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351	Sandscapes: Geographies of Flux and Flow (2)
Affiliation	Social and Cultural Geography Research Group
Convenor(s)	Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University, UK) William Jamieson (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)
Chair(s)	Julian Brigstocke (Cardiff University, UK)
Timetable	Friday 31 August 2018, Session 4 (16:50 - 18:30)
Room	Sir Martin Evans Building - Physiology B Lecture Theatre
Session abstract	<p>Sand is the stuff of power. It is a vital material in modern construction. It transgresses borders and thresholds. It connects the elemental to the global. It is at home in land, sea, and air. Yet within human geography, little attention has been paid to the material life of this imaginatively potent material. This session addresses calls for a multiplication of materiality within the discipline (Anderson and Wylie 2009; Whatmore 2006), by delving into the multiplicity of sandscapes that pervade our lives in the context of a global shortage of sand (Peduzzi 2014).</p> <p>Sand, a seemingly mundane material, is an active substrate of the spaces of modernity, and constitutes a vantage point from which to read and write landscapes that are urban, coastal, nomadic; wet and dry; dispersed and fragmented; eroded and reclaimed; political and cultural. What aspects of the production of space slip through our fingers? How do we develop new ways of reading and writing everyday spaces that are intimately entangled with an inherently itinerant material?</p> <p>This session invites papers that engage with the materiality of sandscapes, examining how sand might reinvigorate debates around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new materialism in human geography; • affective and more-than-human geographies; • new ways of reading and writing landscape; • the materiality of geopolitics; • transnational and migratory geographies; • landscapes of displacement; • planetary urbanization
Linked Sessions	Sandscapes: Geographies of Flux and Flow (1)

Contact the conference organisers to request a change to session or paper details: ac2018@rgs.org

Sandscapes of the psyche

Elizabeth Gagen (Aberystwyth University, UK)

Alongside its role in the industrial economy, in processes of shoreline weathering, as a cultural product of Orientalism and beach

holidays, and as a metaphor for the ephemeral, sand has also played a prominent role as a technology in the development of child psychology. From nineteenth century sandpits to modern play therapy, sand has been adopted as a medium through which psychological processes can be rehearsed and potentially transformed. In this paper, I examine the shifts that have taken place in the construction of sand a psychological technology, exploring both the elemental and governmental qualities of its use in specific contexts from the playground to the therapy room. In doing so, I hope to explore some of the ways in which the site specific nature of sand work as an enabling tool can provide clues about the evolution of therapeutic technologies in their various geographical contexts.

Instituting Cement

Samir Harb (The University of Manchester, UK)

Cement in the Middle East region is becoming a central material by which conflicts, new states, and new geographical imaginaries are produced. It is the material which not only bonds; aggregates, sands, tile, asphalt. Rather, a material that draws the politics and invent imaginaries of new geographies. Based on the case study of Palestine. This paper contributes to disclosing the political ecology of cement in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and within Palestinian discourse: its materiality on the one hand, and the politics of space, and symbolic association on the other. Since 2015, the Palestinian Investment Fund (PIF) decided to begin assembling the first Palestinian cement production line, slated to be accomplished in 2021. This paper will explore how cement performs the task of reassembling the urban, while functioning as an object of instituting new social and state imaginaries under conditions of continued occupation and control. Cement has become the material by which Palestinian elites manifest the process of re-inventing themselves in the aftermath of crises, namely, the failure of the state building project. This paper looks to cement and cement production on two main levels: first, as a "territorial agent" – a material by which imagined sovereignty is practiced that traverses fragmented geography, recasting urban territory and performing the politics of statehood. Second, it looks to cement plants as technological "devices and machines" which institute the social imaginary and symbolic order of new frontiers of conflict. Namely, how PIF's struggles to establish the plant, and how the plant's design, reflect new technologies and visions that implicitly adapt to the broader territorial and political constraints associated with access to space and energy.

Granular Geography: Extraction, Reclamation, Commodification

William Jamieson (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)

Singapore has been continuously expanding for five decades through land reclamation, with 25% of its current land-mass consisting of reclaimed land, and 100km² more to be completed by 2030. Initially used for social housing and infrastructure, more recently reclaimed land has been devoted to the Marina Bay Sands Integrated Resort and Casino, and the Gardens by the Bay, becoming critical in the construction of Singapore's national identity as a Global City. To resource its construction of land, Singapore has been importing hundreds of tonnes of sand extracted from other Southeast Asian countries through a network of contractors. This has produced tensions with its neighbours, as Malaysia, Indonesia and Cambodia have banned sand export to Singapore. However, the sand still flows, legally or illegally. This paper will map the commodity chain of sand, and thread together the geographies of resource extraction and land reclamation to outline how they produce an infrastructure of the Singaporean State's political subjectivity. This paper also proposes that the Singaporean State inverts colonisation's dynamics of geographical expansion (i.e. invasion or occupation) through this commodity chain: by converting another country's territory into a commodity, sand, and extracting it through superior purchasing power, the Singaporean State reconverts it back into its own sovereign territory through land reclamation.

Political geographers, such as Karen Bakker, Gavin Bridge, and Andrew Barry have outlined how an expanded definition of materiality can help to refine our understanding of geopolitics. This paper wishes to argue that sand in the Southeast Asian context offers us an opportunity to explore how multiple conceptions of materiality in political economy, resource geography, and new materialism can be integrated to understand the geopolitics of globalisation, and will demonstrate this by reading the political, economic, and spatial relations of Singapore and Southeast Asia through the commodity chain of sand.

Sand grabbing: Cambodia's new resource frontier

Laura Schoenberger (University of Ottawa, Canada)

Melissa Marschke (University of Ottawa, Canada)

In Cambodia, sand really is the stuff of power. This paper thinks through the particular geographies of sand grabbing through a focus on Cambodia, where the trade in sand has remade coasts and rivers as a new form of resource frontier in which the extraction of sand fuels the territorial expansion and mega-city construction of Singapore, the world's largest sand importer. Sand grabbing articulates with a series of resource grabs in Cambodia centred around timber, land and sand that underpin post-conflict state formation and that contributes to the symbiotic relationship between the state and extractive industry through the interweaving of illicit revenues with formal practices. Drawing from longitudinal fieldwork on a coast that is being remade by rapacious sand extraction and new activist research that has exposed the enormity of the illicit trade in sand, we explore how sand mining muddies coastal resource governance schemes. We ask: What practices facilitate the extraction of sand? What enabled these illegal practices to go on for a decade before serious attention was paid? Why is it that the government is now responding to this attention? How are these practices reshaping livelihoods rooted in local ecologies? In thinking through the materiality of sand from a political ecology perspective, our paper contributes to reading the everyday spaces of coastal fisherfolk and ecologies that are intimately entangled with an itinerant material that can be 'grabbed' by elites looking to insert themselves into global capital flows.

