, Iraq,

James D Sidaway, Department of Geography, National University of Singapore

Departing from much coverage of Iraq, focused on insecurity and war, we describe security and peace. This draws on research in the autonomous Kurdish region (within its contested and barricaded boundary with the rest of Iraq). In the last decade this space has experienced only two significant terror attacks. Both were against symbolic security infrastructures rather than targeting civilian populations. This is 'the other Iraq'. Having once been a prime target of repression and a domain of insurgency, the Kurdish region now enjoys relative security, enabling fast development and an increasingly vibrant intellectual and cultural landscape. To understand these trajectories, we draw on a grounded ethnographic study with the Kurdish security forces operate. Applying what can aptly be described as security-biopolitics, Kurdish territories are covered by a tight net of control combining the monitoring of all movement and surveillance systems. These operate independently from the central government in Bagdad. In light of the insecurity in much of Iraq, these pose significant questions about power, surveillance and control, and the boundaries of war and peace. Unlike many studies about Iraq that apply a distinctly top-down perspective, we use grounded ethnographic findings to reflect on local and regional geopolitics.

2. Are Women the True Civilian Keepers of the Peace?

Sara Koopman, Wilfrid Laurier University

International protective accompaniment is a strategy used in conflict zones that puts people who are less at risk alongside people under threat because of their work for peace and justice. Thousands of human rights workers, grassroots organizations, and entire communities have been protected in this way, across 16 countries. Some accompaniers describe their work as

‘making space for peace’ and others call themselves civilian peacekeepers. The paradox of accompaniment is that it uses systems that make some lives ‘count’ more, to build a world where everyone’s lives ‘count’. It is hard to untangle the geopolitical, racial, and economic privilege that companions use. But one of the social locations often used by companions could be understood as one of less privilege. Many of these peace teams are made up largely of women, and one is women only. I examine how gender shapes accompaniment, and in particular how women companions use the gendering of the figure of the civilian for this work, drawing on insights from feminist geopolitics. I also point to the drawbacks of this strategy, drawing on Kinsella, as well as extensive fieldwork with companions in Colombia.

3. Young people’s Politics in the Abyss: ‘Organized Memory’ in Post-1968 Mexico City, and a Disruption of its ‘Genetic Axis’ in Roberto Bolaño’s *Amulet*
Nicholas Jon Crane, Department of Geography, The Ohio State University

Geographical scholarship on memory and politics suggests that stories of past struggle offer political resources for contemporary mobilization. But longitudinal analysis of post-1968 student activism in Mexico City indicates that contemporary activists’ narration of continuity with past waves of protest may in fact foreclose the articulation of solidarities through which activists achieve social change. Diverse actors on the Mexican left commemorate 1968 as the year of the massacre in Tlatelolco which put an end to the 1968 student movement. After 1968, young people in Mexico City squeeze themselves through the categories of this reduction, and become ‘political’ by self-identifying as ‘student activists’ and asserting inheritance of an antagonism with the ‘repressive’ state. This ‘organized memory’ effectuates durable categories that serve as a ‘genetic axis’ for young people’s politics (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*). My paper examines a disruption of this genetic axis in Roberto Bolaño’s short novel *Amulet*. I argue that Bolaño denaturalizes the spatiality of young people’s politics after 1968. His disruption of certainties in Mexico’s political transition opens new directions for writing and enacting the capital’s violent past. More generally, he provokes us to write political geographies that suspend the universals of ‘organized memory.’

4. Geography and the New Political Economy of Intelligence
Susan Roberts, Department of Geography, University of Kentucky

A troubling new political economy of geographical intelligence has emerged in the United States over the last two decades. The U.S. intelligence community increasingly relies on private corporations, working as contractors, to undertake intelligence work. In this article we first describe the geography intelligence “contracting nexus” consisting of tens of thousands of companies (including those in the geographical information systems and mapping sector), universities and nonprofits receiving Department of Defense and intelligence agency funding. Second, we discuss the “knowledge nexus” to conceptualize how geographical knowledge figures in current U.S. intelligence efforts; themselves part of the U.S. war on terror and counterinsurgency (COIN). To analyze the contracting nexus we compiled and examined extensive data on military and intelligence contracts. To analyze the knowledge nexus we examined recent changes in the type of geographical knowledges enrolled in and produced by the U.S. intelligence community. We note a shift from an emphasis on areal and cultural expertise to a focus on calculative predictive spatial analysis in geographical intelligence. This is a paper based on research conducted with Jeremy Crampton and Ate Poorthuis and recently published in the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

Session VII: Elections, Democratization, and the North-South Binary Heron Room
(3709)

Chair: Jayajit Chakraborty, University of South Florida

1. The Political Geography of Apportionment: 1960-2010

Kenneth C. Martis, Department of Geography, West Virginia University

The United States Constitution states that every ten years a population census shall be conducted to allocate the seats in the House of Representatives to the states, and therefore also the Electoral College. A data table has been constructed showing the gains or losses of each state since 1960. This table shows that in the last half century there has been a clear shift in regional power from the North and Northeast to the South and Southwest. But, how has this reallocation translated into political power? Does it benefit the Republicans or Democrats? The 2012 elections are analyzed using the reapportionment of seats from 1960 through the 2010 census. The states are divided into three categories based upon the 2012 pre-election analysis, safe Republican (24), safe Democrat (18), and “swing” (8). The paper concludes with a discussion of the regional power gains and losses versus the political party gains and losses in recent American electoral history.

2. Open Data, Political Crisis and Guerrilla Cartography

Samuel Rufat, Université de Cergy Pontoise, Paris, France

Open data and the geoweb have emerged, along with the rhetoric of democratization and a promise that increased user participation would lead to more empowered citizens. The EU Open Data rules are now enabling new approaches to the real-time scrutiny of powerful institutions. However, geography, open data and the Internet are not intrinsically subversive. Moving from transparency to accountability, and from critical thinking to political leverage, requires making sense of data and empowering people with it. This suggests that crowdsourcing geography is not so much about collaboratively distributing the production of data but instead about shifting the production of meaning from the few to the many. This is an opportunity for guerrilla cartography, transforming data into real-time leverage and coming unexpectedly, because it can be launched from virtually any place, crowdsourced, and spawn followers around the world. However, crowdsourcing geography requires more trained brains than dot.com domains. What matters most is grasping ‘dead’ data, giving it ‘live’ meaning, rapidly transforming data into political leverage and sharing it in an efficient manner. We will showcase the possibilities of crowdsourcing geography and guerrilla cartography by using the political crisis in Romania that took place during the summer of 2012.

3. Weakening of the State, Decline of Sovereignty and the Processes of Democratization in the Third Millennium

Avv. Simona Epasto, Department of Cognitive Sciences, Educational and Cultural Studies, University of Messina, Italy

Deterritorialization and dismemberment of the peoples’ strict identity cracked the traditional concept of “geocentric” State. Simultaneously, the proliferation of political, economic, ethnic and social centres contributed to rescale the state sovereignty. The international political system seems increasingly dominated by a growing number of international and inter-regional, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations that absorb and assemble policies and economies of most Countries or parts of them. In the new order the relations

between State, society and economy appear profoundly changed: technological and economic processes tend to turn the planet into a “global village”. Yet nationalism continues to be cause and effect of the reorganization of the political space in the XXI century, but with different features; nationalisms of the global era appear as disintegrating phenomena based not only on differentiation but on opposition and struggle between ethnic groups and religions. Therefore horizontally, vertically and transversely there is a true work of reallocation and division of state powers and functions in economic and political terms, in view of a governance with which the State must reckon. To understand how all these phenomena could determine the crisis of the concept of the State or not, it’s necessary to analyze the repercussions on the essential elements of the national political and social organizations: territory, population and sovereignty.

4. How Useful is the ‘Global North’ – ‘Global South’ Binary? An Invitation to a Conversation

Alexander B. Murphy, Department of Geography, University of Oregon

Over the past two decades geographers have increasingly embraced the terms Global North and Global South as a way of describing large-scale socio-economic differences and associated power differentials that emerged in the wake of European colonialism. Most scholars employing these terms understand their limitations, but nonetheless see them as invoking a “strategic essentialism” (to quote Eric Sheppard). Given how widely and indiscriminately these terms are used, however, there is a risk that the discipline most concerned with critically analyzing regional constructs (i.e., geography) is serving to reinforce a deeply problematic global dichotomization. ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’ are not only geographically inaccurate descriptors; their use perpetuates the idea that we live in a fundamentally bi-modal world of wealthy countries and poor countries. Moreover, because the ‘North-South’ discursive framework is rooted in a vocabulary referencing locational/latitudinal circumstances, it carries with it environmentalist overtones. Under the circumstances, a disciplinary discussion of the appropriateness of these terms is past due.

Session VIII: The Nation Between Borders- Sandhill Crane Room (3708)

Chair: Natalie Koch, Syracuse University

1. Reproducing the Nation? The Political Geographies of Assisted Reproductive Technologies

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State actors have long intervened in disciplining their citizen’s most intimate choices about procreation. National laws, regulations, and incentives have always governed citizen’s ideas about family planning and childbearing. Reproductive tourism, however, has turned procreation into a transnational project where parents travel abroad to seek fertility treatment, egg donors and surrogate mothers. People travel abroad not only to access cheaper, more efficient, or a wider range of assisted reproductive technologies and services, but also to bypass restrictive laws in their home countries. Indeed, assisted reproductive technologies and their respective transnational markets challenge and transform national ideas of biopolitics. While feminist political geographies have started to engage with the ‘intimate territories’ (Smith, 2012, 2013) of love, procreation and reproductive bodies, the political geographies that shape and emerge from transnational modes of assisted reproduction present still a lacuna. Examining a) the ephemeral transnational geographies of reproductive

travelling that are shaped by constantly changing national legislations and b) the biopolitical challenges resulting from this transnational market, the paper positions assisted reproductive technologies as a new topic on the agenda of political geographies.

2. Backward Spaces in the Modern Chinese Nation

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Since the end of the Qing Empire, modernity has been an animating theme in forging a Chinese national identity, with the Chinese state and nation framed as modern entities. Through a case study of Dingxi Prefecture, Gansu, this paper argues that the territorial classification of modernity's counterpart, backwardness, is also central to the creation of the modern nation. Backwardness has been territorially classified in modern China based a series of hierarchical orderings: ethnicity, rurality-urbanity, poverty-wealth, and westness-eastness all inscribe backwardness on certain spaces in China. While proponents of a modern vision of China often view such places as an aberration, I argue that such places are indeed central to the modern Chinese state and nation. The classification of spaces as backwards through their rurality, westness, or poverty designation marks these spaces as in need of remediation through development, and it is through the process of transforming these places that the nation is made modern. Since the late Qing Dynasty, Dingxi Prefecture has been among the most exemplary area to highlight backwardness and poverty in China. This paper will examine how Dingxi has been constructed as backwards through the academic discourses, popular literature, and government policies, particularly through poverty county designation. This paper argues that classification of certain spaces as backwards creates an internal other against which the modern nation is defined, Chinese national identity in the post-reform era.

3. The “Warm” Nationalism of Jordan: The Creation of a Multi-scalar and Contested National Identity

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In 1988, one year after their withdrawal from the West Bank, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan revealed its Jordanization program known as “We are all Jordan.” This program was created in order to actively unite Jordan's diverse population of East Bankers (those who trace their lineage to a territory east of the Jordan river) and West Bankers (Palestinians who have migrated from west of the Jordan river since the establishment of Israel in 1948). The Jordanization campaign exemplifies postcolonial nation-building programs, as it attempted to facilitate banal reminders and reproductions of national identity. The messages and images of this program are pervasive and political, yet also subtle and banal. Drawing Michael Billig's theorizations of “banal nationalism,” I examine the construction of a Jordanian national identity and illustrate how hot and banal nationalisms work together to be quite “warm.” Using a multi-method approach, including cartographic and discourse analyses and interviews with Jordanians, I complicate Billig's focus on seemingly homogeneous national entities and his dismissal of transnational identities. I argue that a Jordanian national identity is multiscalar, merging Arab supranationalism and localized tribal identities with East Bank Jordanian and West Bank Palestinian identities.

4. Graffiti, Art, and Advertising: Re-Scaling Claims to Space at the Edges of the Nation-State

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Physical barriers have become an increasingly popular political mechanism for central government control over the flows of goods and people at borders. This medium also, however, serves as a canvas for unsanctioned expressions of belonging. Just as graffiti and art are deployed in the urban landscape as unconventional means of claiming space, they are utilized on international border barriers to contest prevalent political winds and re-claim local and alternative senses of who belongs and what is deemed important in debates over border policy. This paper considers unauthorized text and visual imagery on the border barriers of the Arizona-Sonora section of the U.S.-Mexico boundary as a therapeutic reaction to a state-dominated border policy which downplays local impacts. It is argued that such imagery serves to re-scale border space and thereby re-capture a sense of belonging by those whose roles are marginalized by national politics and the neoliberal global economy.