

GES Colloquium Talk

Borderlands and political violence in North and West Africa

Presenter: Dr. Steven Radil

Assistant Professor of Geospatial Science,
Dept. of Economics and Geosciences, U.S. Air Force Academy

April 7, 2023, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM in COH329

Abstract: This talk explores how borderlands across North and West Africa have become central to the production of contemporary armed conflicts in the region. Borderlands are important to the legitimacy and security of states because of their association with sovereignty and are essential to efforts by non-state groups to bypass or challenge the same. Building on previous work on conflict in the region, I consider how borderlands impact the propensity for anti-state, jihadist, and communal violence and how this relationship varies over both space and time. Using decades of data on the locations of conflict events, I establish an association between violence and borderlands in aggregate. However, this finding is highly contextualized by both the characteristics of the borderland in question and the larger geopolitical currents underpinning the violence, reinforcing that not all borderlands are the same and the evolution of the geography of conflict is a complex and dynamic process.



Dr. Steven Radil is Assistant Professor of Geospatial Science at the U.S. Air Force Academy and has previously held faculty positions in geography programs at Ball State University and the University of Idaho. He is a political geographer, and his work focuses mainly on the spatial dimensions of armed conflicts and politically motivated violence. Dr. Radil co-directs the Spatial Conflict Dynamics initiative, which develops and applies new geographic approaches to conflict studies, and routinely advises international organizations on issues related to the same. Dr. Radil earned his Ph.D. in Geography from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Department of Geography &
Environmental Studies

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO COLORADO SPRINGS