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Caribbean aeromobility: Offshore economies, mobile technologies, and changing island spatiality

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The convergence of intensive human mobilities, “offshore” financial flows, export processing zones, virtual connectivity, and new forms of border surveillance make the Caribbean a crucial region in which to study emerging mobility regimes and cultures of movement in the Island Americas. There is a longstanding interest in island-centered themes of movement, migration and transnational ways of life amongst Caribbean writers and artists, but few studies within the social sciences that address how new technologies of mobile communication, software-supported mobility, and changing patterns of air travel are re-shaping island spatialities. This paper aims to update the well-established view of the Caribbean as a mobile region by investigating how recent changes in the technologies and infrastructures of mobility, the cultural practices of air travel and virtual travel, and the economic and political regulation of national borders and financial flows are reconstructing and respatializing the Caribbean islands, leading to major reconfigurations of territory, authority and rights. Examples will be drawn from dependent territories such as the Turks and Caicos Islands and the French départements d’outre mer, as well as from independent countries such as Jamaica and Barbados.