IGC PRE-CONFERENCE 2024
CELEBRATING A WORLD OF POLITICAL DIFFERENCE

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THURSDAY 22ND AUGUST

CANADA ROOM AND COUNCIL CHAMBERS

10.00-11.20 INTERNATIONAL AND POPULAR GEOPOLITICS

Chair: Tristan Sturm (Queen's University Belfast)

Irish Neutrality and Anti-Colonial Internationalism
Rory Rowan (Trinity College Dublin)

This paper argues that Ireland's neutrality policy, as developed since the second world war, has been fundamentally anti-colonial in nature. Further, it argues that neutrality has involved a powerful counter mapping of Ireland's geopolitical position, locating it, at least in part, in relation to a network of post-colonial solidarities with countries in the Third World, rather than through geographic and cultural proximity to the imperial powers of the UK and the USA. The contention is that in so doing Ireland's neutrality policy has constituted a powerful act of decolonisation, that has materially shaped the conduct of Irish foreign policy and the geographic relations through which the Republic of Ireland is understood domestically and internationally alike. Legislative Acts, Parliamentary debates, and works of literature will be used to explore the anti-colonial politics at the core of Irish neutrality, in both state and popular understandings, from 'The Emergency' through the Cold War and the construction of the postwar international order to its transformation in the first decades of this century. Understanding the anti-colonial core of Irish neutrality, as it developed in the postwar decades, is crucial to assessing what is at stake in recent attempts by the Irish government to reframe the policy as fully compatible with the imperial geopolitics of US-led world ordering projects. Approaching Irish neutrality as an act of anti-colonial counter mapping allows recent efforts to redefine the nature and scope of the policy as attempts to recast the fundamental values and geographies that constitute the Irish state.

Drawing China: Negotiations of Geopolitics in Online Communities
Simon Wellisch & Songmin Liang (National University of Singapore)

Polandball comics are satirical depictions of countries in ball-form, produced and shared by internet users on various platforms. They reference geopolitical events, reflect but also challenge official discourses of nation-states. While the Polandball community is mainly located in North America and Europe, the comics are also very popular among Chinese internet users. Considering these different (geo)political contexts and the spread of Polandball comics on different platforms, e.g., Reddit and Tieba, we discuss how Chinese and non-Chinese community members portray China and its relations with other countries or organizations, based on a comparative analysis of the Chinese and non-Chinese Polandball communities. In addition, we adopt an (auto)ethnographical approach with interviews and drawing to gain a nuanced understanding of the influences of different factors, ranging from personal life to geopolitical events. We reveal the processes of creating pop cultural geopolitical content from a self-critical perspective and how members develop their own narratives. In doing so, we offer a contribution to analyses of popular geopolitical discourses and drawing as a method of exploring the simplified representation of geopolitics.

The Popular anti-Geopolitics of the MCU Phase 4 Superheroes
Katrinka Somdahl (Rowan University)

Popular culture plays a significant role in shaping and framing our understandings of geopolitics. Popular geopolitics encompasses the complex interplay between media representations, popular culture, and political narratives. The Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) offers several instances where popular geopolitics can be observed. The MCU features superheroes with extraordinary abilities and power, often representing different nations or cultures. These characters reflect geopolitical ideologies and national identities, showcasing how popular culture can portray geopolitical power dynamics and

nationalistic narratives. This paper will specifically look at the MCU products that are a part of Phase 4, particularly the Disney+ series. I investigate if the MCU's storylines of identity and difference within the Multiverse Saga question the dominant power structures, ideologies, and strategies that shape global politics and international relations. By analyzing the ways in which the MCU addresses how identities, such as race, gender, class, and nationality, intersect and influence geopolitical power dynamics, this paper will explore the ways in which popular culture can reinforce or challenge dominant narratives and ideologies that perpetuate inequality and injustice.

Anticolonial Geographies and the British Geographical Imagination
Gerry Kearns (Maynooth University)

In most discussions of Decolonising Geography among British geographers, the absence of Ireland is striking. Colonialism, it seems begins in the tropics with the Caribbean. This paper parks the issues of colonial denialism and historical revisionism with respect to Ireland and asks instead: what have been the consequences for British Geography of this occlusion of colonialism in Ireland. First, for all its concern with landscape and class, British historical geography has had rather little to say about the nature of the British state as a geographical actor. Second, the tropical focus of historical geographies of colonialism tips the scales towards an essentialist theory of race, with empire following colour rather constituting race as its core legitimation. Third, it has left British political and historical geography largely silent about state-perpetrated violence in Northern Ireland.

11.40-13.00 Alternative Geopolitics: Practice and Performance

Chair: Oliver Dunnett (Queen's University Belfast)

'Performing independence without statehood: independence day celebrations and claims to sovereignty, legitimacy, and nationhood amongst the Nagas of Nagaland'
Alex Manby (University of Oxford)

This paper discusses how Naga nationalists use independence day celebrations to make political claims – to nationhood, to statehood, and to Indigeneity – in the absence of de jure and de facto sovereignty. It speaks to scholarship on how non- and aspirant state actors engage 'performance' and 'performativity' to produce political legitimacy without formal international recognition (Jeffrey et al. 2015; McConnell et al. 2012). While taking inspiration from this work, this paper advocates for geographical engagement with both performance studies scholarship on the relationship between the embodied and the archival, and public history writing on the relationship between performance, history, and memory. It describes the celebrations organised by the Naga National Council in August 2022 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Naga Declaration of Independence ('NID'). This paper demonstrates how approaching performance as a form of 'embodied memory' (Taylor 2003:20) and a means of 'historical praxis' (Bonilla 2011:314) sheds light on the role of archival practices in articulating nationalist claims at multiple scales. By foregrounding three aspects of the celebrations – the construction of collective memory, military spectacle, and cultural pageantry – this paper argues that NID's political potency is derived, on the one hand, from its deliberative performance of stateness (McConnell 2016; Jeffrey 2012) and, on the other, from how the celebrations imbue the present with historical meaning by offering a recurring reminder of an unrealised past. In doing so, this paper makes two contributions. First, it adds empirical depth to understandings of the spatialities and temporalities of political legitimacy, geopolitical performance, and notions of independence. Second, it responds to calls for more 'eventful' analyses of nationalism (Antonsich 2015:301), by elucidating the mechanisms through which performances of independence sustain nationalist subjectivities and geopolitical imaginaries under conditions of ongoing political stasis.

'An Alternate World Political Map: Seating Arrangements in the UN General Assembly'
Stanley D. Brunn (University of Kentucky)

We are comfortable looking at the world political map in familiar perspectives: Mercator projection, Eurocentric with the Prime Meridian in the middle, or some equal area projection. These projections portray absolute locations and familiar shapes we see in textbooks, atlases and on computer screens. Those familiarities extend to maps showing locations of political conflicts, environmental risks, migrations, income disparities, Global North and Global South worlds.

While these familiar projects and patterns are comfort zones for many, those who observe and study global patterns and regional politics, cultures, economies, and media inform us that the geographies of world's states are much more complicated than time-honored absolute location maps. the shrinking of both times and spaces mean that travel-time and communication-time worlds often results in different perceptions of friends, adversaries, conflicts, and members of regional and global political organizations. Those maps, whether in our heads or leaders, are different from the absolute location map.

This presentation explores alternative ways of mapping political worlds where states have no control over who are their bordering states. I am discussing the seating arrangements of members of the UN General Assembly. We explore its history and analyze who is sitting next to whom. These alternative maps reveal a variety of patterns about “geopolitical closeness" at continental or subcontinental scales. They reveal that "seating neighbors" are often distant from those shown on familiar world maps in school texts, news media, and government websites, but delegates are addressing and voting on global issues in one room at the same time. A follow-up study might explore if UN neighbors vote alike. Needed are constrictions and displays of alternate world political maps.

‘Building a state from a refugee camp: the anomalous statehood of the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)’
Jaume Castan Pinos (University of Southern Denmark)

The Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), and most specifically its ruling party (the Polisario Front) and its citizens, epitomise the fact that refugees have agency. One of the many particularities of this case is that the agency of refugees is cemented through the (still) most powerful institution of contemporary geopolitics; the state. This paper examines the nature and challenges of the SADR, a political entity characterised by a plethora of exceptionalities with regards to statehood – which leads us to the notion of anomalous statehood. Such exceptionalities include a failed decolonisation process (by Spain) in 1975, an ensuing occupation (by Morocco) and the subsequent development (in 1976) of statehood in exile by Saharawi refugees. Conceptually, the paper challenges the notion that this case belongs to the de facto state category, as has been previously claimed by various authors (see MacQueen, 2015; Florea, 2017). Methodologically, the paper is primarily based on the semi-structured interviews conducted by the author in the Tindouf refugee camp with SADR diplomats, policymakers, commanders from the security forces, representatives from the legal institutions and activists from the civil society.

“You could start a new country, but you would need to discover new land” Exploring understandings of Statehood and political difference with Primary School Pupils in England’
Fiona McConnell (University of Oxford) & Liam Saddington (University of Cambridge)

There is a broad movement within critical geopolitics to pluralise the field of study and consider actors which are not traditionally seen as ‘geopolitical’. This includes a small but growing body of work on how children and young people engage with geopolitics in their everyday lives. Meanwhile, scholarship in children’s geography has long challenged assumptions that young people are politically disengaged. In bringing together this scholarship this presentation examines how children engage with and challenge concepts of statehood. We have developed an activity for primary school age children whereby they collaboratively engage with questions of ‘what is a country? what do you need to be a country? can anybody start their own country?’ Drawing on participant observation of running this exercise with over 400 Year 5 and 6 pupils (9-11 years olds) at ten primary schools in England, we examine how children conceive of and articulate political legitimacy, the act of recognition, colonial

practices, and the politics of identity and difference. In doing so we engage with work on children's 'ethno-geographies' (Catling and Martin 2011) and argue that children are able to apply existing knowledge not only to everyday geographies, but also to abstract geopolitical concepts. We thereby argue that children have complex geopolitical understandings of the world that encompass nuanced articulations of difference, and that the classroom is a key space for researching how children conceive of geopolitical concepts.

14.20-15.40 Urban Geopolitics and Everyday Bordering

Chair: Merav Amir (Queen's University Belfast)

Brickless Walls: The performance of territorial difference in everyday objects
Merrill Hopper (King's College London)

The most visible way to examine territorial belonging across space is through the material world. On the fringes of territory, these manifest as border walls. These structures demarcate the end of sameness and the beginning of difference. Physically shameless in their intent, walls nonetheless are vulnerable to subversion – either in the physical or metaphysical – due to the high standard of fixed rigidity they must maintain. This paper turns its attention to brickless walls. Objects and symbols express the narratives and power relationships occurring in space, especially in places of contest, where the benign everyday can become politically charged. In the paper, I use the lens of difference utilised in studying walls and apply that to these objects, providing a look into the delicate and small expressions of territorial identity.

Specifically looking at flags and language in West Belfast, this paper seeks to demonstrate an approach of using the material landscape to reveal the affective embodiment of difference within them to express identity and territoriality. Key to the pertinence of this is the operationalization of sameness, where difference is visually absent. But absence is not simply as lacking presence, instead absence is a tangible nonappearance of difference that can be considered. An individuals' relationship to the object and subsequent difference or sameness then contributes to a sense of (un)belonging to the space, demonstrating the performativity of divisive objects. By turning to the fringes of identity, I will show how the affective embodiment of difference is subtly embedded into objects of the everyday. Ultimately, I argue that these are the 'walls' that create the most effective borders through the constitution and polarisation of territorial identity. At its root, this paper aims to contribute methodologically to the development of a critical understanding of the relationship between identity and territory.

(Re)Examining Urban Borders: (Re)Producing Political Boundaries in Belfast
Milena Komarova (Queen's University Belfast)

The paper engages with the palpable presence of borders and bordering processes in cities, particularly those traditionally regarded as sites of ethno-national or ethno-political conflict (Pullan 2013, Scott and Sohn 2018, Iossifova 2020, Ramirez 2020, Fauser et al 2022). In Belfast, urban borders (such as 'peacewalls') are often regarded as proxies for the political conflict encapsulated by the Irish border. By contrast, I want to draw attention to how a broader array of urbanisation and bordering processes (driven by the logics of capitalism, bureaucratic governance, and the UK's exit from the EU) get entangled and work together in the city to reproduce political boundaries in a multitude of ways, above and beyond those of ethno-national conflict. Such processes can be observed particularly through the production of infrastructures of mobility.

As cities become key sites for – and key participants in – the circulation of globally extending flows (financial, economic, cultural, migration, informational, to name but a few), state-led bordering that aims to regulate such flows is affected by, even produced through the processes of urbanisation (Sassen 2012, 2015). Conversely, processes of urban redevelopment, diverse experiences of cities,

and the production of political and cultural boundaries become profoundly affected by the bordering inherent in (local) government and urban residents' attempts to regulate or respond to an increasing variety and intensity of mobilities; from the literal physical movements of people and goods in the city (in this case themselves affected by post-Brexit (re)bordering), to migrant and refugee populations.

Ultimately, by questioning how processes of urbanisation and bordering in post-Brexit Belfast intersect and produce each other, I want to employ this intersection as an analytic lens that enables a fresh look at the reproduction of political boundaries in the city, and – more generally – at the tensions between sovereignty and politics in cities.

No Man's land: Planning Mzab for a conflict yet to come
Nora Gueliane (Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou)

When territorial discontinuities in a city become deep enough to separate social groups from each other, the concept of the internal border becomes relevant. Borders then would filter, regulate and differentiate between two systems (urban, social, cultural, political, economic, geographical, etc.), yet they remain an element of relationship. Based on this observation, We seek to discover how we can transform discontinuities into new spaces of sociability in a fragmented city

We will construct an answer to this problematic through the study of a local conflict in Algeria, that of the M'Zab. A region located in Ghardaïa, known for its particularities which, since Algeria's independence (1962), has experienced a series of conflicts. I conclude that one of the effects of these conflicts, on the urban level, is the socio-spatial fragmentation of the M'Zab. The violence (ethnic, doctrinal and others) is at the origin of the regrouping of communities in well delimited and very homogeneous districts. This phenomenon does not only concern the old neighbourhoods, but also the new extensions which also respond to ethnic criteria and quotas (50/50) in the distribution of land and housing. Thus, these populations, united on identity, ethnic, doctrinal and tribal bases, constitute themselves as a "group", which reinforces the logic of inter-community confrontation. The more permanent the conflict becomes, the more reasons the two communities have to live apart and the more the conflict is prolonged. Indeed, while the level of segregation increases during periods of unrest, it does not decrease during periods of tranquillity. Homogeneous neighbourhoods provide residents with the territorial basis for their physical security. With the last conflict in Ghardaïa (2013-2015), the inhabitants left their houses and businesses located in mixed areas, the ones most seriously affected by the conflict, to settle in highly segregated neighbourhoods. The gradual abandonment of these mixed neighbourhoods has led to the creation of real internal borders.

Based on these observations, how to transform these internal borders into spaces to meet, socialise and live with the "other"? Under what conditions, in what context and by involving which actors is it possible ? The idea, therefore, is that instead of seeing the border as a fixed material separation, I approach it in the diversity of its forms, and in the light of the inhabitants' practices (*bordering practices*). Indeed, each conflict leads to new geographical configurations, which in turn induces new bordering practices on the part of the inhabitants, as well as new relationships of power.

Resituating urban geopolitics: connections and frontiers
James Sidaway (National University of Singapore)

There has been a surge in references to urban geopolitics over the last twenty-plus years. Reviewing claims that warfare has urbanized, however, yields questions about the delineation and frontiers of the urban. The multiple meanings and definitions of "geopolitics" and "urban" beckon a broadening range of sites and an analytical deepening of urban geopolitics. To these ends, seeking to develop the field in conceptual terms, the article revisits Maoism's urban geopolitics and reflects from other selected African and Asian sites. This invites deeper geopolitical engagement with the literatures on extended – planetary – urbanization.

16.00-17.00 Environment and Politics C Keynote

Chair: Fiona McConnell (University of Oxford)

Difference and the Politics of Feeling
Anna Secor (Durham University)

In the US and the UK today, politics is motivated and played out through collective political feelings. Political forms such as right-wing populism, left progressivism, and liberalism work by distributing attachment and intensity – by aggregating rallying points, provocations to outrage, sites of exhilaration or enjoyment, and modes of political performance. This talk addresses the need for concepts and critical tools to confront how 'structures of feeling' (Raymond Williams, Marxism and Literature, 1977) organise and differentiate the political field within these two Western democratic societies today. Working in the blur between affect studies and ideology critique, I bring difference to the fore of the politics of feeling by emphasising the multiplicity of structures of feeling, exploring their unevenness and holes, and examining how they not only operate differentially but actively produce difference and relations of domination. This talk is based on the book manuscript, The Politics of Feeling: Populism, Progressivism, Liberalism (Goldsmiths Press, 2025), co-authored with Prof Ben Anderson (Durham University).

Room TR6 (Graduate School)

10.00-11.20 Biographies and Geographical Thought

Chair: Diarmid Finnegan (Queen's University Belfast)

Scientific masculinities in post-colonial India and Sri Lanka: The correspondence of Arthur C Clarke and J B S Haldane
Oliver Dunnett (Queen's University Belfast)

This paper examines the concept of scientific masculinities in the post-colonial setting, by examining the correspondence and other works of Arthur C Clarke and J B S Haldane. These two individuals, both known as popularisers of science in the post-war period, maintained a correspondence during the 1950s and 1960s when they were living in Sri Lanka and India, respectively. These exchanges, supported by other published and archival sources, inform concepts of political and geopolitical difference in terms of sexuality, identity, masculinity and postcolonial space. Beginning with a brief introduction to the life-worlds of each writer, the paper suggests that the postcolonial environment offered each writer unique opportunities to tacitly explore notions of scientific masculinity, which ran against the grain of prevailing metropolitan cultures and politics in the homelands they both left behind.

Eternal sunshine of the imperial mind: H.J. Mackinder's geopolitics, technological futurism, and renewable energy
António Ferraz de Oliveira (University of Groningen)

Writing to Leo Amery in 1943, Halford J. Mackinder dwelt on his surprise at wartime resurrection of his Heartland theory and confessed he had not anticipated how aerial technology would transform the geography of world politics. In the same year, though this has escaped scholarly scrutiny, Mackinder referred to a near future, after the exhaustion of coal and oil, when capture of solar energy, in the Sahara and elsewhere, would redefine geopolitics. In this paper, I trace the intellectual roots of Mackinder's early imaginations of solar power geopolitics. In a first part, I review his early thought on geophysical sources of political power, with special attention to Stanley Jevons's 'Coal Question'. In a second moment, I trace Mackinder's reactions to late nineteenth-century visions of tidal energy. In a third part, I excavate his interwar reflections on solar and hydropower experiments, from the Sahara to the Soviet Union. To conclude, I draw away from the particularities of Mackinder's case and reflect

on the value of renewing histories of geopolitical thought through the lens of the Anthropocene. Such explorations, I argue, can help us face our contemporary planetary predicament more critically, disturbing current imaginations by reflecting on how they may still carry the disquieting futurisms of the past.

Past, present, and future of Political Geography: Report on a CPG interview project
Corey Johnson (University of North Carolina at Greensboro)

In 2021, with the blessing of the Commission on Political Geography of the IGU, I began a series of virtual interviews with leading international figures in the subdiscipline. In 2023, approximately 10 of the interviews were posted on Youtube. In this paper, I discuss themes, threads, and other insights from the interviews.

Inscribing the Dutch imperial geopolitical order: The colonial geography of Louis van Vuuren (1873-1951)
Michiel van Meeteren & Sophie Bijleveld (Utrecht University)

Despite the renewed critical interest in the colonial traces of much geographical knowledge, many geographies and geographers from the era of inter-imperial rivalry (1875-1945) remain under-explored, for instance that of Dutch colonial geography. This paper traces Dutch colonial geopolitics of present-day Indonesia through a biobibliographical reading of the work of Louis van Vuuren, whose lifespan almost perfectly aligns with the era of late European imperialism. While Van Vuuren is mostly remembered for his contributions as one of the founding figures of Dutch human geography and spatial planning, navigating German and French influences, much less attention has been paid to his colonial career and geography. Born in colonial Indonesia in 1873, Van Vuuren participates as a young Dutch colonial officer in the final violent phase of the Aceh war, which was instrumental in bringing the outer reaches of present-day Indonesia under Dutch territorial control. Under the tutelage of his commanding officer and future oil magnate and prime minister of the Netherlands, Hendrik Colijn, he consecutively becomes a colonial administrator and director of an encyclopaedic bureau for regional geography of colonial Indonesia, which would eventually lead him to a professorship in human geography at Utrecht University in 1927. Because of his positionality and proximity to powerful colonial circles, Van Vuuren's geography is indicative of an important conservative strand of Dutch geopolitical thought. In the paper we analyse Van Vuuren's colonial writings and geographical theorizing from a critical geopolitics framework utilizing Agnew's notion of the "geopolitical imagination" and Toal's concept of geopower. We subsequently trace the civilizational, naturalised and ideological dimensions of Dutch antebellum geopolitics, including its alignment with German geopolitics. The sobering result is that the history of Dutch geography loses its innocence as a colonial legacy that equals its great-power counterparts comes into focus.

11.40-13.00 Networks of Academic Knowledge, Expertise and Cooperation

Chair: Rebecca Bamford (Queen's University Belfast)

The role and responsibility of academia in the context of the planetary crisis – or what is to be done?
John Barry (Queen's University Belfast)

Sir William Petty, the 17th a century colonial administrator in Cromwell's army in Ireland, was the first to articulate what we now can 'economic growth' as state policy. In this way, economic growth, 'the greatest story never told' in terms of its ubiquity and capacity to be a form of ideological 'commonsense', has its origins in colonial Ireland. Inextricably linked to empire, extractivism and capitalism, over the centuries economic growth has been a 'core state imperative', especially in the post-World War II cold war context. This paper surveys the historical and Irish roots and evolution of this concept, together with contemporary green critiques of economic growth as an outdated objective

that is increasingly ecocidal, inequality producing and undermining of planetary health and human flourishing. As a ‘poster child’ for neoliberal, globalising capitalism, this paper analyses economic growth an ideology amongst economic and policy elites in Ireland and in other countries. More recent iterations of the growth discourse at state, media and business elite levels include ‘green growth’. The ideological ‘commonsense’ of growth can be observed in the popular as well as elite support for low corporation taxes, and the persistent media discourse of policymakers and politicians ‘wearing the green jersey’ to keep Irish competitiveness and low taxes from European interference. This paper proceeds with an analysis of the need for post-growth, post-carbon and post-capitalist policies and strategies that can address the planetary crisis that has its roots in a growth/accumulation dynamic that has also passed a threshold of being a net benefit to the majority in society. The paper concludes with suggestions for post-growth policies which it is claimed can reduce socio-economic inequalities that growth perpetuates rather than reduces, which would also open up opportunities for the liberation of society and human labour from the ‘tyranny’ of growth.

Ambiguous post-colonialities: (Re)negotiating geography between Universitas Gadjah Mada (Indonesia) and Utrecht University (the Netherlands)
Sophie Bijleveld & Michiel van Meeteran (Utrecht University)

During the mid 20th century political decolonisation process, academic cooperation between people and institutions within the (now former) colonial relationship had to be (re-)negotiated into a ‘post-colonial’ partnership. But without a blueprint, what would - or should - ‘post-colonial’ academic/university cooperation actually look like? This paper aims to reconstruct such a (re-)negotiation attempt of ‘post-colonial’ academic cooperation by taking as a case study the first two decades of a cooperation that began in the 1970s, and is still ongoing as of today, between the geography department of one of the first universities established after independence, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia, and that of Utrecht University, the Netherlands, a department that had been extensively involved in Indonesia since the colonial era.

At the time, the cooperation would become center stage in a heated conflict as the critical student movement of the ‘70s, NGOs, academics, political parties and governmental agencies clashed vehemently over the direction of ‘post-colonial’ cooperation in the context of human rights violations in the Suharto-regime. By combining archival research and oral histories of people involved from both the Netherlands and Indonesia, the paper aims to investigate the idea(s) of ‘post-colonial’ cooperation and illustrate its ambiguities and complexities through the multiperspectivity and experiences of those involved. Recent inquiries into coloniality within/of academic disciplines and explorations into ways to decolonize these legacies have become manifold. Yet suprisingly, what sometimes gets overlooked in the bustle of current discussions on decolonisation are comprehensive reflections on previous ‘decolonising’ iterations from the past, whose lasting impact and influence on current practices actually forms the premise of these debates to begin with. As case studies of ‘post-colonial’ experimentation in the past, the case of Utrecht and Gadjah Mada provides a rich resource through which to study in detail the spectrum of de/re colonizing practices and their effects.

National studies and the local bureaucrat: Spatial hierarchies of state knowledge and expertise in Ecuador
Ellen Carmen Gordon (New York University Madrid)

The Instituto de Altos Estudios Nacionales (IAEN) is a state-run postgraduate university in Ecuador that was tasked with transforming the state, in the wake of a new Constitution in 2008. The Constitution promised overhaul of state-citizen and state-environment relationships, and amongst other ambitious projects, it signalled a step towards redress for historic dynamics of class, gender, and race-based exclusion and discrimination. It also promised to fully integrate all of the national territory into the state, and to tackle long-standing regional disparities.

The IAEN's post-2008 task involved training civil servants from across the country, and thus improving and modernising the state from within. This paper focuses on the students who study at the institute,

who often live far from central Quito (the capital city), and who work within the state from different geographical and cultural perspectives. Drawing on data collected during 7 months of fieldwork, it analyses how these public servants (who travel to study in Quito on the weekends) engage with the institution, and with the state they work in. It analyses how they locate themselves within perceived spatial hierarchies of state knowledge and expertise.

In doing so, this paper highlights the implicit and important role of travel in the implementation of state projects, especially when policies are imagined as travelling from the centre to the peripheries of the state. Bringing together literature on political geographies of the state, policy transfer and education, the IAEN case urges us to afford more attention to travel and translation across space. The travelling knowledges of the IAEN students provide new insight into how state policy is created and implemented on the ground. Furthermore, the paper underlines how public servants contribute to remaking the state using their local knowledge, creating previously overlooked, pathways for state knowledge and policy transfer.

The evolution of competing growth plans: Explaining/examining Northern Ireland's (contested) green growth pathways
Thomas Hastings & Erin Sherry (Queen's University Belfast)

Various literatures within economic geography have underlined the rationality of state and capital actors in shaping state policy and intended economic trajectories, which are formulated in deliberate directions (Jessop 2008; Coe and Yeung 2015). Contrary to a focus on rationality and deliberate action in the formation of new (state-led or influenced) economic pathways, the following paper focuses on the intersection of agriculture and energy economic industries to examine the role of chance, contestation and competing rationalities in informing agricultural and energy industry trajectories in Northern Ireland (Lemeilleur et al. 2015). In doing so, the paper engages with Cohen et al.'s (1972) Garbage Can Model (GCM) to critique the Northern Ireland Executive (NIE) approach to economic and environmental management. Specifically, the paper considers two linked but ultimately contrasting growth pathways which the NI Executive has sought to develop in recent years. The first is linked to the intensification of agriculture and DAERA's Going for Growth Action Plan, primarily geared to the growth of intensive agriculture as linked to global exports of animal products (also informed cultural associations with the agricultural economy). Through this case, we illustrate how one industrial pathway morphed/combined with a distinct environmental pathway, due in part to path dependence but also resistance from external stakeholders (e.g. community groups). We subsequently focus on the rise of anaerobic digestion and wind farm facilities, and reflect on the potential for these 'green energy' sectors to give rise to further economic pathways (with attendant regional cluster formations) in their own right.

14.20-15.40 Activism Beyond Binary

Chair: Shona Loong (University of Zurich)

Working on the Farm: Community Development and Accommodative Resistance
Anil Sindhwani (Durham University)

Since Isin (2008) coined the 'acts of citizenship' theory, scholars have used the concept to theorise a variety of direct action(s) that lead to new subject formation(s). Most such examples emphasise a direct, oppositional form of activism. Yet, the theory of acts is constrained by this emphasis as it misses out on those acts that are "accommodative towards the authority" (Jakimów, 2022, p. 510). Accommodation is not co-option; it is a cover, silent exploitation of state-sanctioned routes that enable defiance and bring about new citizens. Jakimów's case study is in China, where authoritarianism prohibits resistance. Yet, in the UK, authoritarianism has always been present for Britain's most marginalised—through both the welfare and judicial state. Austerity has only aggravated this (Davey and Koch, 2021). However, literature on acts currently privileges the conception of activism as an

organised, collective struggle. Conceptions of citizenships acts remain therefore remain constrained.

I thus turn to activism that is rooted in ideas of community empowerment and development. While community empowerment can be oppositional, I foreground those acts that are ultimately accommodating. I will relay the work of activists at the Broadwater Farm Estate (BWF), in particular the Youth Association and Co-op. I focus on their activities between 1979 and 1997, which includes the 1985 'riot' and reaction. This group had an ambivalent relationship with their local council, that was sometimes confrontational but also often accommodating—especially with respect to getting funds for programs. Using this group, I will demonstrate how scholars might break beyond an active/passive citizen binary, expand activism studies to attend to under-privileged forms of dissent, decolonialise citizenship studies by gesturing past subject formations associated with a Global North context (Jakimów, 2022), and also to highlight the very real politics of becoming a citizen in a frenzied, hyper-neoliberal world (Emejulu and Bassel, 2020).

Embracing complexity and nuance: Tensions and Debates in Platform Labour Regulation
Sofia Negri (Queen Mary University of London)

This paper examines debates around platform labour regulation, focusing on the tensions within the delivery platform workers movement. Drawing upon empirical research and interviews with workers and organisations in Argentina, it analyses the specific characteristics of platform labour that set it apart from traditional employment arrangements and which lead to divergent understandings and perceptions among stakeholders. Platform workers, classified as independent contractors, lack access to essential rights associated with the standard employment relationship. Despite this classification, they operate under company policies, indicating a form of control resembling traditional employer-employee dynamics. Nonetheless, there are certain aspects of platform labour such as flexible work arrangements that blur the lines between workers' autonomy and employer control. In that sense, workers' testimonies reveal varied perceptions of autonomy and flexibility, influenced by diverse working conditions and modalities within platforms.

This paper argues that a binary understanding of labour regulation based on the standard employment relationship which opposes schedule flexibility with access to social security has hindered the possibility of regulating platform labour and has also fed cracks within the platform workers' movement. It also looks at how these cracks have been exploited by right-wing and libertarian discourses in Argentina. These discourses advocate for minimal state intervention and emphasise individual autonomy, resonating with some workers' experiences and fears regarding regulation, including job loss and reduced flexibility. This divergence reflects broader societal debates surrounding state intervention and labour rights and point towards the need to adopt a perspective beyond binary that would acknowledge and address the novel complexities of platform labour to move towards a more equitable and inclusive regulatory landscape for the evolving world of work.

Scholar-activism in, with, and against the state? Reflections from research on the political geographies of debt and social housing allocation in England
Fraser Curry (King's College London)

Scholars working across disciplines have long pondered the role of the 'university' and the 'scholar' in relation to movements, activists, and activisms. Today, especially for those of us committed to housing justice struggles, the scholar activist moniker has become a way of describing our orientation to the neoliberal university. The Autonomous Geographies Collective provided clear and helpful guidance for would-be scholar-activists "to make strategic interventions collectively with the social movements we belong to" (The Autonomous Geographies Collective, 2010, p. 247). However, discomfort around the term remains, particularly as the gendered, raced, and classed politics of casualisation infuse the "impossibilities of being a good enough researcher" for movements and universities alike (Bishop and O'Connor, 2023; Zielke, Thompson and Hepburn, 2023). But what about the state? How should scholar-activists understand it, should we orient ourselves against it, or

make ‘strategic interventions’ in and with it? Drawing from research with Katherine Brickell and Mel Nowicki on debt, family homelessness, and temporary accommodation in Greater Manchester (Brickell and Nowicki, 2023), this paper will discuss our collective attempt to ‘move beyond the case’ and map the political geographies of debt and social housing allocation through an England-wide policy analysis and FOI-research and reflect on the ‘doings’ of scholar-activism in, with, and against the state, including working with the Shared Health Foundation and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Households in Temporary Accommodation.

Decolonizing Housing Justice: Unpacking Solidarity across Difference
Caolan Barr (University of British Columbia)

The question of settler colonialism has often been obscured in the literature and organizing around housing precarity and justice. In particular, settler-led projects for housing justice have often failed to adequately address the breadth of Indigenous sovereignty and decolonization and the context of settler colonialism in which such politics occur, often tacitly understanding housing justice to operate outside of the context of ongoing settler colonialism. In this presentation, I explore how social movements organize around difference and understand the scope of decolonization differently, in order to bring emergent projects for housing justice and mutual aid into alignment with Indigenous-led projects of decolonization. I do so through a comparative examination of the occupation of the British Columbia Legislature Building on Lək̓ʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ territory, in solidarity with Wet’suwet’en communities contesting the development of the Coastal GasLink pipeline across, their territories, and efforts to provide mutual aid and encampment support to people experiencing homelessness and sheltering in urban parks in so-called ‘Victoria’ during the Covid-19 pandemic.
This allows me to illustrate that processes which are fundamentally connected through colonization; resource development, land rights and housing precarity, are often understood as discrete or separate within the organizing of settler-led projects of mutual aid and housing justice. I work to illustrate these processes’ connections and to develop theoretical frameworks that can meaningfully tie together decolonization and housing justice. At its core, this work explores how solidarity movements have often failed to account for difference and have inadvertently worked to truncate the scope of Indigenous politics and to materially and discursively segregate Indigenous peoples to delimited spaces and struggles. Analyzing these processes can help to produce frameworks in which communities can more meaningfully and ethically conduct solidarity and work across difference.

Room 01/052 (Lanyon Building)

10.00-11.20 Geographies of Migration in Times of Crisis

Chair: Milena Komarova (Queen’s University Belfast)

The Right move? The domestication of climate migration and security in Italian political debates
Anna Casaglia (Università di Trento)

The intersection of climate change, migration, and security has become a focal point of academic inquiry and political debates. While humanitarian narratives portray ‘climate refugees’ as victims deserving of protection, the spectre of a ‘climate exodus’ can be mobilised also to justify border militarization and reinforce racial lines. Concerns over the latter scenario are becoming more pressing as right-wing political formations rise to power in numerous countries. Aiming to advance debates on climate migration, security and political ecologies of the right, we examine the articulation of 'climate migration' in the Italian political landscape, a case made particularly relevant given the ruling right-wing coalition and its track-record of anti-migration rhetoric and policies. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of parliamentary debates, electoral programs, social media feeds, and other sources, we show that the Italian right, rather than waiving the spectre of a climate exodus, has been attempting a ‘domestication’ of climate change, taming the debate on the impacts of global warming and reducing it

to a domestic matter (a twofold process that we term ‘depoliticisation through reticence’ and 'post-denial recalcitrance'). These findings, while underscoring the need for situated and nuanced understandings of how political actors address the climate crisis in relation to security and borders, also highlight the danger that right wing formations, on top of responding to the climate emergency by pushing explicit forms of eco-fascism or ecobordering, can resort to less spectacularised repertoires that aim at blocking climate action while still pursing anti-migrant and racist agendas. This research thereby not only sheds light on the Italian case but also contributes to broader discussions on climate security and the diverse responses of right-wing political formations to the climate emergency.

Chained hopes. Perspectives on peace as an everyday experience by migrant women
Claske Dijkema (Bern University of Applied Sciences)

Peace is still predominantly thought within the context of nation-states. This approach does not integrate all those who physically extract themselves from (different forms of) violence. What does peace mean to those people, who are on the move and who stay shorter or longer periods of time in transit and destination countries? What does peace mean in a transnational context? An exploratory research project at the University of Basel posed this question to five women, coming from different countries (Nigeria, Cameroun and Afghanistan), and who are at different stages in the asylum process, but have in common that they applied for asylum in Germany. The methods used are photo elicitation and feminist Relief Maps. This research builds theoretically on important contributions from feminist scholarship that challenge the idea of the nation-state as the dominant concept or context in which to think about security. It helps to understand peace as an everyday experience, and a process in time and space, building on the temporal turn in geography.

Hospitality, solidarity and care? Theorizing new forms of mutual aid among transnational migrants in Québec/Canada
Patricia Martin (Université de Montréal)

The Americas, like other regions of the world, are experiencing unprecedented forms of human mobility generated by overlapping political, economic, and environmental crises. In a dialectic process, new forms of border enforcement also shape these contemporary migration flows. Under the hegemony of the United States, an ideology of prevention through deterrence is rapidly transforming the function, nature, and geography of borders throughout the region. These new forms of bordering increase the precarity of migrants as they navigate between state surveillance, detention, and deportation, on the one hand, and informal and increasingly criminal forms of trafficking, on the other. These combined processes produce new zones of deep violence and death particularly in locations, such as the US-Mexico Border and the Darian Gap, that are located geographically and legally along the jagged edges of nation-states.

As critical migrant scholars have argued, migrants and local host communities are not passive in the face of these processes, however. Indeed, migration represents an essential dimension of human - including political – agency. The well-being, even survival, of precarious migrants relies, furthermore, on a range of economic, political, and social forms of mutual aid which sustain community and sociability in deeply hostile contexts. Based on research that we are currently undertaking in Québec, Canada, along the northern “edge” of migratory system in the Americas, we seek to critically interrogate the limits and possibilities of these subaltern forms of sociability and agency. Through interviews and participant observation with transnational migrants and migrant advocacy groups, we deploy the overlapping theoretical lenses of hospitality, solidarity, and care to specify the geographical and social contours these emergent forms of mutual aid. Highlighting these practices helps to recast deeply prejudicial narratives regarding migrants and migration while illuminating prefigurative forms of politics.

Mobility, difference, and cultural heritage among Bedouin in Jordan.
Olivia Mason (Northumbria University)

Bedouin are central to Jordanian identity and state security. Yet in Jordan a complex relationship between Bedouin and the state occurs as conflicting narratives and practices around Bedouin were created by the (post)colonial Jordanian state to create a citizenry out of semi-nomadic groups. These practices including limiting Bedouin movement, forced sedentarisation and banning cultural and livelihood practices. This paper explores these contradictions and challenges by reflecting on a project with a Bedouin artist to document cultural heritage practices in Jordan's Badia. Through interviews with Bedouin involved in this project, this paper explores how state imaginations of Bedouin intersect with lived experiences. This includes understanding how mobility creates cultural heritage and how nationalism and culture are entangled in ways that can reinforce difference. The paper reflects therefore on how artistic practices in the present day can help to understand culture, difference, and mobility.

11.40-13.00 ELECTORAL GEOGRAPHIES

Chair: Jonathan Harris (King's College London)

The role conception of Joe Biden and Donald Trump on the Russian-Ukrainian war during their presidency and the campaign of the US election 2024
Ádám Labáth (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest)

The US support is critical for Ukraine in the war against the Russian aggression. The US president's role in the collective European security and his position are also critical on contemporary geopolitical issues. In November of 2024, the United States elects a president, and the two most likely candidates are the current president Joe Biden and the former president Donald Trump at the moment. The whole world is watching how the US geopolitical role will develop after the election. For this reason, it is crucial to answer the questions and compare the two candidate's presidency and campaign by analysing their political communication compared to their actions. The role theory provides a framework to investigate the difference between the political actors' speeches and behaviour. In my research, I compare the Biden presidency to the Trump administration, focusing on their Ukraine-related foreign policy by analysing the two presidents' remarks and their political actions. The remarks of the two presidents reveal their political position and role conceptions about the Russian-Ukrainian war and conflict. Furthermore, comparing their presidency to the campaign could brighten the scenarios of US foreign policy after the election. Support for Ukraine has became one of the main topics of the presidential campaign debates. Some candidates, including Trump strongly criticized the role of the USA in the supporting Ukraine, while others still stand with the wartorn Ukraine, just like Biden. For this reason, the US allies, Europe and Ukraine are anxiously awaiting the result of the US election. The concern is grounded: the less support is given by the USA, the more pressure is on the European partners. Or is this exactly how they want to achieve greater involvement of Europe in supporting Ukraine?

Dynamics of Boundaries and Political Change in the British Isles: An Integrated Geopolitical Analysis
Simona Epasto (University of Macerata)

This study employs a geopolitical evaluation methodology that includes the delineation of geographical spaces, mapping of internal and external actors, assessment of relevant geopolitical factors, and examination of the interconnections among these elements, guided by a meta-geopolitical framework. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of the dynamics shaped by and shaping boundaries in the British Isles, considering both political and cultural-religious dimensions. The analysis focuses on England, Scotland under Humza Yousaf's leadership, who is notable for being the first head of government of Muslim faith and immigrant descent in the region, Northern Ireland with the new government led by Michelle O'Neill from Sinn Féin, and the Republic of Ireland. The study explores the Northern Ireland Protocol's role in managing the only land border between the UK and the EU, highlighting its post-Brexit political and social implications.

The evaluation also considers recent electoral dynamics in Northern Ireland, where Sinn Féin's significant victory indicates shifts in border perceptions and internal policies. Additionally, the decline of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) is examined for its regional political landscape implications. Moreover, the study delves into cultural and religious boundaries, particularly between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, to understand their impact on intercommunity relations and internal politics. Using the cross-impact technique for assessing interactions between actors and factors allows for incorporating qualitative considerations alongside quantitative ones, outlining political interests and strategies within a context marked by various constraints and opportunities. This flexible and creative method emphasizes conceptualizing space in terms of flows and interactions rather than just as a physical entity. By integrating these methodological components, the study provides a comprehensive view of the challenges and opportunities presented by boundaries in the British Isles. It underscores the importance of adopting dialogue and intercultural understanding strategies to foster peaceful and productive coexistence amid significant political and social changes.

Electoral Geography and Political Representation of Marginalized Groups: 2020 Elections of Black representatives in Brazil
Daniel Azevedo (Universidade de Brasília)

The electoral year of 2020 is a crucial milestone in the Brazilian democratic process, symbolizing an increasing involvement of racial groups traditionally marginalized in politics. In current political representation debate, there is an emphasis on the mirror-descriptive model, suggesting that representatives should reflect the demographic characteristics of society, including the percentage of women and Black individuals within the electoral geographic area. The objective of this study is to analyze whether there was a rise in mirror representation of Black individuals based on the spatial distribution of votes in the 2020 elections in three Brazilian states capitals: Porto Alegre, Natal, and Belo Horizonte. The methods employed commence with a quantitative analysis utilizing geostatistics (Moran I Index) and the mapping of spatial voting patterns. Subsequently, 875 surveys were conducted with voters in the three capitals as a methodological triangulation. The research indicates that the increase in Black representatives in the three capitals does not directly correlate spatially with the electoral zones with the highest concentration of this population. This suggests that the rise of this group in institutional political spaces may not reflect an ethnic-racial mirror vote but could be more associated with substantive representation linked to public ideas and preferences. This study may signify that racial issues and elections in Brazil differ considerably from other global realities that also witness an increase in the representation of marginalized racial groups.

Still United in diversity? Celebrating difference in the European Union and the 2024 EP elections (national) campaigns
Virginie Mamadouh (University of Amsterdam)

In June 2024 the European Parliament will be elected directly for the tenth time since 1979. One more time, the turnout is likely to be low and parties articulating discontent against the EU are likely to collect more support than at the previous elections. European elections are organized nationally, and candidates run for national political parties, although most of them are federated in European parties with a common manifesto and a lead candidate (after the German Spitzenkandidat). According to the polls and analysis of the think tank European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) in January 2024 anti-European populist parties are likely to win in nine member states and come second or third in another nine countries, while some reshuffling among the parliamentary groups is expected that would increase their political influence through the creation of a new coalition between Christian Democrats, conservatives and radical right wing parties. Moreover in a period of poly-crisis (climate crisis, financial crisis, migration crisis, covid-19 crisis and war in Ukraine) European voters are also divided in terms of their crisis that preoccupied them the most. The EP election campaigns are the occasion to examine what bind Europeans in their divisions. Are they united in their diversity as the motto of the EU would have it? United in diversity (available in all official languages of the EU and in Latin In varietate concordia) has been adopted by the European Parliament in 2000 and inscribed into

the European constitution drafted in 2004, and rejected in referendums in France and the Netherlands (but the article about EU symbols have not been retained in the Treaty of Lisbon). From the EP initiative together.eu to promote democracy and participation to the election to individual party manifestoes and events, the paper will examine how unity and diversity have been celebrated.

14.20-15.40 MOBILITY ACROSS BOUNDARIES

Chair: Patricia Martin (Université de Montréal)

From 'red scare' to 'law and order': nested scales of local, domestic and international security at the US Passport Office
Catriona Gold (University College London)

In the aftermath of WWII, the travelling American emerged as a hotly-debated domestic and foreign policy concern. While some political actors sought to restrict and/or surveil the travel of 'subversives' to and from the United States, others saw travel as an opportunity to project American political power and prestige. Travelling tourists - with proper guidance - could be enrolled as 'lay ambassadors' in the 'cultural Cold War.' In this context, and with passports newly mandatory, the US Passport Office played a central role in both facilitating and curtailing the Cold War travel of Americans.

While scholars have considered the governance of travel in connection with the broader Cold War, the role of the Passport Office and its 1955-77 Director Frances Knight in shaping Cold War geopolitics is less well understood. This paper specifically considers both the figure of Knight, her leadership of the Passport Office, and the urban context of Washington, DC during the civil rights era through which Knight presided. I consider the Passport Office as a 'nested place' through which domestic, local, and international scales interplay in the construction of broader Cold War discourses of security. I specifically consider how conservative imaginaries of urban crime and disorder underpinned Knight's increasingly strident calls for new forms of security measures - including new technologies of identity and surveillance - to tackle what were framed as intensifying local and national security threats of drugs, crime and 'illegal aliens'. In critically exploring the nested scales of the Passport Office's geopolitical reach, this paper offers insight into key spaces through which US Cold War security practices emerged and travelled.

Deframing the European Cultural Routes as a Cultural Infrastructure: Geopolitical Entanglements
Bonato Michela (University of Padova, DiSSGeA)

The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe trace their legitimation roots to the Faro Convention, which stipulates the democratic and grassroots nature of current heritagization processes within the European Union. According to the institutional discourse, the Cultural Routes are certified tangible and intangible networks promoting the shared consciousness of a diversified but united Europe through heritage promotion and place branding. By reflecting on the geopolitical power resting in cultural heritage, this paper analyses how institutionalized discourses produce new language and significance regarding the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes as a way of (re-)constructing a pluralist but unified version of 'Europe' in both diachronic and synchronic terms. It highlights biopolitical mechanisms of internal gaze and the outcomes in defining forms of otherness, showing how diverse worldviews may strategically leave out the burden of 'difficult heritage' by (de-)politicizing historical facts, goods, natural resources, and intangible traditions. Based on critical discourse analysis, particularly the thematic analysis of keywords, the paper questions the normative language of the Europeanization process beyond rhetoric, arguing how it contributes to the building of 'Europe as a cultural infrastructure' within a 'worlding' process that surpasses the descriptive realm of the Cultural Routes content and purposes, enforcing narratives and local interests based on political, economic, social, and ideological premises. In so doing, the paper enriches the discussion on institutional, discursive assemblages (re-)making socio-cultural worlds through the broader perspective of tourism

and mobility, cultural policies, and their geopolitical potential in ontologically designing ‘Europe’ as a continuously lived albeit standardized spatiality vis-à-vis bordering processes of otherness.

The Role of Geopolitics in Shaping Global and Regional Tourism Trends
Nikolai Grudtsyn (St. Petersburg State University)

This study explores the interactions between geopolitical factors and the dynamics of global and regional tourism. Recognising the profound impact of geopolitical forces on tourism patterns, the research investigates how political events, military conflicts international relations, and regional dynamics shape the tourism landscape. Utilising a comprehensive analysis, the study examines the multifaceted influences of geopolitics on tourist flows and destination choices. This work also goes deeper into potential areas where tourism serves as a diplomatic instrument. Through careful study of complex connections between geopolitics and tourism, the research aims to identify opportunities for leveraging tourism as a tool for diplomacy. The examination of diplomatic strategies embedded within tourism activities sheds light on how nations can strategically enhance international relations. This dual perspective, encompassing both geopolitical analysis and the diplomatic potential of tourism, contributes a holistic view to the study, offering valuable insights into the multifaceted role of tourism in the contemporary global context. By delving into both global and regional perspectives, the research aims to provide insights into the complex relationship between geopolitics and the tourism industry, offering valuable implications for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and scholars interested in understanding and navigating the geopolitical factor in the world of tourism.

From Border Art to border arting - How geopolitics hold artworks together?
Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary & Andrea Masala (Uni. Grenoble Alpes)

Since 1984 and the birth of the collective Border Art Workshop / Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW-TAF), a contemporary art form maintains a specific link with a problematic type of locations such as international borders. Its English-language name, Border Art, or Spanish-language Arte Fronterizo, doesn’t translate well into French, where it's necessary to add a proposition: art FROM, AT, AGAINST the border. Our work over the past fifteen years has shown the spread of this type of artistic expression on a planetary scale, as geopolitical boundaries geopolitical boundaries were increasingly monitored, leading to a growing number of them being walled off, through a process known as the "securitization" of the world.

However, the search for commonalities to artworks produced in such contexts, whether installations, performances or other visual works, shows that it is possible to associate more works to Border Art. Through a critical reading of the notion of artistic genre, we propose to discuss the link between space and contemporary art, based on both an aesthetic and spatial reading of a vast corpus of contemporary artworks that we are bringing together into a database that we are currently building. This leads us to propose the notion of Border Arting, expressing the complex space-time dimensions of such artistic expression in geopolitically sensitive spaces.

Environment and Politics C Keynote

Chair: Fiona McConnell (University of Oxford)

Difference and the Politics of Feeling
Anna Secor (Durham University)

FRIDAY 23RD AUGUST

CANADA ROOM AND COUNCIL CHAMBERS

10.00-11.20 BOUNDARIES, BORDERS AND BELONGING (1)

Chair: Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary (Université Grenoble Alpes)

Macroregional imaginaries of French Caribbean Territories: Similarity and Difference in political geography of in-between and multi-belonging
Camille Dabestani (University Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne)

As part of the Caribbean, Martinique and Guadeloupe are at the crossroads of multiple areas, associated with France and Europe through their administrative and political status ("overseas territories" in France, "outermost regions" in the EU). In representations of the world produced from the North, these territories are seen as peripheral to these areas, sometimes even forgotten or ignored. Their geographical position within the Caribbean is obvious, but the definitions and status of this group are complex and plural, reflecting processes of regionalization.

This proposal invites to consider the ways in which the expression of differences and similarities is used to construct macroregional imaginations associated with these territories, to define spaces of belonging on this scale through the point of view of students from Martinique and Guadeloupe (living in these territories or studying in France). How are they using differences and similarities to question discontinuities, postcoloniality and hierarchization in practices and representations of the world from and within these territories?

Analyzing their imaginations means analyzing institutional peripheralization in the French and European contexts, as well as in the Caribbean context. It also means shedding light on how students represent and practice these spaces, policies and futures.

The results of a two-stage survey will be used. First, a digital cartographic questionnaire distributed to students at the University des Antilles and universities in France mainland (2021/22) which questioned their spatial representations of their regions of the world with mental maps, their migratory trajectories and mobilities (real or imagined). Secondly, semi-directive interviews were carried out with students, discussing their mobility, their cultural practices and their macroregional representations.

The survey shows the socio-spatial and political proximities and discontinuities expressed by students with regard to their macoregions and their relationships through different processes (identification, differentiation, hierarchization, forgetting), parameters (cultural, political) and by different positions (in-between, multi-belonging).

Place and belonging in Northern Ireland: Evidence from ARK's Public Attitude Surveys
Paula Devine, Erin Early, Martina McKnight and Dirk Schubotz (Queen's University Belfast)

Place and belonging are vitally important in Northern Ireland (NI), with the social conflict of the region highlighting how place can be highly contested and segregated. Despite the progress made, there remain key questions when considering place and belonging: what is Northern Ireland as a geographical and political entity, and is it accepted by all? The Together: Building a United Community' (T:BUC) Strategy, (2013) reflects the aim of the NI Executive in improving community relations, and working towards a shared society. However, this assumes that local people feel a sense of belonging and influence on debates at the local and wider political level. This is particularly pertinent given the re-instatement of the NI Assembly and Executive in February 2024, which necessitates political and civic buy-in and support for its successful functioning.

Geographers define regions as social and mental constructs which are often culturally defined (Schlemper and Panozzo, 2020), with identity and boundaries having spatial and historical dimensions. While places provide a sense of belonging and security to those who claim membership of them, physical and social boundaries are often contested, resulting in the politicisation of belonging, especially in times of perceived threat (Yuval-Davis, 2006). This is exemplified in NI, with contested narratives of nationhood.

This study examines sense of belonging and influence within two arenas: Northern Ireland, and the local neighbourhood. Logistic regression analyses explored how belonging and influence are impacted by identity (religious and national), and attitudes and experience of residential, workplace and educational mixing and segregation. The analysis utilised data from two annual cross-sectional public attitude surveys undertaken by ARK (Northern Ireland's social policy hub): the Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) survey of adults and the Young Life and Times (YLT) survey of 16 year olds. The study focused on data from 2013 to 2023.

Identity politics and Turkish irredentism during the Erdoğan era
Hameed Jabery (University of Tehran)

Secularism arising from the politics of Mustafa Kemal in the early 20th century created the conditions during which Türkiye became isolated in its foreign policy towards the Middle East in the second half of the 20th century by joining NATO and Westernization. On the other hand, the turning point of the presence of the elites who had differences with Kamal was the victory of the Justice and Development Party in the 2002 elections. During the last two decades, there has been a shift in Türkiye's view of the surrounding environment. This country has also made territorial claims against some countries. Therefore, this article seeks to investigate the impact of identity politics on irredentism in Türkiye's foreign policy from 2003 to 2020. The theoretical approach in this research is unit-level constructivism and its research method is process tracing. In this research, it is shown that the main source of intellectual inspiration for Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, is the thoughts of Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, which is based on modeling the style of politics and governance of Abdul Hamid II. The manifestation of such thoughts has provided the transition to Neo-Ottomanism in the process during which the religion was strengthened and the secularism and Kemalism were weakened. Neo-Ottomanism as an element of identity has shaped Türkiye's national interests. It has led to a new foreign policy emphasizing regionalism in the form of territorial claims and adopting new approaches. Among these approaches, inspired by the borders of the Ottoman Empire, making a new border claim in the former provinces of this empire and adopting an assertive foreign policy in the surrounding areas, especially in Syria, the Mediterranean Sea, during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, and even claiming the need to review treaties such as Sevres.

On the intersections between race and nation - an empirical study
Marco Antonsich (Loughborough University)

The paper intervenes on the debate about the intersections between race and nation by exploring how the nation is imagined and narrated by its racialised subjects, i.e., subjects that white majorities categorise as subaltern and less entitled with national belonging due to their ascribed ethno-racial difference. It does so by attending to the voices of non-white Italians living in the UK. Empirical data shows the ambiguous relation that the interviewees entertain with the idea of 'Italian' and 'Italy', showing how the multicultural context of the British society allow these subjects to express plural forms of identification which are instead suppressed within the Italian society. Taken together, these voices offer a more nuanced understanding of the nation-race nexus in an age of growing white nationalism.

11.40-13.00 Boundaries, Borders and Belonging (2)

Chair: Marco Antonsich (Loughborough University)

Questions of Nature: Constructing Singapore's Geopolitical Discourse
Tiantong Gu (National University of Singapore)

This paper poses the 'questions of nature,' recognizing its inherent dynamism with urban, to ask, fundamentally, what's the desired urban-nature relations which go beyond the confines of static perspectives that seek to define and study it as a mere 'thing.' The focus in this essay is understanding 'nature' as the spatialization of the discourse surrounding the urban-nature relationship. By delving into an examination of the language and practices surrounding 'nature' in the context of Singapore, this study underscores the significance of situating 'nature' within the dual frameworks of local social-political scales and broader international geopolitical contexts. And ask more detailed questions how and why 'nature' is strategically rewritten in narratives and produced in selective forms and space? And what does it bring to state and people? And how does it as a practice in turn reshape the discourse? Subsequently, the author argues that 'nature' in Singapore is a multifaceted process wherein the discourse becomes spatialized and space, in turn, becomes discursivized. This offers an inspiration to understand the intricate urban-nature relationship through an analytical geopolitical perspective.

Contested more-than-human territorialities and conservation biopolitics at Copeland Bird Observatory, Ireland
Steven Farquhar (Queen's University Belfast)

Although geopolitics is often associated with (anthropocentric) large-scale international affairs, contemporary research emphasises the importance of geopolitics at smaller-scales (Dixon, 2016), of non-state actors (Koopman, 2011), and of the more-than-human (Gibbs, 2018). Following this, Gibbs defines geopolitics as "a politics that pays attention to the material properties, capacities, and tendencies of the Earth" (ibid: 218). I consider the territorial actions of non-humans to be an example of more-than-human geopolitics. Drawing upon the assemblage theory of Deleuze and Guattari, new materialism, and conservation biopolitics, I explore the territorial relationships between humans and non-humans through self-reflexive participant observation and interviews conducted at Copeland Bird Observatory, Lighthouse Island, Ireland. During the breeding season, parts of the island are inaccessible to humans due to gulls protecting their colonies, while manx shearwaters undermine footpaths with their burrows and occasionally fly into toilets. At the same time, ornithologists attach rings and tracking devices to birds. The close contact between humans and birds involved in such practices is not appreciated by the birds and can be considered an act of territorialisation. Meanwhile, conservation practitioners carry out habitat management, which requires decisions to be made about which species and populations are to be protected and which are disposable. In sum, the island consists of myriad (de/re)territorialising assemblages which are subject to and create their own (geo)political contexts. Lighthouse Island is a particularly useful site for understanding the role of non-humans in such geopolitics.

Bottom-up geopolitics: Everyday geopolitics during the Anglo-French fishing row
Karst Berkenbosch (KU Leuven)

People often associate the term 'geopolitics' with politicians and international organizations. However, relations between states and regions are also shaped in mundane ways, by 'ordinary' people. This idea of geopolitics from below has not yet received due research attention. To fill this gap, this project analyses how people living in a region subject to a geopolitical dispute interact with, articulate and socially (re)produce space and territory on a daily basis.

The study uses qualitative research focusing on the bay of Saint-Malo, France, including the waters around the Channel Islands. Since Brexit, a dispute has resurfaced over access to fishing grounds. These tensions are not only situated in a complex social and geopolitical context that involves relations between the UK, France, the EU and the British Crown Dependencies. They also situate in the daily life of people affiliated with the fishing industry, both on the French and British side.

The data consists of participant observations and semi-structured interviews with people affiliated with the fishing industry. The analysis focuses on the role of discourses, social structures and physical aspects related to the sea in shaping interregional relations. Preliminary results show that Jersey and French respondents constructed different territorial logics. The former largely relied on narratives of national identity and a distinct history of Jersey. The latter based their claims on profitability and acquired rights of their businesses. Overall, the results underline how discursive, structural and physical elements interact and co-shape how geopolitics are (re)produced in everyday settings.

Multispecies encounters: when borders meet and broaden
Lola Aubry (University of Luxembourg) & Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary (Université Grenoble Alpes)

In this paper, we are engaging with an ontological turn of border studies based on the analysis of how alive non-humans, in this case animals and animal-related actants interfere with bordering processes. We aim to contribute with a critical examination, revision, and expansion of Rumford's agenda for a multiperspectivist border studies, in dialogue with the ontological turn, but also fields such as ethology (Despret, 2019), 4D (Billé 2020), and animal geographies (Philo & Wilbert, 2003), which have, long before border studies, looked into nonhuman spatialities and the complex entanglements of humans and nonhumans in space and time.

We are especially interested in the ways ordering and othering processes become multilayered and imply a conceptual and empirical broadening of border spaces. In that context, multiperspectivism becomes a matter of “thinking-feeling like a border multiplicity” amid a world of multiple entangled and sometimes conflicting ontologies where “it matters what matters we use to think other matters with” (Haraway 2016), where ethics, epistemology, and ontology can no longer be viewed as separated domains (Barad 2007), and where we, as border scholars and political geographers, lose our innocence in a world of differentiated complicity in the webs of processes that matter, that shape, enliven, and kill (Haraway, ibid.). We will illustrate our argument with two cases of whale-human othering and ordering.

14.20-15.40 Camp Geographies of the Balkan Route

Chair: Anna Casaglia (Università di Trento)

Trieste endgame and the politics of the ban along the Balkan Route
Claudio Minca (University of Bologna)

Trieste is often considered the endpoint of one of key articulations of the most important informal overland migration corridor in Europe: the so-called Balkan Route. This is the section of the Balkan Route that brings migrants from Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Adriatic city via Croatia and Slovenia. This paper discusses in broader terms the spatialisation of the politics of the refugee ban across the Route by focusing in particular on ‘the Silos’, the infamous makeshift camp emerged in Trieste in an abandoned building near the railway station, a camp that since 2018 has hosted a significant number of asylum seekers. The majority of the residents of this conspicuous squat are asylum seekers who, despite having applied for protection and therefore being legally present in the Italian territory, are not accommodated in a regular camp and therefore forced to live in extremely dire conditions in the Silos. The paper will therefore reflect on this form of spatial harrassment silently implemented by the local authorities as well as on how the abandonment of this population on-the-move to such informal spatialities is part of a broader ‘politics of the ban’, that is, of a way of governing migration characterized by forms of slow and indirect violence.

Life and Labour in Refugee Camps in mainland Greece
Valeria Raimondi (University of Bologna)

This paper investigates the current living conditions of migrants and asylum seekers in some key refugee camps in mainland Greece, investigating how it has changed and is evolving with recent developments in national migration policies. Very little research to date has focused on the working

conditions of migrant people residing in the camps, yet these conditions are an important foundation of everyday life and mobility possibilities of people living in camps. Accordingly, my research examines national labor policies, involvement of NGOs in official workforce recruitment, undeclared work, and exploitative labour practices concerning migrants and asylum seekers residing in institutional camps. Based on fieldwork carried out in Greece between September 2023 and July 2024 in five cities (Athens, Patras, Corinth, Ioannina, Thessaloniki), this paper attempts to draw a connection between the geographical location of refugee camps in mainland Greece and the demand for cheap migrant labor in the surrounding area. As regards the temporal sphere and the individual practices of migrant people, the research aims to investigate how the time spent in Greece is deemed necessary for the migrants to save enough funds and continue the journey along the Balkan Route.

The rise and fall of refugee counter-geographies in Northern Serbia
Dragan Umek (University of Trieste)

In light of recent changes occurred in the geopolitics of migration in the Western Balkans, this paper explores the implications of such developments for the so-called refugee Balkan Route in Northern Serbia. In particular, we examine the rise and fall of a network of institutional hospitality centres in relation to the mutating conditions of the regions along the Serbian borders with Croatia, Hungary and Romania and the associate twists and turns of the making of the Route. We will accordingly critically reflect on how this network of camps has represented for long a key form of humanitarian support for the people on the move trying to reach other parts of Europe; how - at the same time - it played a role in shaping the informal mobilities of the refugees; and how the overall border region is impacted by their continuous presence. Furthermore, a few preliminary findings of our ERC project will be presented, while a few methodological questions related to the interplay between visible and invisible refugee spatialities in the complex geographies of this part of the Route will be also discussed.

The Geopolitics and Biopolitics of Opening and Closing Camps in the Balkan Route
Yolanda Weima (University of Bologna)

Refugee-migrant camps have often been studied as discrete sites. While an emerging literature is attentive to their situation within broader campscapes or transnational fields, very little literature has specifically studied the management and life of camps in relation to broader migratory routes. Drawing on research in the Balkan Route, this paper looks specifically at camp openings and closures as spatial-techniques through which state and humanitarian authorities attempt to respond, (re)shape, and (re)route the migration corridor. The cases presented from across the Western Balkans demonstrate that camp openings and closures are shaped by the interplay of the geopolitical and biopolitical, and their interaction with the counter-geographies of refugee-migrants forging routes.

16.00-17.00 RGS POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY RESEARCH GROUP ROUNDTABLE

Chair: Olivia Mason (Northumbria University)

Teaching and researching violence, censorship, and difference
Merrill Hopper (King's College London), Anil Sindhwani (Durham University), Dean Phelan (University College Dublin) and Kara E. Dempsey (UNC-Appalachian State University)

This event aims to provide an opportunity to discuss, share experiences, and challenge the way we teach and research within our current geopolitically violent times. Spaces of teaching and research are sites where critical political discussions can emerge and different views be discussed but they can also be sites of censorship and closure. We reflect on how we are navigating geopolitical violence, censorship and difference when teaching or researching political geography to. In times of increasing censorship, how could we ensure that silenced and marginalised voices remain central to our research? How can we mainstream topics of teaching that are frequently censored? How do we deal with difference or opposing views in our teaching and research spaces? This panel will be a place of

learning from one another and thinking together to produce conversations on how we can better teach and research violence, censorship, and difference.

ROOM TR6 (GRADUATE SCHOOL)

10.00-11.20 GEOPOLITICS AND PRACTICES OF WARFARE (1)

Chair: Oren Yiftachel (Ben-Gurion University)

Universalistic ethics under colonial militarization: The exercise of 'violence' by black soldiers in pre-reversion Okinawa (1945-72)
Takashi Yamazaki (Osaka Metropolitan University)

This presentation aims to clarify what universalistic ethics constituted the rhetoric that supported the practice of colonial militarization in the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa) under U.S. military administration in pre-reversion Okinawa. Its analyses are conducted by investigating the "violence" exercised by black soldiers. Although the U.S. military attempted to correct intra-military racial segregation during World War II, racially separated units remained in the U.S. military stationed in Japan and Okinawa after the War. The residual effects of these segregation policies were geographically manifested in Okinawan society, in particular, "special drinking districts" U.S. soldiers patronized. The study site is Koza City (currently Okinawa City), which was formed in front of Gate 2 of the U.S. Air Force Kadena Air Base, and the following research questions are addressed using U.S. military administration (USCAR) documents, local newspaper articles, and local residents' testimonies: 1) how the special drinking districts were racially segregated, 2) how violent confrontations between black and white soldiers developed against the backdrop of the civil rights and Black Power movements, 3) how these violent confrontations affected Okinawan society, and 4) how it ultimately developed into a 'violent' confrontation between black soldiers and Okinawan locals. This presentation concludes that the universalistic ethic of racial equality, as a strong norm imposed on U.S. soldiers, generated ethical contradictions in which the U.S. military forced the locals to comply with purely 'American' ethical standards through several coercive measures, triggering persistent Okinawan resistance.

The Politics of Psychological War
Jeffrey Whyte (Lancaster University)

"Once an obscure term consigned to the esoterica of army field manuals and battlefield leaflets, 'psychological warfare' has gripped contemporary geopolitical imaginations in the wake of widespread concerns over online disinformation, foreign influence, and apparently novel forms of 'hybrid warfare'. While these alarms have often been sounded by liberal opponents of authoritarian regimes, the spectre of 'psychological operations' has also been embraced in corners of the New Right, with 1 in 5 Americans now believing that pop-singer Taylor Swift is herself a 'psyop' designed to support the re-election of Joe Biden. Stoking this fire, the US Army recently produced a sleek recruitment video advertising the reach and power of its own psychological warriors: "we are everywhere," the film seems to warn and assure.

Against the paranoia and credulity of these popular performances of psychological warfare this paper considers 'psychological war' as a constructed and contested object with specific political and geographical histories. In place of debunking specific claims about specific psychological operations, this paper draws upon the author's recently published monograph The Birth of Psychological War to challenge the terms on which popular ideas of psychological warfare are constructed, mobilised, valorised, and decried. It concludes that claims concerning psychological warfare's power, reach, and efficacy have themselves regularly appeared as forms of 'propaganda about propaganda' through which various actors compete to produce an uneven 'geopolitics of truth.'

Jeffrey Whyte is a Lecturer in International Relations at Lancaster University. He holds a PhD in Geography from the University of British Columbia. His book The Birth of Psychological War was published in 2023 by Oxford University Press.

Critically resituating the British state's use of torture in 1970s and 1980s Northern Ireland
Matthew Robinson (Queen's University Belfast)

The perpetration of torture by the British security forces in Northern Ireland in the 1970s and 1980s has generated an interdisciplinary field of study. Scholars examine the events and personnel surrounding high-profile instances, legalities under international human rights law, and the strategic implications of such practices in the broader conflict. However, work in this field generally ahistoricises the phenomenon, relegating from discussion an Irish colonialism-torture nexus. Instances of torture in 1970s and 1980s Northern Ireland are treated as aberrant, explainable in terms of the immediate needs of British counter-insurgency. Work on Irish history utilising the settler colonial paradigm has proliferated over the last two decades. Analyses centre violence: dispossession; cultural erasure; and the multifarious use of force by the British state. Such studies enrich our understandings of geographies of colonial violence in Ireland pre- and post-partition. However, they do not say much about torture – an extreme form of violence historically utilised against the same communities subjected to more acknowledged forms. Thus, on torture in Northern Ireland, the field centring this phenomenon as its object of study and Irish settler colonial studies have not met. In this presentation I argue that putting these bodies of work in dialogue invites a more historically and critically informed theorisation of British torture in 1970s and 1980s Northern Ireland. Such an account would centre: the longer colonial history of the use of torture by the British in Ireland, focusing on institutions and the transfer of relevant knowledge and personnel; a reframing of torture in the 1970s and 1980s as more congruent with settler colonial violence than distinct from it; and how the accounts of survivors, activists, and journalists might enrich our understandings. Only with such an analysis might torture in the region be resituated historically, spatially, and politically and its broader, island-wide significance suggested.

Researching geographies of violence and the fluid spatial, temporal and professional boundaries of "the field"
Judith Verweijen (University of Utrecht)

Fieldwork is commonly portrayed as an activity that is confined to a professional sphere and well delineated in time and space. Yet many geographers engaged in recurring fieldwork in the same settings have a different experience. Long-term research in, on and with particular communities inevitably leads to the blurring of personal and professional contacts and continuous engagement, whether at "home" or in "the field". This fluidity of spatial, temporal and public/private boundaries becomes however particularly challenging when involving violent actors and settings of ongoing armed conflict. After nearly a decade and a half of periodic research in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, violence and violent actors have become part of my everyday life. Inversely, I am recurring presence in the everyday lives of certain violent actors and those living with and through violence. Whatsapp and other social media have played a crucial role in this development, allowing for ongoing contact, whether inside or outside of "the field". Social media also lead to a steady stream of images of atrocities seeping into the everyday. This contribution reflects on the conceptual, temporal and spatial boundaries of "the field" in light of the interweaving of research on violence and both researchers and research subjects' everyday lives. I argue that although profound power inequalities persist, social media work to a certain extent as a leveller since intrusion becomes a multi-directional process and researchers no longer have the luxury to switch wars on and off. Current ethics protocols and fieldwork training are ill adapted to the realities of "the never-ending field" and should start approaching field research on violent actors and settings as an ongoing and potentially lifelong process, rather than a one-off activity.

11.40-13.00 GEOPOLITICS AND PRACTICES OF WARFARE (2)

Chair: Jeffrey Whyte (Lancaster University)

Negotiated Sovereignty: Surfacing Indigenous Geopolitics within Settler Colonialism
Yee-Chin Teo (National University of Singapore)

This paper explores the assertion of Indigeneity within the settler-colonial context of Taiwan. Theorization of settler colonialism has to date predominantly been focused on settlers of the European metropole, examining specific contexts such as North America, Latin America, Australia and New Zealand. In present-day Taiwan, the metropole is not a "present absence" (Veracini, 2010:24) of Europe, but the very proximate and increasingly irredentist China. The Indigenous people, while still operating within and arguably reinforcing the framework of the settler state, is not wholly internalized but allowed exposure. In a situation where the metropole is reviving its claims to the colony, the settler state strategically enrolls its Indigenous representatives in an assertion of autonomy. I review two processes of Indigenous reconciliation developing in Taiwan and frame them as Indigenous geopolitics – the survey and legislation of traditional territory and the instrumentalization of Indigeneity to assert the island's autonomy from China. I highlight that Indigenous political struggles that have otherwise often been contained within a stable conception of the state can have outward facing effects and suggest that Indigenous rights won can be seen within a spectrum of Indigenous sovereignty in varying degrees, from mere recognition to the extent of making representations to other states. Noting the highly visible process of reconciliation that has yet yielded limited legislative outcomes in Taiwan, I propose that Indigenous geopolitics should not be considered independent of or in opposition to the settler state. Rather, Indigenous representatives necessarily negotiate their politics within the framework of the settler state in an unequal relationship that nonetheless hold benefits for both sides. By studying the complex relationship between the settler state and Indigeneity on the recognition of Indigenous territory and sovereignty in Taiwan, the greater aim of the paper is to uncover implications contributing to the geopolitics of Indigeneity beyond Asia.

Beyond Redemption: Frontier Violence and Israel's War on Gaza
Merav Amir (Queen's University Belfast)

The proposed talk engages with the palpable presence of borders and bordering processes in cities, particularly those traditionally regarded as sites of ethno-national or ethno-political conflict (Pullan 2013, Scott and Sohn 2018, Iossifova 2020, Ramirez 2020, Fauser et al 2022). In Belfast, urban borders (such as 'peacewalls') are often regarded as proxies for the political conflict encapsulated by the Irish border. By contrast, I want to draw attention to how a broader array of urbanisation and bordering processes (driven by the logics of capitalism, bureaucratic governance, and the UK's exit from the EU) get entangled and work together in the city to reproduce political boundaries in a multitude of ways, above and beyond those of ethno-national conflict. Such processes can be observed particularly through the production of infrastructures of mobility.

As cities become key sites for – and key participants in – the circulation of globally extending flows (financial, economic, cultural, migration, informational, to name but a few), state-led bordering that aims to regulate such flows is affected by, even produced through the processes of urbanisation (Sassen 2012, 2015). Conversely, processes of urban redevelopment, diverse experiences of cities, and the production of political and cultural boundaries become profoundly affected by the bordering inherent in (local) government and urban residents' attempts to regulate or respond to an increasing variety and intensity of mobilities; from the literal physical movements of people and goods in the city (in this case themselves affected by post-Brexit (re)bordering), to migrant and refugee populations.

Ultimately, by questioning how processes of urbanisation and bordering in post-Brexit Belfast intersect and produce each other, I want to employ this intersection as an analytic lens that enables a

fresh look at the reproduction of political boundaries in the city, and – more generally – at the tensions between sovereignty and politics in cities.

Beyond Conflict: The Essence of Hazratbal Shrine in Kashmir's Collective Identity
Sarah Ahmad (Banaras Hindu University)

Amidst the backdrop of longstanding political strife and social unrest, the targeted attacks on Muslim shrines in Kashmir signify a disturbing escalation of violence, shaking the foundations of religious coexistence and cultural heritage in the region. The desecration and destruction of these revered sanctuaries not only violate the sanctity of religious spaces but also strike at the heart of Kashmir's rich historical and spiritual legacy, deepening wounds of communal discord and mistrust. In this tumultuous landscape of Kashmir, the Hazratbal Shrine housing a relic believed to be a strand of hair from the beard of Prophet Muhammad, has emerged as a beacon of resilience and communal unity, steadfastly weathering the storms of violence and attacks. Employing qualitative interviewing approaches, this study delves into the intricate dynamics of this religious space through the lens of place attachment and place identity, offering insights into the complex relationship between pilgrims and the place. The study reveals that pilgrims exhibit deep-seated attachments to the sacred site, viewing it as a symbol of spiritual solace, communal solidarity, and cultural heritage. These bonds of attachment foster a sense of belonging and continuity, anchoring individuals to a shared sense of identity and belonging rooted in the shrine's historical legacy. Hazratbal Shrine serves as a locus of collective memory, religious identity, and cultural pride for Kashmiris, embodying the region's rich tapestry of Sufi traditions, mysticism, and resilience. Moreover, the Shrine possesses inherent potential as a catalyst for peace-building and reconciliation efforts in Kashmir. As a sacred space that transcends religious and sectarian divides, the shrine offers a common ground for dialogue, understanding, and mutual respect among diverse communities. Through interfaith initiatives, cultural exchanges, and humanitarian outreach programs, Hazratbal Shrine can foster empathy, bridge divides, and promote a shared vision of coexistence and harmony in the region.

Triality: The Political Geography of Apartheid in Israel/Palestine and the war on Gaza
Oren Yiftachel (Ben-Gurion University)

The lecture attempts to analyze the settings for the current eruption of violence in Gaza and Western Negev. It argues for the existence of a 'triality' – three parallel conflicts – anti-colonial, national-religious and minority rights – which intertwine to create a 'deepening apartheid' process. The focus is on geopolitics, bordering, land, settlement, housing and digitalization policies, and Palestinian resistance as key factors in the making of political, legal and urban geography in the torn land, between River and Sea. Within this setting, Gaza became in 1948 the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees, as later placed under debilitating blockade following Israel partial 'disengagement' in 2005 and the rise of Hamas Islamist and rejectionist rule in 2007.

The spatial analysis shows a persistent process of Judaization of space, and Palestinian ghettoization (with few notable exceptions). The settler colonial policies have spawned since Israel's establishment the massive nationalization of land, and the parallel establishment of over 1000 Jewish segregated settlements. This was backed by persistent uneven housing and infrastructure development, including recent rapid, yet unequal, digitalization project. During the same period Palestinian Arabs (citizens and subjects) have been confined to existing enclaves with little possibility of expansion or construct new settlement, and with severe constraints on economic development.

The result has seen a process of 'creeping and deepening apartheid' enshrining Jewish supremacy over the entire land, with its fragmented and marginalized Palestinian spaces. Jewish domination has spawned several trajectories of resistance, one of which is radical Islam, which triggered in its terrorist attack the current disastrous war. The subsequent Israeli assault on Gaza has seen the unprecedented destruction and displacement in Palestinian population. The case of Israel/Palestine thus provides a stark example of the role of geographical scales in ethnic conflict, and the need for

analyzing various parallel mobilizations of 'the conflict' in order to fathom the roots of the crisis, and work towards ending the suffering and resolving of the protracted state of war.

14.20-15.40 POSITION MATTERS! THE MALDIVES, BETWEEN CHINA AND INDIA

Chair: Satish Kumar (Queen's University Belfast)

Linking islands through sport: a new model of governance in the geopolitical chess game of Indian ocean. The case of Maldivian archipelago
Claudio Melli (Università di Milano-Bicocca)

Although there is no universally accepted definition of a 'small state,' the Maldives can be characterized as such due to its limited population, territory, and GDP per capita. Not only the Maldives are small, but it is also geographically fragmented, with its territory dispersed across over a thousand islands. One of the primary factors uniting these islands is sport, which functions as an 'iconographic glue' in the nation-building process. National symbols are prominently displayed on sports uniforms, in sports facilities, and within the homes of the inhabitants, signifying the role of sport in fostering a sense of national identity. Over the past two decades, sport has evolved into a battleground where various political actors vie for influence. Through sport diplomacy, these figures seek to enhance their reputations, gain political legitimacy, and bolster their accountability. On the international stage, the Maldives leverages sport to attract investment and secure a position at global political tables. This is achieved through the construction of sports infrastructure and the hosting of international events. Sport diplomacy has recently emerged as a key component of the Maldivian political agenda. The pattern of project initiation, infrastructure development, and investment in sports reflects the Maldives' geopolitical strategy: maintaining a well-calibrated balance between the major diplomatic powers in the region, namely China, India, and Saudi Arabia. The Maldives' positioning within the broader geopolitical context of the Indian Ocean's "Cold War" is evident in the fluctuating popularity of football and cricket, which mirrors the ebb and flow of the nation's relations with China and India. This dynamic is also reflected in the alternating pro-Chinese and pro-Indian stances of successive Maldivian presidents, showing that Maldives governments strategically utilizes sport diplomacy not only as a tool for fostering national unity but also as a means of navigating its complex geopolitical landscape. By balancing relations with regional powers through the promotion of sports, the Maldives underscores the significance of sport as both a cultural connector and a diplomatic instrument on the global stage.

Missing the wicket? India, cricket, and its complex relations with the Maldives
Valeria Pecorelli (Iulm University, Milan)

The study explores the strategic significance of the Maldives in the East Asia-Middle East trade routes due to its geographical location (Zahir, 2021). Given the escalating strategic competition between India and China in the Indian Ocean (Frankel, 2011), the Maldives' foreign policy is intricately shaped by the dynamic influence of these two powers, fluctuating with local political dynamics (Ranjan, 2021). Initially adopting a pro-Western stance post-independence in 1965, the Maldives shifted towards India as a natural ally in the late 1980s, following India's military intervention to suppress a coup attempt in 1988 and subsequent aid in health and education (Kumar, 2016). Despite a pro-China phase during Yameen's government (2013-2018), India regained favor under Ibrahim Solih's administration (2018-2023). However, Solih's overt 'India First' agenda faced opposition, leading to the 2023 election of President Mohamed Muizzu, ushering in a pro-China stance. Notably, diplomatic strategies employed by India and China often utilize sports, with India engaging in "stadium diplomacy" tailored for cricket, in contrast to China's focus on football (soccer). The proposed China-funded football stadium and India-funded cricket stadium remain pending decisions on the diplomatic chessboard.

Stadium diplomacy and the "geopolitical landscape" of the Maldives: asymmetries of power in the Indian Ocean
Elena dell'Agnese (Università di Milano-Bicocca) & Claudio Melli (Università di Milano-Bicocca)

The notion of the political landscape, as opposed to the landscape of the everyday, or vernacular, is one of the central points of the cultural landscape theory developed by the American school of J.B. Jackson. When speaking of the political landscape, however, one usually refers to the creation of monumental works that exalt the regime in power at a given historical moment and the celebratory iconography of a given national narrative. In this paper, the aim is instead to highlight how, starting from the last decades of the 20th century, the intervention of external political forces, which, through loans and donations, allow the realisation of works of great visual impact (such as stadiums and bridges) within economically or politically weaker realities, towards which they establish relations of 'friendship', or strategic alliance, leads to the realisation of a new type of landscape, the 'geopolitical landscape'. Football in the last two decades has become a battleground between potentates of various backgrounds, united, however, by the need to create a good reputation for themselves, gain political respectability and strengthen their accountability. The contemporary stadium is an issue that generates multiple and often barely decipherable entanglements, between identity and history, economic interests and maximum media exposure, urban integration and innovative technological solutions. It is precisely the complexity of the issues that obliges us to take different, perhaps even contradictory, points of view. Here, we will examine the path that led to the construction of a football stadium in the capital of the Maldives, Male, with Chinese capital, in a true example of stadium diplomacy. In the Maldives as elsewhere, the sector is extremely dynamic and in great evolution, with processes that refer to a policy of change and negotiated territoriality. In the case of the Maldives, where a very characteristic spatial conformation leads the resource 'land' to be extremely rare and full of value, building bridges and stadiums seems to be the future because the stadium, in addition to sport, is also an icon.

Indian Ocean Small Island States and the Blue Growth. Big players' rivalries and Maldivian food policies

Stefano Malatesta (Università di Milano-Bicocca)

Blue Growth has been taken up as a key strategy for island and coastal economies coping with global challenges. In Europe, this centrality peaked between 2012 and 2021, moving from a "concept" to the dominant ideology in the construction of maritime economic policies. This framework is based on the implementation of blue jobs market by focusing on a limited number of Blue Economies: coastal and maritime tourism, aquaculture, marine energy, blue biotechnologies and seabed mining.

In the last decade, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has prioritised Blue Economies, under the umbrella of Blue Growth. As stated by Vishva Nath and Bohler-Muller in 2018: the Indian Ocean is the third largest ocean in the world, containing 20% of the water on the Earth's surface. The sea lanes in the Indian Ocean are among the busiest in the world, with more than 80 per cent of the world's seaborne oil trade passing through the Indian Ocean and its key choke points, and an estimated 40 per cent of the world's offshore oil production coming from the Indian Ocean.

The effectiveness of this strategy deals with by macro-regional dynamics such as the rivalry between the big players (especially India, China and Saudi Arabia), the environmental impacts of extractive economies on coastal and island geographies, the maritime geographies of mega-industrial economies (especially China) and, more generally, the geopolitics of climate change in the Indian Ocean (Rumley 2010). The risk is that Blue Growth is acting (and will act) as a driver of inequalities among the Indian Ocean big players and the countries (e.g. small island states) crossed by these tensions.

Focusing on one of the targets of Blue Economies (namely food security), this contribute presents the role of the Maldives in this macro-regional dynamic, particularly in light of tensions over control and exploitation of large oceanic fishing grounds.

ROOM 01/062 (LANYON BUILDING)

10.00-11.20 TERRITORIES, IDENTITIES AND GEOGRAPHIES OF RESISTANCE (1)

Chair: Ronit Berger Hobson (Queen's University Belfast)

Against the Wasteland. Reclaiming Fairness in the Russian Periphery.
Maria Chiara Franceschelli (Scuola Normale Superiore)

Between 2016 and 2018, the Moscow city government suffered a major waste management crisis. Local infrastructure was unable to process the city's growing amount of municipal solid waste (MSW). With the locals facing the consequences of toxic fumes, it became a issue of public health. As the problem was blatantly getting out of hand, Moscow outsourced the solution to remote areas.

In July 2018, local hunters found out about a landfill being built at the Shies railroad juncture, in the Russian Northwestern Arctic. The project was named "Ekotekhnopark", though was deficient in both ecological and technological terms: a huge pit in the ground that would host 500 tons of unsorted and unprocessed Muscovite waste, immolating 5000 hectares of ancient forests and threatening local water basins. The protests immediately erupted. By 2019, they had spread across the whole country, and shifted from strictly environmental to eminently political, challenging the Kremlin's extractivist attitude towards peripheral regions. In 2020, the project was halted.

This paper relies on Protest Event Analysis (PEA) and Frame Analysis to disentangle the dynamics of an unprecedented success in Russian recent mobilisational history. It explores the factors that allowed for a local issue to become a major driver for nationwide political mobilisation. Drawing from Laclau's conceptualisation of populism and political identity, the paper shows how activists created a political subjectivity that was initially arbitrarily rooted in local identities, which eventually became suitable ground for the construction of a broader front against the Kremlin's extractivist politics. This upscaling from a narrow identity to a broader front is based on the acknowledgement of a common experience uniting different groups and areas, namely a) a predatory attitude of the centre towards the regions; and b) rent-oriented decision-making processes posing a threat to the (environmental) integrity of territories.

Experiencing "special war": ecocide and environmental necropolitics in North-East Syria.
Marcin Skupiński (University of Warsaw)

Civil war in Syria showcased many examples of spatialised violence and territorial divisions including the rise of certain topographies of terror in especially contested areas like Aleppo. In Syria's North-East, conflict paved the way for the development of Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (still commonly referred as Rojava, a Kurdish term denoting western Kurdistan), a current iteration of an ongoing attempt at building a direct democratic system based on ideals of Kurdish Freedom Movement.

While regions of DAANES experienced relatively little violence from the Syrian state, since defeat of ISIS it is mostly under the constant pressure and attacks from neighbouring Turkey. In proposed paper I will focus particularities of Turkey's silent war against DAANES. I will argue that the Turkish state deploys peculiar form of necropolitics which aims not at physical extermination of regions predominantly Kurdish population but rather at rendering area unliveable and thus break the support for the political project of DAANES and potentially even lead to change in ethnic composition of the region. The recent attacks against the key infrastructures in North-East Syria during harsh winter months can serve as apt, yet painful, illustration for the argument I am making.

In this context of everyday violence, staying in territory of DAANES becomes, as I argue, the act of everyday resistance, supported by the politics of life encouraged by Autonomous Administration. One of the fields where such entanglements are visible is environmental activism, whereas ecological

problems are deeply politicized and linked both to very localized challenges and geopolitical factors. In my paper will argue that these dialectics of environmental destruction and protection play significant role in creation of new forms of belonging and identity in NES.

Navigating Identities: (Re)scaling Resistance and Territorial Attachment in Polish Upper Silesia
Géza Barta (ELTE Eötvös Loránd University)

Upper Silesia's often elusive, rarely spectacular ethno-regional identity is linked to the territory that has been disputed for centuries, Silesia. Many elements of the identity construction developing in the contact zone of the German and Polish cultural spaces are tied to passive or active resistance. The counter-narratives of official interpretations of the historical past, the demonstrative usage of language, the representation and handling of spaces and products thought to be Silesian, and the attempts to dominate discourse are embedded in postmodern hybridized networks of social organizations and cultural systems in Upper Silesia, which requires a complex theoretical approach for interpretation. Transgressive activities, endeavours for social change, cultural innovations, spaces, and places of creative resistance can be interpreted as crystallisation points of the fluid Silesian ethno-regional identity.

Although territory and scale are often conceptualised as fixed, they are uncongealed, dynamic, and entangled with the multiplicity of identities, in this particular context, regional identity and the spaces of resistance associated with it. Even in the case of Upper Silesia, it is therefore not possible to anchor regional identity to the region as a single territorial scale, not to mention the formations of resistance that emerge here. Instead, it makes more sense to consider complex networks of identity-generating resistances in individual, neighbourly, communal, regional, national, and even European and global dimensions, which compose a complex web of interactions.

The different forms, manifestations, spaces and scales of resistance call for a complex theoretical model. Classical and banal approaches to ethnicity and national identity, spatial theories, regionalism, as well as emotional and affective approaches result in a postmodern cacophony of concepts. However, a bricolage of theories could be the possible solution by adopting a "researcher-as-bricoleur-theorist" approach. With this assistance, a reflexive, interconnected assemblage of overlapping theories that possess interpretive capability can be created.

Thinking Digital Sovereignty in Context: A Case Study in the Balkans
Amaël Cattaruzza (Institut Français de Géopolitique)

11.40-13.00 Territories, Identities and Geographies of Resistance (2)

Chair: Nuala Johnson (Queen’s University Belfast)

Cultivation under fire: exploring the question of "resistance agriculture"...
Celine Allaverdian (Université de Montréal /Université de Paris Saclay /GRET)

Chin state is a relatively isolated ethnic territory in the western borderlands of Burma/Myanmar. As in other parts of Southeast Asia, shifting cultivation systems have been in sharp decline since several decades. Yet, despite the region's deep socio-economic and cultural transformations and State integration, these systems have never totally disappeared. Recently, following the 2021 military coup, armed resistance has been particularly intense in these areas now under fire. A remarkable return to shifting cultivation is underway since then to cope with population displacements and the drastic reduction in economic opportunities caused by the conflict. But we shall see that shifting cultivation is not only about resilience, it is also a choice to resist. Extending James Scott's reflection on the link between sedentary agriculture and state-building (2009, 2017), we shall explore the relevance of the notion of "resistance agriculture" through the case of Chin villages and other international examples.

The River Guardians: Resisting Hydropower in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia
Aida Kapetanovic (Scuola Normale Superiore)

The EU's Green Agenda has spurred a surge of investments in small hydropower plants across the Western Balkans in response to the global climate crisis. However, these projects, which target pristine rivers and streams in rural areas, have exposed the underlying power dynamics of the neoliberal "green" transition. This has resulted in shifting the costs of the EU's decarbonization efforts to its immediate periphery.

In resistance to these small hydropower projects, rural inhabitants have initiated local struggles that have garnered widespread support. Key examples include the Coalition for the Protection of the Rivers of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Defend the Rivers of Stara Planina in Serbia, which have evolved from local struggles into nation-wide movements. These movements challenge the conception of rural habitus dominant in the region, which is linked to notions of backwardness, conservatism, and nationalism. Instead, their attachment to the rivers has motivated a broader mobilization for environmental justice and democracy. By linking local communities, environmental NGOs, and experts, the resistance against hydropower facilitated the development of a river-mediated collective identity. This identity is both deeply rooted in place and inclusive on a broader scale.

This paper explores the cultural dimensions of the mobilizations for river protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. It investigates the evolution of place-based struggles into broader environmental mobilizations and examines the affirmation and transformation of collective identities. To that end, it employs frame analysis of public materials produced by the movements and draws on semi-structured interviews with key activists conducted in the field.

Subaltern Geopolitics on the walls: The case of 'Orso' in the streets of Florence
Francesco Ventura (Università degli Studi di Firenze)

How do subalterns reinterpret and use geopolitical facts and knowledge? The death of Lorenzo Orsetti in Northern Syria (Rojava), while fighting with the Kurds against the Islamic State, became the occasion to flood the streets of his hometown Florence, Italy, with informal traces, such as writings, graffiti, plaques, and stencils in his memory. Through his commemoration, also a message of resistance and solidarity with the Kurdish 'Rojava Revolution' altered the city streetscapes. Drawing on participatory observation and in-depth interviews with three types of agents (artists, political activists, and public space users), this article contributes to the subaltern geopolitical scholarship with two arguments. First, by bridging subaltern geopolitics with an urban geographical focus on the 'right to the city', it emphasises the significance of mundane spaces of informal geopolitical knowledge dissemination such as street walls, squares, and social centres. Second, by using the sociological theory of resonance, the article investigates the connection between the Rojava Revolution and the youth's hope for resistance and social change in Florence. As resonance is a type of coding, the article relies on assemblage thinking to expose how Florence's youth reinterpret and make geopolitical facts their own and use them in their everyday spaces. The memory of Orso becomes the pretext to forge an ideational connection between the Kurdish struggle and local resistance against the neo-liberal way of life and favouring communal forms of social organisation. Overall, this research sheds light on forms of subaltern international equivalence that go beyond traditional internationalist solidarity.

Infrastructural Colonialism on the Periphery: A comparative perspective from Italy and Turkey
Cansu Sonmez (Independent)

This article takes up the notion of infrastructural colonialism in the context of the environmental struggles instigated by mega-infrastructural developments in marginalised peripheries of the Mediterranean, North-west Italy and South-eastern Turkey. Drawing on the affective and decolonial insights of Anderson's (2014) and Gilmore's (2022) conceptualisation, I look at infrastructural

colonialism through the lenses of the structures of feeling that offer collective affective qualities in everyday experiences of organised abandonment. The article asks: what are the affective qualities behind infrastructural colonialism and what role do they play in reshaping the place-making capacities of marginalised communities in the struggle against mega-infrastructure projects in Italy and Turkey? In this study, qualitative empirical fieldwork using a “comparative peripheries” approach was conducted to trace various features of infrastructural colonialism in different marginalised regions. I analysed the struggles over the Ilısu Dam in and around Hasankeyf in the Tigris Valley in Turkey and the struggles over the Turin-Lyon high-speed railway project in the Susa Valley in Italy. I argue that infrastructural colonialism is felt through a set of affects that have the potential to be broken open and reconstructed by local communities to decentralise and counteract the burdens of the peripheral conditions and reconstruct other lifeworlds of decolonial affective place-making, that I call counter-periphery.

14.20-15.40 Spatial Organization at the Regional and Planetary Scales

Chair: Virginie Mamadouh (University of Amsterdam)

Cartography can also be used to explain and understand the development and application of international law: Revisiting cartographic tools to deal with international law
Aude Gery (Geode) & Guilhem Marotte (Institut Français de Géopolitique)

Geographers are often confronted with legal issues in their research and have long used cartography to depict them. In the 2000s, for example, legal cartography developed, with productions aimed at understanding the evolution and impact of a particular law, or on the contrary, at illustrating major global legal systems. The creation of maps to visualize the application of laws in specific jurisdictions or areas subject to maritime or land border disputes has also been widely used. But the cartographic tools can also be used for many other things, not least to analyze and explain power rivalries during the emergence, development and application of international law. Using the example of the development of international law in cyberspace, we will explain how the tools of geopolitical cartography can be mobilized to graphically represent a variety of legal issues. First, we will show how the classic tools of political/geopolitical geography - the map, the timeline and the actor diagram - can be used to illustrate the emergence, development and contributions of new legal instruments to existing law. This relatively simple cartography has both a heuristic and a didactic character and makes it possible to individually analyze and represent legal phenomena. Second, we will look at infographics or problematized synthesis maps to illustrate the construction of a geopolitical argument on a legal object. Here, cartography produces a demonstration that explains complex phenomena and thus has a strong didactic value. Finally, we show that it is possible to continue the process of graphic abstraction that is central to map-making and create graphic models that represent a strategy of territorial control of a state actor through the use of legal instruments.

The world map of overlapping regions: Social Psychology explanation on exclusionary regions
Shintaro Hamanaka (Institute of Developing Economies)

The world is full of overlapping and nested regions, but why is this so? This paper offers a parsimonious explanation for the proliferation of overlapping and nested regions (regional groups) from the perspective of states that aspire to the leading position, borrowing ideas from the social psychology literature. The tip is that the fact that regions are overlapping and nested and that regions are exclusionary are phenomena that can be regarded as different sides of the same coin. We argue that, because regions projects are exclusionary, many come and stay in an overlapping and nested manner. Our main claim is that the creation of a regional group is a convenient and effective way to exclude rivals; hence regional groups proliferates. This paper first develops theories of exclusionary regionalism, which explains countries’ effort to organize regional groups from which more powerful

states are excluded. The underlying rationale is that, just like people called “dominance-oriented leaders” by social psychologists, countries value the prestige of leading a group, even a very small regional group. The paper then presents a world map of exclusionary regional groups, drawing a sharp contrast with Buzan’s map of regional security complexes and Katzenstein’s worldview in which regionalism in Europe and Asia is not necessarily exclusionary.

Geography, Difference, and the 'Global South' Trope
Alexander B Murphy (University of Oregon)

Shifts through time in the deployment of terms such as Developing, Third World, Semi-Periphery/Periphery, and Global South reflect the discursive challenges of capturing in words the overarching spatial architecture of a world riven by major power imbalances, differential development prospects, and deep-seated inequalities. Global South now occupies center stage, and it has been widely adopted by geographers despite its geographic imprecision and environmentalist overtones. Its appeal lies in its association with the empowerment challenges facing places with a history of external domination and economical marginalization. Yet its indiscriminate use in academic studies and popular commentaries serves to lump together societies and peoples characterized by great differences, even if they share a history of colonial/imperial domination. As such, the current reflexive invocation of ‘Global South’ carries with it the risk of concealing, or at least directing attention away from the difference that place makes in human affairs. For political geographers, consideration of something as basic as the nature and implications of the different types of colonial systems that took root in Central/South America and in South/Southeast Asia risks fading from view.

Given geography’s longstanding emphasis on bringing a critical perspective to bear on the spatial organization of the planet, it is surprising to see so little engagement with the advantages and limitations of the Global South trope on the part of geographers. Thoughtful geographical engagement with the concept, however, could contribute much to the nascent, but growing effort to subject the term to critical scrutiny. The geographical concern with difference has a central role to play in that regard—complementing and supplementing past critical commentaries that have focused primarily on the geographical inaccuracies and associated environmentalist baggage of the Global South trope.

Putting the place in flow restructures: Networks, assembled positionalities and the Special Economic Zone development
June Wang & Chao Yao (City University Hong Kong

This essay attempts to further develop the positionality of place through aggregated effects of vision construction by different positioned actants. We attempt to integrate two concepts: the feminist positionality that stresses the subjects’ situatedness in networks and their relational power of vision constructions in host places and, the networking behaviour of brokers with their exclusive connections to small world clusters, as argued by IR network analysis. Our attempts at the bodily level of situated and subjective vision construction aim to address two challenges: first, how to address the entanglement of geopolitics and biopolitics, and second, how to account for the power of a place premised upon its areal resources through the behaviour of brokers. The institutionalization of SEZ development in Cambodia, from the introduction of new norms to law-making and planning, is chosen as a case for its dynamic process.