



Political geography I: Extractions

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journals.sagepub.com/home/phg**Jennifer L Fluri** 

University of Colorado-Boulder, USA

Abstract

This progress report incorporates the concept of extraction as an umbrella term for political and geopolitical analyses of the spaces, sites, settings, and scales of power, authority, influence, and resistance. The political geographies of extraction discussed in this report include an assemblage of human-and-nonhuman actors across divergent epistemologies and ontologies, as well as forms of recognition, representation, and repression within and across states, borders, and spatial scales. The research surveyed here covers both state and non-state actors to address national and corporate methods commensurate with ongoing and new conflicts over resources, how they are extracted, conserved, distributed, shared, and hoarded.

Keywords

extraction, gender, identities, knowledge, political geography, race/ethnicity

I Introduction

This progress report incorporates the concept of extraction as an umbrella term for political and geopolitical analyses of the spaces, sites, settings, and scales of power, authority, influence, and resistance. The political geographies of extraction discussed in this report include an assemblage of human and nonhuman actors across divergent epistemologies and ontologies, as well as forms of recognition, representation, and repression within and across states, borders, and spatial scales. The research surveyed here covers both state and non-state actors to address national and corporate methods commensurate with ongoing and new conflicts over resources, how they are extracted, conserved, distributed, shared, and hoarded. The various forms of extraction discussed in this article are organized into the following categories: Resources, Scale, Knowledge, Bodies, and Identities.

The term extraction is generally reserved for examinations of mining or the removal of other

material resources, such as water. Using the term extraction to encompass knowledge, persons, and identities fits well with the expanded definition of this term, that is, ‘to pull or take out forcibly’ or ‘to obtain by much effort from someone unwilling’. This is particularly significant as the articles in this report highlight the use of violence and force as a common attribute of extractions from material to immaterial resources; while abstract resources such as information and time remain forms of structural and systemic violence. Thus, extraction provides a useful term for examining the various geographies associated with the ways in which both humans and nonhumans have moved and been removed from spaces through various political and geopolitical machinations.

Corresponding author:

Jennifer L Fluri, University of Colorado-Boulder, Boulder, CO 80309, USA.

Email: jennifer.fluri@colorado.edu

II Resources

Large-scale resource extraction remains a key area of research on the Anthropocene. Recent analyses draw upon Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) assemblage theory, critical political ecology, and human and more-than-human (or non-human) geographies (Leifsen, 2020; Murton and Lord, 2020; Rogelja, 2020; Squire and Dodds, 2020). Some scholars also situate their analyses within a historical framework to better understand the entangled processes of resource extractions that have benefited states and increased wealth accumulation for the few at the expense of many local communities (Mendez et al., 2020). Analyses of resource nationalism suggest a redefining and relegitimization of neoliberal resource extraction as a strategy of governance (Poncian, 2019). Schmidt's (2020) historical analysis develops the concept of settler-geology to illustrate the ways in which the temporal foundations of settler colonialism and corresponding resource extraction legitimized institutional governance consistent with indigenous dispossession. Historical analyses along with time-space geographies offer intellectual interventions and critiques of popular and political discourses that have spurred the 'double erasure' of indigenous ways of knowing by reproducing time-geographies that obfuscate indigenous interpretations of history and normalize land dispossession and the marginalization of their political subjectivities (Fagan, 2019; Schmidt, 2020: 3). The exile, erasure, and extraction of information is integral to these political processes, which will be discussed in more detail later in this report.

The allocation of resources within and across state boundaries continues to be of interest to political geographers, with an increasing focus on how this impacts local communities and their territorial claims. In the case of gas rents in Peru and Bolivia, the uneven distribution of resources regularly drives mobilization of social disruption regarding resource extraction, which has

reactivated social demands for territorial autonomy (Irarrazaval, 2020). Marks' (2019) examination of resource extraction by rebel groups during the civil war in Sierra Leone contends that while they seek resources to pursue and fund war, laborers and local communities rarely receive the benefits of these extractions. This suggests that resources present both an opportunity and curse to rebel groups, when they gain finances while also mimicking rather than challenging the actions of the very state they are resisting. In other contexts, resource extraction and capital accumulation are achieved through the state's use of violence and displacement, creating corporeal precarity as an everyday condition of living (Lesutis, 2019). Other forms of extraction, particularly in the technology sector, exemplify a form of anti-politics when political influence is extracted from energy regimes, while turning them into neoliberal economic outputs and sacrificing human agency (Sadowski and Levenda, 2020: 7).

Scholars examining the borderlands of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) emphasize cycles of resource and wealth extraction, as well as everyday exchanges that create discrete economic and political assets (Akdedian and Hasan, 2020). Borderlands continue to be contested sites, particularly in areas of protracted conflict (i.e. Syria and Iraq), where military, political, economic, and social interests collide. These borderland conflicts while dynamic and continually in flux remain consistently damaging and distressing to the local communities living in these spaces (Akdedian and Hasan, 2020). Water scarcity in the MENA region has been identified as a major reason for increased violence among communities along with the need for adaptive strategies to create sustainable groundwater distribution (Döring, 2020). Resource politics in this region is further marked by research on subterranean security in Israel/Palestine (Slesinger, 2020) and hydraulic geopolitics throughout the region (Mason, 2020). The politics of resource management and extraction

provide critical insights that identify the assemblages of human-and-nonhuman resources and elucidate novel approaches that contribute to political geographic understandings of power, wealth, scarcity, and conflict.

Space and resource conservation represents a contrast to extraction, by way of discursive framings that focus on resource preservation and protection. However, the political practices of conservation, particularly in spaces of political upheaval or conflict, reveal the use of violence and other methods to prevent individuals and communities from accessing land and resources. These dislocations and deprivations are experienced more frequently by indigenous communities and other populations without access to or influence within existing power structures.

The collection of articles on conservation within violent spaces address contemporary politics within a broader spatial-historical framework (Lombard and Tubiana, 2020; Minarchek, 2020; Titeca et al., 2020). Conservation practices were also critiqued through examinations of unequal alliances between states, communities, corporations, and humanitarian organizations, including how some international assistance agencies cause rather than mitigate direct forms of physical violence (Verweijen, 2020). Additionally, conservation operates as a political tool for controlling populations and curbing resistance to oppressive regimes by removing humans from places designated for conservation (Dutta, 2020; Minarchek, 2020; Muralidharan and Rai, 2020; Woods and Naimark, 2020). Efforts to conserve certain spaces and the resources within countries are further fraught by politically reinforcing a human/nonhuman binary, rather than viewing the human and nonhuman world as part of an integrated assemblage. Resource conservation shapes human behavior and interactions with the biophysical environment and in some cases reinforces state sovereignty through control over resource conservation (Ramutsindela et al., 2020). Scalar approaches to resource

extraction have also been taken up by political geographers, which includes both macro and microscale analyses, while there remains a distinct focus on how these processes effect local populations.

III Scale

Two different special issues in the journal of *Political Geography* took divergent approaches to scalar analyses, one focused on macroscale research on resource extraction and the other taking an on-the-ground approach to developments and extractions associated with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The articles in the special issue on extraction and land control examine states and corporations 'from above' to elucidate political machinations along with large-scale analyses of more-than-human geographies (Childs, 2019). By focusing on top-down approaches to resource extraction, these scholars address the multiple ways in which states and corporations use violent and nonviolent coercion to harm or pacify populations in pursuit of environmental exploitation (Dunlap, 2019; Huff and Orengo, 2020; Jakobsen, 2020); engage in the cooptation of environmentalist nongovernmental organizations to allow destructive corporate mining practices to continue unabated (Wiegink, 2020); and forego non-human and human well-being and recognition in pursuit of industrial growth (Brock, 2020; Leifsen, 2020).

New contributions to the extensive research on the geopolitics of BRI examine the communities impacted by these projects in different locations. These articles provide nuanced understandings of China's massive scale BRI project and suggest an empirically rich 'scalar turn' in geopolitical and geo-economic examinations by underscoring the relational and disputed process of BRI in particular places (Oliveira et al., 2020). These studies address the use of violence against populations to preserve or extract resources and call for more methodological approaches to scale,

highlighting microgeographies, microdynamics, and micosituations (Dwyer, 2020; Lawreniuk, 2020a; Lefort, 2020).

Other scholars take a multi-scalar approach, such as Gautreau and Bruslé (2019) who argue that national forest management in Bolivia, rather than erasing the scales associated with global capitalism, made them more complex nationally, globally, and locally. The multi-scale governance created a 'pragmatic management model that combines agrarian colonization, conservation and extractivism', suggesting the resiliency of neoliberalism on space and operational scales (Gautreau and Bruslé, 2019: 119). The scalar approach in these articles expands our understanding of the spatial politics of extracting both nonhuman and human resources. In addition to scale, some studies of resource extraction call upon political geographers to incorporate volume, verticality, depth, and the subterranean as research methods and sites of analysis (Campbell, 2019; Dodds, 2019a; Liu and Yuan, 2019; Squire and Dodds, 2020).

This attention to space and scale, particularly ground-level, micro, and multi-scalar analyses, demonstrates the ways in which political geography has been influenced by feminist, qualitative, and ethnographic methodologies. For example, new approaches to analyzing communities within refugee camps identify the extraction of individuals from 'the boundaries of their individuality' and suggest that powerful microcommunities within camps often reinforce rather than resist the macroscale power structures orchestrated by national or supranational organizations (Carter-White and Minca, 2020: 9). Brankamp (2019) argues that the micro-geographies of militarized camps demonstrate an 'assemblage of occupation' that has significant and violent impacts on refugee mobility and everyday life (p. 74). While scholarly analyses about camp management, community, and agency within camps will continue to be debated, it is clear that micro and corporeal-scale analyses – long-touted

by feminist geographers – have gained significant recognition as an important and even necessary scale of analysis for understanding political processes and power relations. Geographic interventions into the politics of human and nonhuman extractions across scales suggest scholarly sensibilities that further examine human actors and their various perspectives and epistemologies as a vital component of extractive geopolitics both historically and in contemporary time-spaces.

IV Knowledge

Political epistemologies represent another area of inquiry where power geometries converge and conflict. The extraction of knowledge about space, time, and resources from indigenous communities has been an endemic component of colonization and remains a political strategy for contemporary forms of sociopolitical marginalization, resource extraction, displacement, deprivation, and dispossession. Knowledge is extracted from communities through a myriad of political and geopolitical processes, which must be historicized through critical analyses of colonialism along with community engaged research methodologies. Feminist political geographers' have drawn on Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledges as a method for calling attention to the way in which certain epistemologies are valued – and therefore amplified and widely disseminated – more than others. Feminist political geographers have emphasized the spatial situatedness of knowledge, while reinforcing the need for intersectional gender analyses and underscoring marginalized populations vital contributions to the production of knowledge (Mollett and Faria, 2018).

Knowledge extraction remains a method of removing and erasing new and alternative ways of knowing from the cannon of established epistemologies. In response, political geographers have begun to incorporate various forms of indigenous knowledge while critiquing the

removal/extraction of indigenous understandings from scientific analyses (Marston, 2019; Mitchell et al., 2020). Other scholars highlight the ways in which indigenous communities continue to resist their erasure and the extraction of resources from their communities, including mobilizing drones and other technologies to supervise and in some cases limit the extractive operations of states and transnational corporations (Millner, 2020).

Additional political geographic scholarship analyzes the epistemologies and ontologies of resource extraction. The production of knowledge along with claims of legitimacy and political authority are bounded by ontological politics. Within the human–nonhuman assemblage, humans compete to highlight their ontological representation of resources (such as water) while marginalizing other ontological framings (Götz and Middleton, 2020). Thus, extractive practices are embedded with ontological representations of nonhuman resources that are further reinforced, produced, and reproduced through power relations and control over the use of violence. Dressler (2019) demonstrates the ways in which indigenous epistemologies are extracted through both state and non-state actions by imposing political and religious ontologies onto communities. These impositions subsequently violate the lives and livelihoods of indigenous people as ‘a biopolitics of erasure’ through the optimization of forest conservation (Dressler, 2019: 136).

Other forms of knowledge extraction occur through historical erasure of indigenous, minority, and women’s political participation in various struggles. Political geographers’ interests in reinserting marginalized epistemologies into the spatial-historical cannon underscore the important work needed to challenge conventional and often state-centric and manufactured representations of the past. For example, Greenidge and Gahman (2020) counter common histories of environmental movements in the Caribbean through a methodological approach to research

drawn from decolonial scholarship, feminist ethics, and critical race theories while collaborating with local communities. This is marked by increased inclusion of participants as core-researchers in the process of data collection and analyses (Davis et al., 2020). Localized resistance to resource extraction in Australia, as discussed by Ey (2020), avoids narrow gender analyses in favor of diverse approaches through both more-than-gender and more-than-human analyses of resistance movements. The political haranguing many scholars must contend with when studying race and gender continue to be fraught by national politics in various countries, while scholars and activists endeavor to find creative methods for challenging conventional knowledge regimes (Bagheri, 2019). While significant strides have been made, the acceptance and legitimacy of minority knowledge claims continue to be associated with the body from which these claims are made.

V Bodies

The extraction of bodies and identities from space occurs through various political forces that are further influenced by social and economic conditions. The politics of migration exemplifies a type of corporeal extraction where individual and group mobilities are categorized and contained by states and non-state actors. Discursive framings of populations occur through a variety of formats from political leaders to social media, where imaginative geographies about people and the places they are migrating from are imbued with time-geographies to define immigrants as ‘lagging behind’ by associating their behaviors with the past as compared to the ‘contemporary-progressive’ present (Doboš, 2020). In this example, migrants are extracted from the spatial present to position them as living in a separately distinct time-spaces to reinforce their difference as either victims in need of assistance or adversaries in need of control and discipline (Casaglia, 2020a). Additionally,

when environmental disasters are the catalyst for hastened forms of extraction and dispossession, Bonilla (2020) argues that they must be understood within the larger temporal-spatial analyses of colonialism, particularly in contemporary sites of neocolonization. Disaster is compounded by time extractions and marked by an ongoing process of political and economic delay, which places victims in liminal spaces where they are continually ‘forced to wait for repair’ (Bonilla, 2020: 10).

Similar forms of temporal extraction are experienced by migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers through extensive forms of waiting that are further compounded by spatial and situational uncertainty (Hyndman, 2019). Uncertainty and unpredictability remain outgrowths of various systems of control over migratory refugee populations. The systems of control and governance over displaced populations is further buttressed by institutional ambiguity, which operates as a method for pacifying and managing the displaced (Nassar and Stel, 2019). Time-burdens such as waiting and unequal access to space also occurs among marginalized and oppressed populations within countries, such as the differential experiences of time and space between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem and other contested spaces in Israeli and the occupied territories (Greenberg Raanan and Avni, 2020; Rijke, 2020).

Furthermore, labor is regularly extracted from migrants by host states, particularly driven by neoliberal economics, while excluding those same migrants from political recognition (Loong, 2019). States continue to dominate the way in which refugee and migrant populations are politically recognized, managed, and controlled; which corresponds with a significant decrease in protections for refugee populations globally, identifying the difficulty for nongovernmental and supranational organizations to provide adequate protections for vulnerable populations (Bose, 2020). Geopolitical analyses of mobility through examinations of the

management of immigrants by states and non-governmental and supranational humanitarian institutions further address the complexities of vulnerability and precarity through ground-level and corporeal-scale analyses of care and constraint (Crane and Lawson, 2020; Dadusc and Mudu, 2020). Migrants continue to experience multiple forms of compounded challenges through differential systems of control and institutionalized spaces that extract time, certainty, labor, and knowledge from migrants without a commensurate provision of social, spatial, or political acceptance and participation (Mitchell et al., 2019).

Political geographic analyses of corporeal need such as issues of hunger, thirst, and shelter contribute new insights into concepts of bio-power, power hierarchies, and geometries, along with uneven and unequal access to resources (Massey, 1993; Strong, 2019). The jagged geographies of migrant vulnerability and subsequent exploitation within and across borders continues to be examined through complex analyses of migrant populations, which challenge conventional dichotomous stereotyping of migrants and the multiple forms of violence endemic to managing migrant populations (Casaglia, 2020a; Spathopoulou et al., 2020). Individuals, who are already experiencing low wage labor, are further embroiled in cross-border extractions of their physical bodies through transactional exchanges of their blood plasma for cash, which elucidates novel and important geopolitical analyses of borders and bodies (Ebner and Johnson, 2020).

Recent feminist political geographic analyses grapple with various forms of gendered corporeal governance such as natalist polices, population control, and biosecurity. This includes calls for a political geography of abortion (Calkin, 2019) and a number of articles addressing different forms of neo-Malthusian limitations on women’s bodies under the guise of addressing climate change, environmental degradation, and economic development (Bendix et al., 2020;

Ojeda et al., 2020; Shaw and Wilson, 2020). Patchin (2020) offers another approach to corporeal geopolitics through her examination of public health initiatives that sought to contain the Zika virus in Puerto Rico. Her research elucidates how safety and security were extracted from women's bodies by positioning them as risks to the US mainland and subsequently threatening aerial chemical fumigation based on perceptions of women's improper management of their homes and bodies. In addition to the extractive and exclusionary ways in which bodies are managed and controlled within and across spaces, political geographers continue to tackle with the spatial dynamics and sociopolitical extractions associated with identity politics.

VI Identities

In addition to the biological material of bodies, corporeal geographic analyses of the political exemplify other different forms of identity and cultural extraction. This type of extraction was discussed by several authors as part of special issue focused on security violence and mobility for Muslim women negotiating politics and the public in European spaces (Finlay and Hopkins, 2019; Hancock and Mobillion, 2019; Najib and Hopkins, 2019; Warren, 2019). These articles examine the multiple challenges bracketed by navigating one's corporeal representations while traversing public spaces as a gendered, racial, economic, and religious minorities. Individual and collective expression, such as a Muslim-minority women wearing hijab in public spaces, was countered by non-Muslim citizens' expectations and demands for corporeal assimilation through various forms of social discipline including microaggressions, disgust, and spatial exclusions. The non-Muslim majority population's ability to effectively 'correct' corporeal clothing choices through coercion and castigation reinforces the extraction of one's cultural expression as an expected process for 'proper' assimilation in public space (Finlay and

Hopkins, 2019; Hancock and Mobillion, 2019; Najib and Hopkins, 2019).

In response, some women developed creative methods to challenge gender, race, class, and religious stereotypes both within their own communities and the larger population (Warren 2019). Refusing the extraction of expression includes resisting a variety of narrow representations of their subject positions within divergent places and political understandings of the intersectionally gendered body in public space. Spatial sorting and categorizing of individuals based on identity has a long history of political analyses; while contemporary examinations expand our understanding of these practices through in-depth qualitative and ethnographic examinations of the everyday (also see Öcal, 2020b).

By examining everyday mobilities, political geographers (and especially feminist political geographers) illustrate intersectional-gender dynamics of power in contested sites, where methods of categorization are used to sort individuals by differences and determine which bodies belong or do not belong in a particular place (Greenberg Raanan and Avni, 2020; also see Smith et al., 2016).

VII Conclusion

This report has provided an overview of recent research in political geography through the theme of resource, knowledge, corporeal, and identity extractions at different scales of analysis. Political geographic analyses of the Anthropocene have embraced the analytical framework of human-and-nonhuman assemblages with an increased attention to micro and multi-scale analyses. While political geographers continue to approach their research from different spatial scales (from international to intimate), there are consistent efforts to situate the effects of political process through an understanding of the impact they have upon local places and people. Political geographers are engaging in more qualitative and ethnographic research, while attending to

the effective and affective political relations across sociopolitical scales. For example, resource extractions and allocations have led to wealth accumulation and hoarding with little to no benefit for the local communities living in these sites of extraction. In other cases, land and resource dispossessions accompany extractive practices directed by large corporations with the assistance of national governments or in other cases through the nationalization of resources.

Indigenous and identity-based minority communities continue to be the most negatively affected by resource extractions through various methods of spatial marginalization and displacements compounded by resource deprivation. Additionally, knowledge extractions have led to historical erasures of indigenous and other minority epistemologies and ontological connections to land and resources. Research on migration further addresses the extraction of time through waiting, delays, and institutional ambiguity, which keep people in situations of uncertainty and privation. The various forms of violence along with inadequate forms of institutionalized care highlight the political problems facing how states and non-state actors and institutions categorize and control migrant populations. Violence remains a method of inducing harm by extracting corporeal or spatial security and dislocating one from livelihood and living through displacement, deprivation, or death. Political geographers are well poised to confront the varied forms of extractions discussed in this report through continued and insightful examinations across scale and incorporating innovative analyses of time and space.


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ORCID iD

Jennifer L Fluri  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4531-6036>

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