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Political geography I: Reconfiguring geographies of sovereignty

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Abstract

This first of three progress reports on the subdiscipline of political geography reviews recent scholarship on the transformation of geographies of sovereignty. The piece offers a review of major analytical themes that have emerged in recent geographical analyses of sovereignty. These themes include the design of spatial metaphors through which to conceptualize sovereignty, US exceptionalism and the influence of Agamben's work, productive blurring of onshore and offshore operations and productions of sovereign power, and debate about the kinds of power operating through these newly constituted global topographies of power. The text also visits five kinds of sites where contemporary struggles over sovereignty manifest: prison, island, sea, body, and border. After reviewing recent trends, themes, and locations in studies of sovereign power, recommendations for future research topics are made.

Keywords

exceptionalism, offshore, political geography, sovereignty

I Introduction

Political geography has experienced a renaissance over the last several years. When I attended graduate programs in the United States and Canada in the 1990s, both institutions had course listings in political geography that had not been taught in years due to lack of interest and expertise. Faculty members who once taught the courses had retired and not yet been replaced. Today, more departments offer courses in the subdiscipline, and even occasionally hire political geographers. Other signs of health include surges in interest and publication by junior scholars in *Political Geography, Geopolitics,* and the *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* on political geography and (critical) geopolitics.[1]

My assessment of recent literature on sovereignty suggests that there are exciting developments, while much also stays the same. During much of its history, the subdiscipline has prioritized and reified nation states in the organization of power, knowledge, and research on the relationship between politics and space (Agnew, 1994, 2009). Just as imperial geographers were criticized for the discipline's complicity in colonial projects, political geography was critiqued during its waning decades for forging close ties

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to and even doing the work of the nation state's geopolitical machinations, militarism, and mappings of war (Smith, 2003; Woodward, 2005). These entanglements between scholars and states have served as magnet and Achilles heel: drawing in some, while repelling others.

To be sure, nothing can simultaneously liven up the party *and* kill the mood quite like talk of the state. Either way, recent scholarship in the subdiscipline features renewed exploration of sovereignty. More people are coming to the party, and the party is getting better. I would argue that this surge in interest reflects recent geographical shifts in the operation of sovereign power. In other words, precisely the empirical changes in spatial relations of sovereignty that I will discuss have drawn in a new generation of political geographers noticing something 'afoot'. The territorial dimensions of sovereign power are no longer given, but contested (Agnew, 2005), and contemporary geographers draw on a broad array of approaches to and conceptual understandings of state and sovereignty.

This first of three installments addresses sovereignty and territoriality. The second and third installments will explore two locations mentioned here in more depth: islands (report II) and the body (report III).

I aim *not* to understand the nation state as an institution or organization of one kind or another, but instead to explore recent scholarship that seeks to trace and understand transformational geographies of sovereignty and important trajectories therein. While political geographers have long centered the nation state, recent interests have shifted to more ambiguous spatial arrangements or 'gray' zones through which sovereign power operates and is produced. A pattern of sites has recurred in the geographical imagination of literature and lexicon over the past 10 years. This constellation reflects new global spatial relations of conflict, encounter, mobility, legality, military strategy, and social movements. The constellation also expresses militarized security central to American power. While not new, these arrangements became a central focus of critical geopoliticians after the terrorist attacks carried out on 11 September 2001.

While discussing emergent themes, I will also address the kinds of locations around which this scholarship has been organized. These are geographic flashpoints that – due to the controversial nature of what transpires there – prompt scholarship on the territorial ambiguities and transformations of sovereignty appearing as constellation tied to the global landscapes of power. Much work, for example, has been published on the US base on the British-owned Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia (e.g. Sidaway, 2010; Vine, 2009), and the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay (Cuba) has proven a focal point of recent scholarship (e.g. Gregory, 2006; Reid-Henry, 2007). Much has been written about spaces of war and terror associated with the United States and its allies' 'war on terror' and conflict in Afghanistan and Iraq (Gregory, 2004, 2007). These are sites where sovereignty is effective, questioned, infringed upon, and altered, and where geopolitics come to the fore in considerations of sovereignty.

I proceed with an overview of major themes recurring in recent scholarship on sovereignty. These logics are subtle, not heavy-handed. I then outline the general kinds of sites where discussions of sovereignty emerge. These include prison, island, sea, body, and border. In each case, I discuss specific locations that have caught the attention of political geographers and fueled debates over uneven and asymmetrical operations of sovereign power. These are exemplary locations where struggles over sovereignty have emerged and not been resolved. To conclude, I offer additional sites that political geographers have studied that challenge easy territorial demarcations of sovereignty and outline future directions arising from debates established in this literature.

II Recurring spatial themes in recent scholarship on sovereignty

Political geographers have not always agreed on the best way to study nation states or the operation of sovereign power. They tend to agree that the state is important to understand, however difficult to study (Abrams, 1988). Still, nation states provide what Eudaily and Smith (2008: 310) refer to as 'a peculiar geographic certitude', although this certitude has been amply challenged in recent years. Some have sought to displace the centrality of the state in political geography, whether through shifts in scalar thinking (e.g. Brenner, 2004; Marston, 2000; Nagar et al., 2002), responses to globalization (Agnew, 2009), or focusing attention more directly on social movements seeking to challenge state policies, practices, and discourses (Routledge, 1996). Others have argued that political geographers *already* work well beyond the scope of the state (Agnew, 2005; Staeheli et al., 2004). I have observed that most political geographers do not examine the nation state directly, but the spatial dimensions (such as locational intensity, transnational reach, and territorial limits) of sovereignty.[2]

If anything, as attention to 'the state' has waxed and waned as object and subject of analysis over the years, attention to sovereignty has remained – although some would say it has 'returned' (Coleman and Grove, 2009). Whether the collective geographic gaze remained or returned, sovereignty has seen a rise in interest over the last several years. What has given rise to this renewal? In part, the world is demanding more creative conceptual models to understand geographies of power. The plethora of work on what has alternately been called internationalization, globalization, empire, and transnationalism of flows, spaces, structures, populations, and landscapes requires those interested in sovereignty to flex their spatial muscles beyond what Agnew (1994) called 'the territorial trap', or thinking about sovereignty in territorially contained terms. If sovereignty ever operated in such a way (see Steinberg, 2009), it no longer does.

Walker (2010) argues that it is not the sovereignty of nation states that has been challenged by globalization and neoliberalism, but indeed the sovereignty of the entire state system. Agnew (2009), alternatively, suggests that recent reassertions of sovereignty actually function as national expressions of neoliberalism's rise and emphasis on economic prosperity. Indeed, much scholarship debates spaces of neoliberalism (Ong, 2006), the rescaling of sovereignty through the neoliberal state (Brenner, 2004), and shifts once again in the postneoliberal era (Radcliffe, 2011).

Here, I rehearse four analytical themes central to recent work on spatial arrangements of sovereignty. First, geographers have engaged in a restless *search for appropriate spatial metaphors* to interpret and explain geographies of sovereignty. This search is not new; political geographers have challenged traditional notions of sovereignty and territoriality for some time. Perhaps best known among these challenges was Agnew's (1994) territorial trap. Agnew departed from this trap, wherein social scientists and scholars of international relations in particular imagined the confines of national territory and sovereign power within state boundaries. Agnew argued that states are *not* contained by the boundaries that surround them, but were – and are – more global institutions. Scholars recently revisited the territorial trap, its continued salience in spite of globalization, as well as changes in the spatiality of sovereignty that have occurred in the time since Agnew's publication 15 years ago (Fall, 2010; Newman, 2010; Reid-Henry, 2010; Shah, 2012; Steinberg, 2009).

Building on Agnew's argument, geographers have grown more spatially imaginative in conceptualizing sovereignty. Some take up new spatial relations of states themselves, understanding sovereign reach as transnationally

mobile and structurally hybrid in form (e.g. Coleman, 2007b; Sparke, 2005). Still others study shifting dimensions of sovereignty by mapping geographies of enclosure (Martin and Mitchelson, 2009), confinement (Coutin, 2010), containment (Cresswell, 2006), and offshoring (Lillie, 2010; Vicek, 2009). These forms work simultaneously within and transcend, not adhering to outer limits of national territory imagined on a political map.

Political geographers are not alone in conducting scholarship on sovereignty. Political scientists have interpreted shifting spatialites of sovereign power (e.g. Walters, 2008). Anthropologists have studied sovereignty's spatialities, as in Ong's (1999, 2006) 'graduated zones of sovereignty'. In *Political Geography,* anthropologist Susan Coutin traces what she calls 'zones of confinement' among Salvadoran immigrants in the United States. To Coutin, these are bubbles whose regulation maps legality onto the bodies of migrants as they move through national territory and cross border thresholds.

These kinds of mobile bubbles also appear in writing about other confined spaces, including enclaves (Berger, 2010), exclaves (Falah, 2003), military bases (Davis, 2011), and islands (Sidaway, 2010). These zones tend to reference places where certain rules or laws do not apply; where sovereignty is contested, undermined, evaded, called into question, or – conversely – asserted more strenuously. Indeed, legal status, jurisdiction, and the intensification of precarity have been recurring themes among political geographers exploring contemporary intersections between territoriality and legality (Coleman, 2007a; Mountz, 2011a).

Still other scholars deploy metaphors to trace sovereignty in spatial binaries: from 'above and below', or both, as in Carmody's (2009) 'cruciform sovereignty'. Such binary thinking recurs frequently. Appadurai (2006), for example, evokes a spatial metaphor for a binary akin to Carmody's horizontality and verticality. Appadurai identifies the 'vertebrate world': 'organized through the central spinal system of international balances of power' and the 'cellular world, whose parts multiply by association and opportunity rather than by legislation or design' (Appadurai, 2006: 129).

Whereas poststructuralist and feminist scholarship might encourage the deconstruction – or at least the complication – of such binary thinking, the binary persists in political geography, due in part to the influence of theorists Carl Schmitt and Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2005). Over the last decade, political geographers have been heavily influenced by Agambenian thinking about sovereign power and by intense debates about Schmitt's theories of the exception in cognate disciplines. As a result of Agamben's influence *and* the role of US exceptionalism, a second trend in recent writing on sovereignty involves *a turn to exceptionalism.* Influenced by both Schmitt and Michel Foucault, Agamben (1998) centers ideas around *homo sacer* or bare life, a figure in Roman law with a paradoxical relationship to the state that entails inclusion through exclusion. He builds on Schmitt's state of exception, characterized simultaneously by abandonment and entrapment where sovereign powers produce bare life. Binary thinking about sovereignty structures Agamben's thinking. He suggests that excluded figures such as migrants, prisoners, those reduced to 'bare life', may only be included in the juridical order by way of exclusion. In his key texts, Agamben (1998, 2005) links this paradoxical inclusion/exclusion to the topological operation of sovereign power in thresholds that he refers to as 'spaces of exception'. The exception and its expression as the camp function as the primary architecture through which Agamben constructs his ideas about sovereign power. Agamben plays with the recursive relationship between being inside and outside of sovereign territory, and much of the recent scholarship discussed here pursues a similar logic, thus advancing the binary whether explicitly engaging Agamben or not.

Agamben's work has spawned a prolific amount of writing on processes of exclusion and exceptionalism (e.g. Minca, 2007; Mitchell, 2006; Pratt, 2005; Secor, 2007). Given the sheer volume of attention to his ideas and the substantive influence on these analyses, he has profoundly shaped recent writing by political geographers. Even where his work is critiqued, which happens often and in important ways (e.g. Gregory, 2007; Mitchell, 2006; Pratt, 2005), or when not discussed or referenced, it often remains a subtle influence. Some have written against Agamben by placing exceptional locations in broader historical context. Historicized on colonial grounds, for example, Guantánamo Bay emerges more as a form of business as usual (Gregory, 2006; Kaplan, 2005).

It is difficult, and not necessarily important, to determine whether the strength of Agamben's ideas or their timing captured the attention of political geographers. Agamben's ideas were published and read as news of the detention of 'foreign enemy combatants' happening in Guantánamo Bay circulated. This news was perhaps not surprising in a national context where imprisonment rates highly as business, public policy, and socioeconomic ill (Davis, 2003; Gilmore, 2007; Peck, 2003). Agamben's work mobilized a collective geographical imagination for its intersection with recurring global phenomena, namely ever more creative uses of offshore sites by nation states to carry out certain activities: imprisonment, detention, tax-free trade, and torture, to name but a few.

The existence and creative uses of so-called exceptional sites as places where sovereign power is present and yet absent also contributes to the recurrence of the notion of this concept in recent literature. Analyses of exceptionalism are often associated with specific sites and activities, such as imprisonment. Guantánamo Bay and Abu Graib are two locations where notions of exceptionalism have taken hold (Gregory, 2007). As Butler (2004) argues, petty sovereigns carry out policies and orders of sovereign power. Exploration of sites like Guantánamo Bay, Diego Garcia, Abu Graib, and other islands – literal and figurative – leads frequently to debate about whether sovereign powers and activities there are in fact anathema or status quo (Baldacchino and Milne, 2006; Mountz, 2011a).

Analysis of offshore sites relates to a third theme in recent scholarship on sovereignty: *the productive blurring of onshore and offshore, internal and external, inside and out* in reconfigurations of sovereignty. Contemporary operations of sovereign power produce territory in a way that destabilizes divisions between onshore and offshore, domestic and foreign territory. Some have argued in Agambenian fashion that 'inside' and 'out' work together productively, rather than distinctively. This argument emerges in analysis of offshore activities that are neither anathema nor business as usual, but rather testing ground in an iterative process of power relations and sovereign activities that will make their way recursively from offshore to mainland territory and back again (Lillie, 2010; Steinberg, 2005). For Steinberg (2005), for example, governance models on islands became prototypes, models for the evolution of state sovereignty. Lillie (2010), for example, traces the movement of the relations of offshore transnational production onshore. Lillie (2010) argues against the exceptionalism of 'offshore', noting that capital's spatial fix combines onshore and offshore regimes, rendering them strategically indistinguishable. Again, this can be understood in Agambenian terms, and as empirical expressions of the war on terror (Bhungalia, 2012), foreign policies, and their correspondence with onshore security measures that render citizens, partial citizens, and non-citizens more vulnerable.

Part of the productive relations between offshore and on is 'geolegalities', wherein various legal regimes – domestic, international, refugee, property, maritime law, and so on – influence sovereign activities and the power to proceed or be challenged in so-called exceptional sites

(Elden, 2009). Beyond the blurring of on and offshore comes the production of new expressions of sovereign power alternately characterized as transnational (Basch et al., 1994) and forms of American empire (Hardt and Negri, 2000). Geolegalities and globally complex assemblages of sovereign power correspond with changing conceptions, laws, and practices pertaining to citizenship (e.g. Cowen and Gilbert, 2008; Leitner and Ehrkamp, 2006; Sparke, 2006). Much of this scholarship connects the ambivalence of the territoriality of sovereignty to partial, precarious, changing, or uncertain forms of legal status. This uncertainty emerges time and again, albeit with different expression. For Reid-Henry (2007), it takes shape through the 'gray' zone that is Guantánamo Bay. Gregory (2006), too, conceptualizes Guantánamo Bay and Abu Graib as zones of geographical, jurisdictional, and legal ambiguity that are productive in the strategic assertion of sovereign power (see Butler, 2004; Kaplan, 2005).

In a recent issue of *Geopolitics* on human migration, the relationship between domestic and foreign serves as key organizing theme (Hyndman, 2012). International migrants cross state boundaries and through this mobility are subjected to different local, national, regional, and international forms of regulation and law, depending on their location at any given time. As their locations change, so too do those regimes.

My fourth theme involves exploration of the *kinds* of power sovereignty operates in and through – indeed, producing sites that are ambiguous, 'gray', exceptional, and asymmetrical expressions of power. Expressions of power emerge in part through debates about jurisdiction and control of territory: who governs a site, polices its borders, regulates mobility in the form of entry and exclusion? In some cases, these debates are intensely complex, as in the case of the US naval base in Guantánamo Bay, which is on land leased by Cuba to the United States, however unwillingly. As with military bases, prisons too may function as legal islands, regardless of location, public or private management, or jurisdiction. Like some island residents, prisoners and detainees are treated as partial citizens, many without the right to vote, for example. Still other people, such as undocumented migrants, may have no rights to citizenship, in which case these struggles over partial citizenship take on ever more complex meanings as representations and improvement of the status quo. Such legal and jurisdictional complexity prompts political geographers to explore what *kinds* of power are at work in these sites.

Conceptualization of power has been heavily influenced by Michel Foucault's body of work on disciplinary power, biopower, biopolitics, and governmentality. These ideas feature centrally in recent analyses of ambiguous or exceptional sites (Coleman and Grove, 2009; Gregory, 2006; Sparke, 2006) and increasingly involve debates about governmentality (Braun, 2000; Butler, 2004; Conlon, 2010; Foucault, 1991). Foucauldian conceptions of power are certainly not the only ones circulating in recent scholarship. Geographers have also sought, for example, to spatialize the concept of haunting (Coddington, 2011). Although originating in the work of Jacques Derrida, contemporary interpretations of haunting developed by Gordon (2008) refer to repressive, historical forms of power that remain hidden from view, yet haunt people in the present. These often relate to imperial, colonial, and neocolonial relations. Increasingly, as in the case of haunting, political geographers are studying power relations that are difficult to map in material expression, either because they are intentionally hidden geographies, as in the hidden flights of extraordinary rendition (Paglen and Thompson, 2006) and remote sites of detention (Mountz, 2011a), or difficult to identify for other reasons, as in the case of emotional and affective ranges associated with geopolitics and analyzed increasingly by feminist geographers (e.g. Pain and Smith, 2008). The move to the hidden, the ghostly, the

shadowy, ambivalent, and nefarious, results in research on power, visibility, and representation.

To summarize, these four themes – design of spatial metaphors to conceptualize sovereignty, study of exceptional sites, sustained attention to blurring of on and offshore sovereign productions, and the search for distinct forms of power – all traffic in concepts of territoriality. Specific sites associated with productions of sovereign power recur in the literature, proving that the particularities of place are as important as general struggles over territoriality.

III Sites where conflicts over sovereignty emerge

Conflicts over the spatiality, reach, and nature of sovereign power tend to emerge in particular kinds of sites and more specific, often contested spaces of political struggle produced by the ambiguity of sovereign rule. As a result, these sites – both general and specific – have captivated political geographers and others as places where struggles over spatialities of sovereignty emerge.

Sovereign power is produced in these locations through the iterative construction of subjects and territories. Five general locations include prison, island, sea, body, and border. I address each in turn, ordered from location with least literature (prison) to most (border) within the subdiscipline. Each raises analytical themes discussed earlier in my characterization of recent scholarship. Struggles in these sites bring into circulation a series of spatial metaphors through which the site and people and activities therein are placed in relation to sovereign power. These sites blur domestic/foreign, internal/external, offshore/onshore territory, a process central to transforming geographies of sovereignty. The activities and conflicts occurring here are often characterized as exceptional, and frequently discussion revolves around the nature of power operating therein.

1 Sovereignty and prison

Themselves islands of a kind, prisons and detention facilities have captured the attention of geographers, however latent (Gilmore, 2007; Martin and Mitchelson, 2009; Moran et al., 2012; Peck, 2003). While inherently spatial in nature and imbued with the state, it is surprising that prisons do not have longer histories of research among geographers. Prisons are often located remotely such that they become a primary source of income for populations. The political economy of prisons mirrors regional economies that economic geographers have studied for years (Bonds, 2009). Prison economies are so pervasive and extensive as to generate large income for companies and government agencies that run them, as in the prison economy that Gilmore (2007) maps in California. An interdisciplinary set of scholars identified struggles over sovereignty and citizenship that transpire in sites of incarceration (Davis, 2003; Sudbury, 2005). Political geographers have recently begun to weave these threads into discussions of sovereignty, jurisdiction, bordering, and territoriality (e.g. Bonds, 2009; Mitchelson, 2013; Mountz et al., 2012).

2 Sovereignty and islands

Although islands offer rich spaces to study political geography, they have only recently received sustained attention. Islands have been geopolitically strategic sites in theatres of war where states set up naval bases to station and launch troops. Many islands that occupy contemporary public discourse for their struggles over power and territorial control have pasts checkered with patterns of colonization, occupation, liberation, displacement, dispossession, and militarization. Cuba, Diego Garcia, Puerto Rico, and Guam are all examples of islands where residents have experienced cycles of colonization, liberation, occupation, and displacement and dispossession as people lost homes, land, and livelihoods. These patterns contribute to complex

jurisdictional arrangements (Baldacchino and Milne, 2006), partial forms of citizenship, and 'sketchy' behavior of nation states.

Islands become sites of territorial control and conflict of all kinds, where imperial, colonial, military might are expressed and resisted, and state sovereignty undertakes projects less likely to happen on mainland territory. In the case of Diego Garcia, for example, Chagossians were forcibly removed when the United Kingdom leased their land to the United States to set up a military base that today serves a key role in the war on terror (Vine, 2009). Guam is unincorporated territory of the United States after also surviving the cycle of colonization, occupation, and liberation by Spain, Japan, and the United States, who again set up two large bases, and is moving a third from Okinawa. This relocation has functioned as a tipping point, with some Chamorros now engaged in a social movement for autonomy and independence called 'We are Guahan'. The movement is challenging yet another round of militarization that disrupts the economic fabric of the community and raises issues of indigenous verses state sovereignty. Due to generations of oppression and the complexity of jurisdiction, these creative sovereign undertakings often meet success for years before they are formally challenged, as in the case of both Diego Garcia where displaced Chagossians won a case before the British High Court in 2007. Political geographers debate ways to categorize jurisdictions (Baldacchino and Milne, 2006), whether they are anathema to or testing ground for future sovereignties (Steinberg, 2005), and how historical trajectories map onto present struggles over power (Sidaway, 2010).

3 Sovereignty at sea

Complex and dynamic spatial arrangements of sovereign power are also found at sea where maritime and international law, commercial trade, military exercises, recreational activities, and conservation efforts all battle over what is legal, possible, or implausible in the ocean. Steinberg (2001, 2011) argues that the social construction of the ocean posits layers of sea and seabed as yet another site where sovereignty is produced through territoriality.

Indeed, arguments over assertions of power for the laying of claims on resource extraction and trade routes in the Arctic are dominated by nation states and their ever-expansive geographical imaginations (Gerhardt et al., 2010; Kristofferson and Young, 2010). Nation states hold power to make claims in their representations of the interest of large, territorially bound, and internationally legible populations associated with sea and the Arctic; and yet these claims to sovereignty are being challenged as political and physical geographies combine in the Arctic region and indigenous sovereignties challenge state sovereignties (Nicol, 2010; Powell, 2010). These debates are reaching a frenzy as climate change and associated events accelerate the melting of ice faster than scientists imagined or modeled (Beckwith, 2012). Corporations and nation states alike are intensifying exploration from previously submerged ocean beds and subterranean resources that lie therein.

4 Sovereignty and body

Human bodies have also proven a location where sovereign power operates unevenly. The very term sovereignty draws on the power invested in one body: that of the sovereign. The body lies at the center of ambiguities about jurisdiction and sovereignty. Sovereign power acts upon the body that struggles, moves, is contained and produced, showing intimate connections between sovereign and biopower (Gregory, 2007; Nast, 1998). Whether the mobility of migration, stasis of imprisonment, right to land, or finality of death, power exercised on, over, and through the body commands sophisticated conceptual approaches to sovereignty. Work on the body also facilitates intersectional

analyses that feminist scholars have pursued for several years now; analyses that are attentive to how race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, and other axes of difference inform the embodied experiences of power as people move through the world. As engagement between feminist and political geography intensified (e.g. Staeheli et al., 2004), work on bodies grew as subject and scale of analysis (Hyndman, 2007; Mayer, 2004; Nagar et al., 2002).

5 Bordering sovereignty

Border studies offers yet another area where sovereign power becomes highly visible and challenged by crossings that simultaneously reify and subvert violent sovereign control of territory (Nevins, 2002). This area has been well covered elsewhere (e.g. Johnson et al., 2011; Jones, 2012; Rumford, 2010; Sidaway, 2011). The border is the site in this list with the most literature available within political geography, in part because the boundaries of the nation state have always been a central theme of the subdiscipline, albeit with conceptual and methodological approaches that have shifted substantially over the years. Much scholarship has been published on borders, as scholars track and interpret the dramatic changes that have taken place in the location, enforcement, and securitization of borders in recent years (Brown, 2010; Budd et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2011; Jones, 2012; Sundberg, 2011).

IV Conclusions

Global phenomena have driven recent political geographic inquiry into forms and claims to sovereignty and attendant struggles over power. Decolonization, neoliberalism, and new forms of conflict and social movements all fuel the shifting geographies of sovereignty outlined in this report. I have provided examples; there are many others. The Arctic is predicted to be one of the flashpoints in decades ahead as global warming alters terrestrial and marine landscapes (Gerhardt et al., 2010). Less ice provides greater possibilities for freight passage and resource extraction, which in turn will intensify struggle over sovereignty among nation states, corporations, and indigenous groups (Nicol, 2010). Indeed, political geographers have not sufficiently taken up different claims to sovereignty that are not attached to the nation state, as in indigenous sovereignties, and the studies of the Arctic offer but one place for such endeavors.

Military bases offer another area needing further study by political geographers as zones where conventional geographies of sovereignty do not necessarily apply, yet where history is recycled and infrastructure repurposed. Bases emerge frequently in discussion of conflicts over detention, imprisonment, and sovereignty (e.g. Vine, 2009; Reid-Henry, 2007), but have less frequently been the primary subject of research by political geographers (see Davis, 2011). Like Coutin's (2010) bubbles, embassies, or churches that provide sanctuary, military bases cover territory that offers both expressions of and exceptions to power relations and their governance in surrounding areas.

Airspace is another location where struggles over and reconfigured spatialities of sovereignty will ensue in the years ahead. The end of NASA's space shuttle program in 2011 opened the way for a new era in a field that has always been geopoliticized, where military actors and, increasingly, commercial players are re-imagining airspace (e.g. Williams, 2011). Graham (2004) merges analyses of airspace with urban space, examining the growing importance of creative thinking about iterative relationships between space and politics with his 'vertical geopolitics'. Ports are yet another classic site where land meets sea and where state practices and policies take material form (Cowen, 2010; Mountz, 2011b; Olivier and Slack, 2006; Walters, 2008). Ships too, are mobile sites that call into question any static location of borders or nation states (Walters, 2008) and that engage recent geographic attention to the issue of mobility (e.g. Cresswell, 2006).

These are geopolitically significant and locally embedded sites where multiscalar struggles over sovereign power get worked out and where new spatial arrangements of power take root, giving rise to new forms of citizenship. The proliferation of distinct forms of jurisdiction provokes and is provoked by struggles over autonomy by island inhabitants. Individual and collective struggles over sovereignty inform what Pain and Smith (2008) and others have identified as the geopolitics of emotion and affect. My next two reports will explore more deeply two sites that are emerging subfields within political geography: islands and the body.

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Notes

1. Based on email correspondence with editors.
2. Studies of the daily life of the state are an important exception, however, as these tend to directly examine the work of state employees (Mountz, 2010) and prosaic forms of state power (Painter, 2006).

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