Abstract for:

A topological reading of Agamben has been recently flourished within and beyond geography. It sheds light on the very process of materialising the exception by focusing on the space of exception as an emergent form rather than a topographical place (Belcher et al. 2008). However, while the topology of the camp has re-evaluated Agamben in contemporary global politics, this scholarship, as well as Agamben and Schmitt themselves, rarely explored outside the context of land. This paper will develop a topological imagination of the camp in the governance of maritime space. While the etymology of territory arguably indicates the relationship between land (terra) and violent acts of exclusion (terrere) (Elden 2007), such violent acts can also be materialised in the sea, or mare. My topological enquiry will first examine the contemporary topographical territorialisation articulated by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Unlike land, the maritime territorialisation shows the sui genesis bordering practices in which the partial-, or quasi-, sovereign territory is established: the Exclusive Economic Zone in particular is a space where the sovereignty of a coastal state is enacted exclusively over economic activities (Steinberg 2001). Meanwhile, such maritime demarcation can, however, be blurred by alleged necessities of the national security. Drawing on the lethal shooting case conducted by Japanese Coast Guard towards the “spy vessel” in East China Sea, 2001, the second part of my paper will argue that the topological critique of the topographical representation enables us to understand the complexity of maritime territoriality.