Cover: "Galadzi (Bear)"
by Francis Dick
(Featured inside)

Galadzi

BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

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ROLLING CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

BIG_Review is a bi-annual, multidisciplinary, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal, providing a forum for academic, policy, and artistic explorations of borders in the 21st century. We publish **scholarly work** (academic articles, review essays, research notes, film reviews, and book reviews), **policy work** (brief and reports), and **artistic work** (photography, painting, poetry, short stories, fiction reviews, and more). The journal is committed to quality research, public access, policy relevance, and cultural significance. We welcome submissions from all disciplines and backgrounds.

Scholarly submissions should engage with the research literature on borders, including, for example, bordering processes, borderlands, and borderscapes. We encourage studies that go beyond the 'land image' by exploring borders as non-contiguous, aterritorial, mobile, electronic, biometric, functional, etc. We are especially interested in explorations of borders and global challenges such as pandemics, climate change, migration, and economic shocks. We also seek border studies that break new ground by integrating Indigenous perspectives, knowledges, and practices. We encourage innovative theoretical work as well as empirical and quantitative research. Articles should be between 7,000 and 10,000 words in length. Book and film reviews should be between 500 and 1,000 words, and essays between 1,000 and 4,000 words. Academic submissions must be previously unpublished and not simultaneously under other publishers' consideration.

Artistic submissions should pertain to borders, whether political, social, cultural, personal, or metaphoric. Borders capture the popular imagination and inspire creative works, which in turn influence the forces shaping borders. We promote portfolios and individual works of photography, painting, poetry, short fiction, video, commentary, and other forms. Under Creative Commons licensing, artists retain copyright of their work and benefit from increased exposure at no cost to them.

Policy submissions should translate research and scholarship into clear, accessible language, avoiding jargon and theory. Policy briefs (2,000 words) and policy reports (4,000 words) should inspire and enable non-experts to incorporate the findings into their policy frameworks pertainng to the governance of borders.

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Submissions are not guaranteed approval. *BIG_Review* reserves the right to reject submissions on any grounds.

The call for submissions is rolling. The sooner you submit, the more likely your work could be published in the next issue.

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BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION
REVIEW

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Letter of Introduction

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the new issue of *Borders in Globalization Review* (*BIG_Review*)!

When we launched the journal in 2019, the editorial team promised a different kind of journal, one that would traverse disciplinary boundaries with comparative and policy relevance, integrating the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Law. Our ultimate goal was to make academic and artistic explorations of borders available worldwide, as illustrated by our eight open-access issues so far. *BIG_Review* focuses on borders that are not necessarily territorial/ terrestrial or maritime, nor confined to boundary lines. We find borders non-contiguous and fragmented, functional and mobile, emerging from ancestral cultures and contemporary claims-making. Borders trace and follow migrants, goods, and markets through spaces and regulatory frameworks that are local, regional, national, international, and transnational. Fundamentally, we are interested in works that document and engage with the experiences of people living in or passing through borderlands. These are works that make sense of new modes of information and communication and of current and historical anthropologies of bordering. These are works that question boundaries, territoriality, and spaces of belonging and exclusion across the world.

Border studies is on the frontlines of a contentious and transformative age, of technological, social, and climatic upheavals, of a clash between old and new. States and borders are everywhere on the rise, but so are decolonisation and Indigenous resurgence. This issue of *BIG_Review* captures these tensions with two special sections joined by a portfolio.

First, we present a ground-breaking special section called, **Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders**, edited by our new Indigenous Internationalisms Editor, Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel. This collection integrates critical appraisals in scholarship, visual arts, poetry, and conversation, with contributions by Corntassel, Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, Andrew Ambers, Rachel yacaaʔał George, Francis Dick, Tiffany Joseph, Loreisa Lepine, Cheryl Bryce, Jana-Rae Yerxa, Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, and Jess Háusťi. Readers are introduced to important and still-underappreciated perspectives and contributions of Indigenous knowledges and traditions, including ancient and contemporary practices of land and water defence, of diplomacies, trade networks, treaties, and new forms of community solidarity. These have profound implications for border studies but remain too little known; our aim is to address these deficits. Indeed, this is our inaugural issue presenting Indigenous internationalisms; herein and going forward, all Indigenous content is marked by a special logo and decorative design with artwork created by Métis artist Braelynn Abercrombie.

Second, this issue of *BIG_Review* presents an innovative portfolio, **Documenting Border Barriers**, by Pamela Dodds. This research-based collection of etching and printmaking shines a light and brings texture to the international rise of walls and fences. The memorable works "bear witness to the violent policies of exclusion and lack of concern for the lives of people on the move", in the words of the artist.

Third, we present a special section called **Border Renaissance**, edited by Astrid Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille. This collection features eight research articles, authored by the editors as well as by Victor Konrad, Ondřej Elbel, Alina Mozolevska, Kamil Bembnista, Marco Mogiani, and Kirsten Sandrock. Combined, their works document the "renaissance (or return/ rebirth) of borders in political and media discourses" with a special focus on Europe but as a case study for global trends. Indeed, borders are everywhere!

BIG_Review is made possible by its team of editors, board members, and other colleagues who contribute the labour of reviews, editing, and production, supported by funding grants from SSHRC and Erasmus+. We are grateful to be at the University of Victoria, located on the unceded Indigenous lands of the Lekwungen, W̱SÁNEĆ, and Esquimalt peoples. We are also grateful for the hosting and support provided by the Centre for Global Studies and by University Libraries.

Happy reading, and happy discoveries! Please enjoy, share, and stay in touch through our webpage and social media.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Carpenter, Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel,
and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly
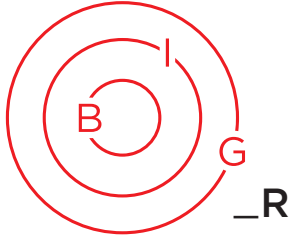
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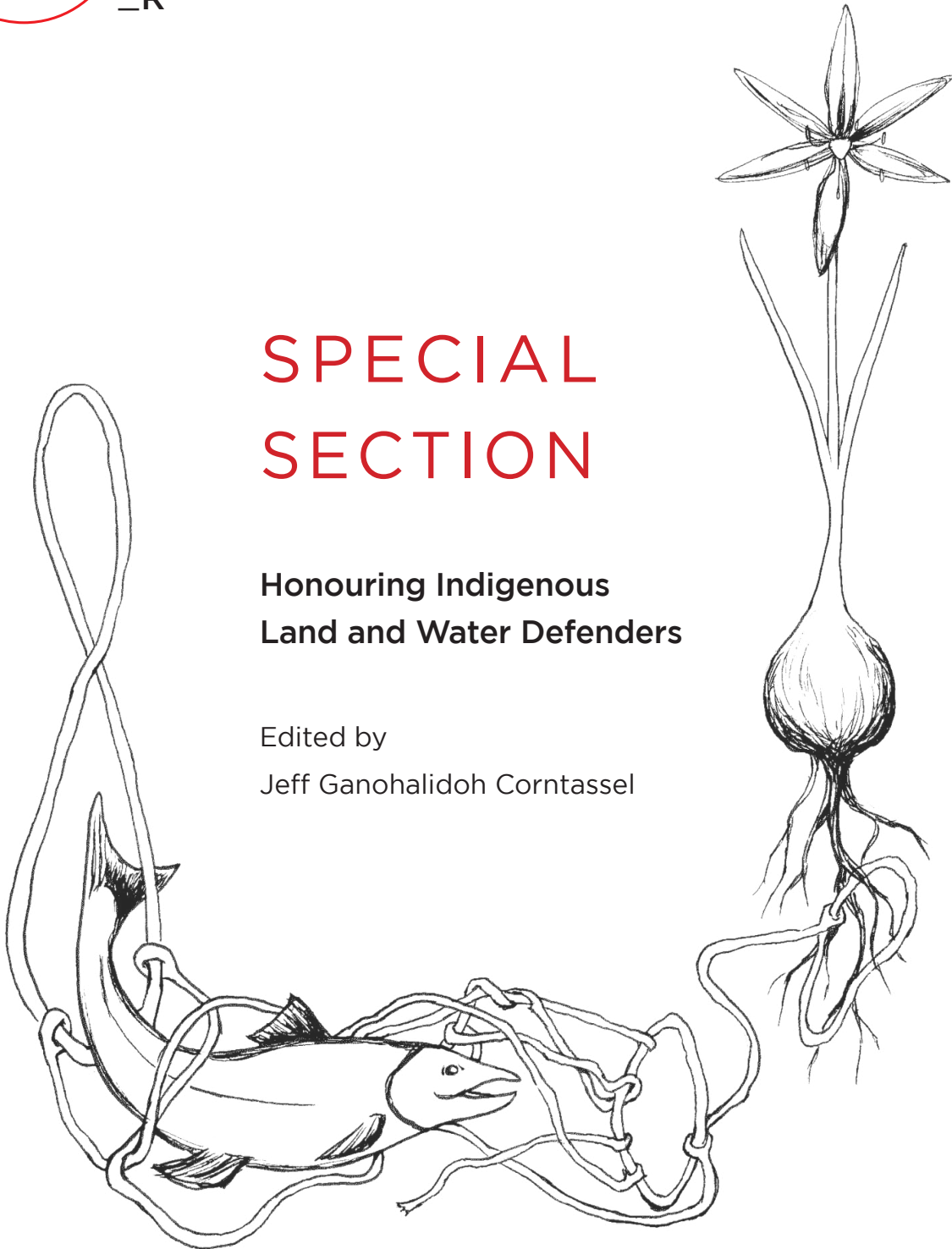
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INTRODUCTION
Reinvigorating Ancestral Practices: Honoring Land and Water Defenders, Indigenous Internationalisms, and Community Protocols

Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel *

For Indigenous peoples, boundaries on homelands and waterways often denote places for family, clan and/or community responsibilities regarding stewardship or protection and are not merely lines of exclusion on a map. In this essay I begin by reflecting on the teachings of the late master carver and artist TEMOSEN̵TET (Dr. Charles Elliott from Tsartlip First Nation) and discuss how his artistry embodies Indigenous internationalism and intimate relationships to W̱SÁNEĆ lands and waters. Indigenous internationalism is practiced through diplomacies, activism, trade relations, treaties, solidarities, and other forms of Indigenous international relations which precede the formation of states. In this essay—introducing the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders—I look at the deeper meaning behind the Cherokee word for nation, ayetli, and discuss how Indigenous internationalism and land/water defense are expressed through stories, activism, and everyday actions that renew relational responsibilities to lands, waters, and more-than-human kin.

First Words

Osiyo nigada. Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel dagwado'a. Tsalagi ayetli agwenasv'i. Echota galsgisgo'i. Jean agitsi nole Gary agidoda. Dagwaltina'i Westville, Ogalahoma nole Huntington Beach, California aneha. Agwetsi ageyutsa Leila Victoria otseha. Nigohilv tsigesvi anehe'i Ani Lekwungen nole Ani W̱SÁNEĆ ahani tsitsinela'i nogwu. Hello. My name is Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel. I'm a citizen of the Cherokee nation and a member of the Echota ceremonial grounds in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. My parents, Jean and Gary, live in California. I live with my family on the unceded territories of the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ nations and peoples, whose relationships with these lands and waters shape their political thought, governance, and self-determining authority that should inform how we all relate to this place. As I share this critical self-location, I pose two interrelated questions to promote accountability as a visitor to Salish lands and waters: how will the lands, waters, and communities benefit from my time here? And how do we go beyond land acknowledgements to take actions that make space for Indigenous protections of lands, waters, and more-than-human relationships?

* **Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel** (PhD), Cherokee Nation citizen, Professor, Indigenous Studies, University of Victoria, Canada, Turtle Island. Email: ctassel@uvic.ca

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The Art of Resurgence

The January 2023 passing of my friend and colleague, master carver TEMOSEṈTET (Dr. Charles Elliott from Tsartlip First Nation), had such a major impact on me and so many others. We would sit for hours in TEMOSEṈTET's carving studio and share food, drink tea (or his favorite, ginger ale), and talk story. So many of TEMOSEṈTET's stories were prompted by the photos and carvings in the room. He would often talk about his time on the Cowichan Tribes' canoe racing team and the intense rivalries and battles that took place on the water between teams. This was where he met Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island and was introduced to Cicero August, who was on the same canoe team and also a well-known carver.

TEMOSEṈTET would tell me about his days protecting the lands and waters as part of his family's involvement in Indigenous activist movements. TEMOSEṈTET's artwork reflects those struggles and his support for Indigenous-led resurgence. In particular, he was very proud of the talking stick he carved for the late Nelson Mandela, who was an anti-apartheid activist and former president of South Africa. Mandela's leadership and lifelong fight against racism was an inspiration to TEMOSEṈTET, and the talking stick he carved for Mandela was adorned with both a thunderbird and an orca to honor the balance of spiritual and physical relationships. At one point, TEMOSEṈTET told me that the poles he carved, which are located throughout Victoria, are "silent ambassadors". What did he mean by that? I think for him they represented guardians of the land, W̱SÁNEĆ warriors who represent the community, the stories, the language and relationships to the lands and waters. They are there to remind others whose land they are on and to respect the communities and relationships they represent. I think of that every time I see TEMOSEṈTET's poles at the airport and other places around Mətúliyə (aka Victoria, BC). What have these silent ambassadors and protectors witnessed over the years as they continue to hold space as guardians of W̱SÁNEĆ landscapes and waterways?

TEMOSEṈTET's artwork exemplifies the principles of land and water defense from a W̱SÁNEĆ perspective. TEMOSEṈTET also put his artwork into activism throughout his life. He was there in May, 2013, for the reclamation of PKOLS, which means "white head" or "white rock", known to the general public by its settler colonial name "Mount Douglas". One sunny afternoon on May 22, 2013, approximately 600 Indigenous and non-Indigenous people gathered at the base of PKOLS to show their solidarity for the reclaiming of this sacred relationship with the mountain. I was also there that day with my daughter to take part in the Indigenous-led reclamation of PKOLS. The PKOLS place name was being reasserted by W̱SÁNEĆ and Lekwungen leaders based on their relationship to that place and their self-determining authority. TEMOSEṈTET had created a sign with the name PKOLS adorned with an orca and thunderbird to explain why the name change was necessary:

> Located in W̱SÁNEĆ territory and on the border of Lekwungen territory, this has been, and remains an important meeting place for many nations. The reclamation of PKOLS to replace the colonial name Mount Douglas recognizes the nation-to-nation agreements negotiated here and supports ongoing efforts of Indigenous and settler people to restore balanced relationships to the lands they call home.

According to TEMOSEṈTET, previous signs for PKOLS had been placed at the top of the mountain throughout the 1970s and 1980s (Corntassel 2022, 27). Each time, these signs were taken down and/or destroyed. This time was different, however. There were over 600 people there to witness the PKOLS reclamation and TEMOSEṈTET's sign has stood the test of time. Despite his passing, TEMOSEṈTET's silent ambassadors stand guard throughout Mətúliyə. His artwork remains as a powerful expression of Indigenous internationalism and land/water defense.

Indigenous internationalisms are practiced in several different ways by First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples across Turtle Island and globally. Encompassing Indigenous trade relations, diplomatic protocols, treaty arrangements, acts of solidarity, and other assertions of self-determining authority, Indigenous internationalism is an emerging area of research that exposes tensions between Indigenous nations and states over border policies and highlights Indigenous relationships that transcend and predate state borders. This essay introduces some of the ways that Indigenous nations are expressing their relationships to lands and waters through complex diplomacies and forms of engagement, as well as their experiences with state border crossings. Through an Indigenous internationalism lens, Indigenous nations and peoples often foster new understandings of how Indigenous forms of diplomacy, activism and trade are "practiced and persist beyond state boundaries" (Corntassel, Ambers & Baker, forthcoming 2024). Land and water defense is at the heart of Indigenous nations' activism and Indigenous internationalism.

In her essay entitled "Kidnapped Water and Living Otherwise in a World of Drought, Fires, and Floods", Zapotec scholar Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez discusses the deeper meaning behind "water is life" as a "relational confluence of plural bodies". In doing so, she examines the actions of the United Front of Nahua

Communities of the Cholulteca and Volcano Regions as they halted production of a bottled water company in Puebla, Mexico, in 2021. Isabel's piece builds on her previous research to demonstrate how land and water defense is relational, and the connections between Indigenous lands and bodies run deep (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2023). The other essay in this special issue by 'Namgis First Nation scholar Andrew Ambers and Ahousaht and Ehattesaht First Nations' scholar Rachel yacaaʔał George also focuses on water but from a different relational vantage point. According to Ambers and George, the ocean is "more than a physical or geographic space, and also emerges as an analytical, intellectual and critical space of and for engagement". Through their experiences in Tribal Journeys, Ambers and George are able to witness firsthand how these Indigenous internationalisms signify "(re)connection to our traditional practices embodies the resurgence of our nations, the continual practice of our self-determination, and the exploration of sovereign protocols across nations". Understanding the relationality of oceans and their role in creating Indigenous legal orders is vital to future avenues of land and water defense.

Nested within this special issue are critical and vital conversations with three Indigenous land and water defenders: W̱SÁNEĆ, Sḵx̱wu7mesh, and Quw'utsun activist and knowledge-holder Tiffany Joseph; Songhees Nation knowledge-holder Loreisa Lepine, and Songhees Nation knowledge-holder Cheryl Bryce. Each of these speakers shares their own experiences around land and water defense along with their desires for the health and well-being of future generations. Poetry is the true language of resurgence and nationhood, and three Indigenous poets share their insights and powerful words for this special issue: Anishinaabe scholar Jana-Rae Yerxa, Kanaka Maoli scholar and activist Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, and Haíɫzaqv parent, poet, leader, and land-based educator 'Cúagiláḵv (Jess Ḣáusti̓). The beautiful Indigenous artwork that adorns each page is drawn by Métis artist and writer Braelynn Abercrombie. The amazing cover, by Kwakwaka'wakw artist and visionary Francis Dick, encapsulates Indigenous land and water defense through a relational lens. The salmon and bear nations are represented in terms of their interconnectedness and resiliency. Francis Dick's amazing work depicts the spirit of her ancestors and the return of the sockeye to the river Gwani (Nimpkish River) in Kwakwaka'wakw territory.

Indigenous Nationhood and Land/Water Protection

The Cherokee word for nation, ayetli, provides some insights behind Indigenous internationalism and demonstrates how our knowledge systems, as well as connections to lands, waters, and communities are so intricately intertwined. While the meaning of ayetli includes nationhood as "center" or "middle", it can also mean half. Half here means that the elected government officials (such as Chief and Council) are only one side to the Cherokee Nation. Relationships to land, water, fire, and plant and animal nations are part of the other, less public half of Cherokee nationhood. Atsila or fire is at the center of Cherokee nationhood, which is an important part of our relational responsibility to nurture and keep the ceremonial fires strong for future generations. As Cherokee scholar Chris Teuton (Teuton & Shade 2023, 21) points out, the goal for Cherokees is to "stand in the middle": ayetli tsidoga… holding this delicate balance is the key to a "good life". Ayetli encompasses the struggles to maintain balance between individuals and the nationhood, between the middle world, skyworld, and underworld. At the core of ayetli are the relationships that maintain our health and well-being as Indigenous peoples. Through the renewal and reciprocity of honoring relationships we express nationhood and acts of Indigenous internationalism.

To help illustrate how kinship and nationhood are interrelated, I will share a short story about my daughter and I returning to our homelands in the Cherokee Nation (previously published in *Langscape Magazine*):

> A few summers ago, my daughter and I were visiting our homelands in the Cherokee Nation (Tahlequah, Oklahoma, so-called United States). As we were driving along the highway, we noticed that there was a ᏪᎵᏣ (saligugi or snapping turtle) in the middle of the road. After taking my foot off the accelerator, I asked my daughter whether we should stop and help that ᏪᎵᏣ out. She immediately said yes so we pulled over and slowly approached the ᏪᎵᏣ, who eyed us suspiciously. We both assured the ᏪᎵᏣ that we were going to help get her out of harm's way. I then showed my daughter how to pick up the ᏪᎵᏣ from the back of the shell as they have very powerful jaws! My daughter proudly held ᏪᎵᏣ and helped her into the creek safely on the other side of the road. Seemingly, that's the end of the story. So why share a story that appears to have little to do with rights or even Indigenous nationhood? I would contend that there is a lot more going on in this story than might first be perceived. The ᏪᎵᏣ story actually teaches us about relationships and ways of protecting and honoring more-than-human kin. Most importantly, it teaches us about responsibility (Corntassel 2023, 15).

Dagasi or turtle has their own nationhood and kinship. By practicing this act of gadugi (working together; helping each other in a time of need), my daughter and I were engaging in diplomacy and Indigenous internationalism. The turtle nation has a special relationship with Cherokees as well as other Indigenous nations. Aside from the restorying of North America as Turtle Island, there are other ways that turtle has

helped us journey through worlds due to their ability to travel on both land and water. For example, when Cherokee women dance at our stomp grounds, they attach turtle shells to their ankles, which keep the rhythm of the dance. Turtle nations are an integral part of our ceremonies and literally signify the rhythm of our nationhood. By helping the snapping turtle across the road, we were practicing respectful relations with our kin. This is also an example of "everyday acts of resurgence", which are forms of intimate connections with the lands, waters, and more-than-human relations. These actions are often unacknowledged and might entail having a conversation at the kitchen table, praying, visiting with kin, or speaking the language. While these may seem like ordinary actions, such as helping a turtle across the road, they are integral to protecting our relationships to lands, waters, and the natural worlds. Sharing stories like the one above helps us identify the everyday ways that we embody and activate our relational responsibilities. Indigenous internationalisms reflect a greater constellation of everyday actions and large-scale Indigenous-led movements motivated by love for the lands and waters and premised on the health and well-being of future generations. As spiritual beings, we are in a continuous process of being and becoming good ancestors.

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ESSAY

INDIGENOUS
INTERNATIONALISMS

Kidnapped Water and Living Otherwise in a World of Drought, Fires, and Floods

Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez *

This essay considers how the production of water as a resource that can be extracted and commodified is situated at the core of colonial capitalist economies. Water has become a volatile means to secure economic growth under conditions of accelerated aridification and scarcity. The focus of the analysis is the struggle of the United Front of Nahua Communities in Puebla, Mexico against the water bottling company Danone Bonafont. Like other Indigenous struggles, the significance of this case goes beyond water rights and environmental justice. Shifting the focus to relationships of water— the interactions between the human and non-human worlds, this paper demonstrates that conflicts over water, the life, and energy it represents reflects not only different value systems but also a disconnect about the place of humans in the wider world and in the current context of climate catastrophes, fires, and droughts. I develop a "confluence of plural bodies" approach to explore how "water as life" may offer us the language to envision alternative understandings of liberation.[1]

We will navigate, we will walk to tell the Earth that, in the world we feel in our collective hearth, there is place for ALL. Simply because that world can only be possible if we ALL struggle to bring it back

— *Subcomandante Insurgente Moisés 2020*

In March, 2021, on International Water Day, the United Front of Nahua Communities of the Cholulteca and Volcano Regions surrounded and prevented access to the Danone Bonafont water bottling plant located in Puebla, Mexico (Acosta 2021). These communities claimed that the company had kidnapped water for over 20 years. They demanded a dialogue with the Puebla state and federal governments, the Water National Commission, and the Institute for Indigenous Development. They patiently waited for almost five months for a response that did not come. On August 8th, on the 142nd anniversary of revolutionary leader Emiliano Zapata's birthday, the communities decided to take over the water plant to liberate water (Castillo 2021). Enacting their own Indigenous laws and articulating "water as life", women, children, elders, and youth took over the water plant. They denounced Danone Bonafont for extracting 1.64 million liters of water daily and drying out water springs and their domestic water wells on their territories (Pueblos Unidos et al. 2021). Danone Bonafont is the second most profitable water bottle company worldwide and these profits increased

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in 2021 during the pandemic (Villanueva 2022). The United Front of Nahua Communities contested the Mexican government's authority to grant water licenses to transnational corporations. This organization argued that water is a living entity, not a resource that the government can dispose of.

In recent years, water has come to assume a distinctive role in Indigenous movements, driving them to articulate political responses to water theft and contamination by resource extraction. The slogan "water is life" has become ubiquitous; heard at protests and gatherings around the world, the phrase is central to Indigenous movements that refuse industrial resource extraction and exclusionary enclosures. Lakota historian Nick Estes argues that Indigenous movements bring into focus the ontological roots of Indigenous peoples' critique of the dispossession of land and water (2019). Lenape scholar Joanne Barker contends that focusing on water as an analytic is useful in foregrounding both movements and relationships. Barker asks, how does water bring people together and why does it matter (2019, 2)? Building on Barker's work, I propose a confluence mode of analysis to examine colonial capitalist contours of aquapolitics alongside Indigenous contestations through water as life. Relationality has been at the center of Indigenous theorizing (TallBear 2019; Yazie & Baldy 2019; Simpson 2018; Stark 2010). I contribute to this discussion through an analytic that not only focuses the human and non-human relations that enable life but also the political practices that center Indigenous life worlds at the confluence of plural bodies, struggles, and ontologies. This analytic excavates the overlapping and accumulated histories of colonization and capitalist violence while foregrounding relations of water and struggles for life. I show that struggles to defend water and the life-energy it represents reveal not only differing value systems but also a disconnect about the place of humans on Earth. *Water as life* is not just a political strategy to recover much needed water but a philosophical standpoint that challenges colonial capitalist enclosures by highlighting the relational confluence of plural bodies as a precondition of life.

The focus of my analysis is the struggle of the United Front of Nahua Communities in Puebla, Mexico, which is situated within the ongoing colonial capitalist aquapolitics of Puebla city and the Nahua communities of the valley adjacent to the active volcano Popocatepetl. This is a peri-urban region, or a zone of transition from rural to urban areas. These communities have been exposed to the constant demand for water from the urban and industrialized areas of this region. Refusing to let go of their water, Nahua communities insist on centering the web of relationships that water binds together and that constitutes their territories. It is this standpoint and the conceptual scaffolding of the altepetl that I am interested in as the basis of Indigenous political practices.

Water and the Confluence of Multiple Bodies

In Indigenous Mesoamerican worldviews, water and land are inextricably connected. In Nahuatl, for example, the word altepetl is formed by the words *alt* (water) and *tepetl* (mountain). Thus, altepetl means water mountain, which is considered the origin of life on earth. It is also a sociopolitical unit, a home/territory that can only be understood in reference to the relationships of interdependence between the human and non-human worlds. A variant image of the altepetl is that of an island surrounded by sea water, which is transformed into fresh water through its movement from inside the land, making life possible. Water manifests in clouds, rain, mists, oceans, steam, and so forth. The Mexica glyph that represents the altepetl is a mountain from whose base a cave opens and from which water flows (Christlieb 2003). Another idea/image of the altepetl is a waterscape surrounded by mountains from which water flows through lakes, rivers, creeks, and water springs. In all these images, different bodies of water and land enter into relationships.

Federico Fernández Christlieb notes that the altepetl can be described as a metaphor for the interactions that Indigenous peoples maintain with the non-human beings that constitute their ecosystems. He defines the altepetl as a socio-spatially organized community who is closely connected to the land through its legal order. He identifies three attributes of the altepetl: 1) an organized community; 2) an Indigenous legal order that includes rotating systems of communal services and authority; and 3) a socio-spatial relation with a specific territory based on the idea of a mountain full of water, seed, animals, or all that is necessary for life (Christlieb 2015). From this perspective, Indigenous territories and Indigenous communities come into being through their interactions with the more than human world and are bound by a legal order and life-making practices. In the notion of the altepetl there is no land without water, there is no water without land, and there is no life without water and land. Water and land together create mud, which is considered the prime material for life. Water connects different bodies of land, animals, and plants, transforming itself through its movement from one body to another.

Earth, territory, and all of life are only possible through the fluidity of water. These interspecies and inter-elemental relations of interdependence embody a particular way of being on and with the Earth. They are central to how Indigenous peoples understand and give meaning to place. Indigenous communities enter into relationships with these entities and forces through the kinetics of their bodies and intentional actions. Such relationships create the conditions of possibility for both the human and non-human worlds through mutual causation. Anishinaabe scholar Heidi Stark argues that for such

relationships to function, they need to be grounded on respect, responsibility, and renewal. These principles are foundational to Indigenous political thought and the treaties established first between the Anishinaabe and the non-human world and later with other Indigenous nations and European settlers (Stark 2010).

Among the Nahuas and other Indigenous peoples in Mexico, practices such as invoking, dreaming of, speaking to, celebrating, and feasting for entities of the non-human world bring human and non-human beings together to act collectively and make something happen. Through these practices the non-human world is encouraged to act in pursuing a common goal. Negotiation and agreement are part of the process of acting together. The idea of communal work is not only of vital importance to the collective wellbeing of humans but also of non-human beings. It reflects the subjectification of both human and non-human beings and a relational affinity among plural bodies. It is through reciprocal relations with elements, entities, and diverse species that humans come into completion. This understanding of subjectification is not only more fluid but also more expansive by including plural selves.

To the Nahua communities of the volcano Popocatepetl region, this relational ethos and principle of communal work is central to their governance institutions and everyday life. Relationality is reflected, for example, in how they address the volcano; they call it Don Goyo (Mr. Goyo). To these communities, the volcano, like water and mountains, has agency and hearth-feelings. It is capable of expressing its desires and its will to act. The Popocatepetl is considered to be the guardian of water. The rituals for water and Tlaloc, the Mexica god of rain and water, are mediated by graniceros or weather workers (Glockner 2019). Graniceros are individuals who were struck by lightning and survived, thereafter carrying the obligation to serve the weather spirits (Albores & Broda 1997). Graniceros' work is to communicate with the spirits of the mountains, the volcano, and water in order to regulate the weather. Life among the Nahuas develops in a continuous process of communication with these entities in order to understand their generosity and life-enabling gift. The mountains, the volcano, water, and spirits support the communal work and social life of Nahuas, and in exchange these communities have the responsibility to reciprocate by feasting for, thanking, and celebrating these entities. This way of understanding inter-elemental and interspecies relations shapes the social, legal, political, and economic arrangements and institutions that govern Nahua communal life. These relationships of interdependence are inextricably bound to a way of seeing the world that gives intentionality, respect, and accountability to the more than human world.

There is no life without this web of relations. This confluence of human and non-human bodies challenges the boundaries between species and elements as well as the colonial anthropocentric, gendered, and racialized hierarchies. Confluence is literally about rivers flowing together to form a mightier current. I understand relational confluence as the practice of bringing plural bodies, human and otherwise, along with communities, ontologies, and struggles together to refuse the death of Indigenous life. This concept invites us to think about the interdependent conditions that bind our human existence to that of the other-than-human world as well as the conscious actions that make such conditions possible. As the entity that makes the conditions for life possible on Earth, water reveals the unilateral violence of colonial capitalist resource extraction and its death-producing force.

Water and the Nahua Communities in the Colonial Capitalist Context

While the confluence of plural bodies in interdependent relations enable life, the colonial capitalist convergence of violence, dispossession, and ecological destruction threatens freedom and the web of relationships that constitutes Indigenous life. This loss of freedom manifests in the loss of the capacity of Indigenous peoples to self-constitute themselves in relation to that life-enabling web of relations. Colonial and capitalist imperatives aim at extracting, damning, containing, controlling, and commodifying water. The commodification of land, water, bodies, and resources is at the core of colonial capitalist economies. In the colonial worldview, water is a means to transport goods and people; it facilitates extraction and has value as a resource. Situated in a broad historical perspective, resource extraction and the ecological effects it produces are constitutive of ongoing colonialism. Dina Gilio-Whitaker writes that colonization is not just a process of invasion and domination of Indigenous peoples by European colonizers but a structure of violence that operates ecologically, politically, socially, culturally, and ontologically (2019, 171). As such, colonialism is bound with ecological destruction and the dramatic transformations of Indigenous landscapes. Indigenous land dispossession, extractivism, erasure, unrecognized rights, and colonial green conservation have all obstructed Indigenous peoples' access to their lands, sacred spaces, traditional food, water sources, and medicine. Movements for environmental justice often fail to connect contemporary struggles to a longer colonial history. However, the construction of colonial cities, railroads, mines, aqueducts, and other infrastructures have had a massive impact on Indigenous nations and the landscapes they inhabit.

As a mode of relationship, violence is structured by hierarchical and anthropocentric conceptions of humanity, life, race, gender, and sexuality. Violence (gendered, sexualized, ecological, and racialized) is not an unfortunate consequence of colonialism and capitalist accumulation. Rather, violence is constitutive

of such processes. Colonialism continues to shape the global economic system and what landscapes and resources are rendered extractable. Traci Voyles writes that "wastelanding", the process of seeing landscapes as a waste, is a racial signifier that "renders the environment and the bodies that inhabit it pollutable" (2015, 45). Wasteland is a transferable signifier that materializes in disparate landscapes, impacting racialized human populations. Wastelanding and racialization manifest in everyday forms of devaluation, exploitation, and disposability. Over time, they produce what Byrd et al. call "economies of dispossession", which are constituted by multiple and interconnected genealogies of racialized dispossession, subjection, and expropriation through which both colonialism and capitalism take form (2018). These circuits of production, distribution, consumption, and reproduction have created a topography of co-constituted processes whose effects are cumulative.

Nahua communities have a history of resistance against different waves of land dispossession. They inhabit both the urban core of San Andrés Cholula and the peri-urban volcano area. Cholula is the oldest living city in the Americas with more than three thousand years of continuous history. Located in the Puebla–Tlaxcala Valley, the city is flanked to the west by the snow-covered peaks of the volcanoes Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl. Several perennial water streams converge with the Atoyac River, creating a wetland to the north and east of the urban center. Cholula was an important pre-Hispanic city; it was a center for the education of Nahua spiritual leaders. This ancient city was modeled as an altepetl, a socio-spatial territory established on a "mountain full of water", a place where the confluence of water, seeds, animals, and land enables life. The pyramids that constituted the city were erected in carefully selected locations as a physical representation of the altepetl and as the basis of the local rotational socio-religious political system (Florescano 2006). Besides being a centre for learning and pilgrimage, Cholula also boasted a vibrant tianquiztli or market where long-distance merchants exchanged goods.

The massacre of Cholula people inaugurated Spanish colonization in the region, even though colonial rule was not institutionalized until the early 1530s with the arrival of missionaries. Cholula's colonial history developed in concert with that of Puebla, the quintessential Spanish city. Land dispossessed from Cholula and neighbouring Nahua communities served to create Puebla as a settler city or Spanish Republic. Cholula, on the other hand, became a pueblo de indios or Indian Republic, providing resources and forced labour to Spanish settlers through the encomienda system. Spaniards razed the numerous ancient Nahua teocallis or temples and replaced them with Christian churches, changing the landscape of the city (McCafferty 2001). Forced Indigenous labourers recycled sacred stones as they built the new structures on the same site of their temples. As Puebla continued to grow, demand for more Indigenous land and forced labour put enormous pressure on Nahua communities. However, the narrative of a triumphant Spanish conquest that eradicated Indigenous traditions remains a myth. The expansion of the colonial frontier was met with Indigenous resistance, which resulted in an area of tension between the imposed colonial order and the persistence of Indigenous legal traditions. Indigenous refusal to disappear manifested in the rejection of imposed governance systems. For example, although the municipal authority eventually became a third level of government, the mayordomías—the Indigenous communal system of posts, services, and governance—continues to coexist with the municipal government, safeguarding the interests of the community's vis-a-vis non-Indigenous government (Schumacher et al. 2023).

As Puebla city continued to expand, it began to reach the edges of Indigenous communally controlled lands, which became the target of real estate investors, land speculators, and the political elite. However, the Mexican Constitution of 1917 protected these lands until the early 1990s. In 1991, in the context of the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Article 27 of the Constitution was modified to open up Indigenous lands to the market. This change triggered a massive process of expropriation and urbanization of Indigenous lands. For example, the government of the state of Puebla expropriated 1,082 hectares of Nahua land to create the Atlixcayotl Territorial Reserve. While the expropriation was justified under the argument of creating social housing, this area became rather gentrified (Schumacher et al. 2023). In this newly open land market, Cholula and surrounding areas became part of an ambitious urban plan for attracting industries and real estate development. The aggressive regional development plan focused on modernizing Puebla's metropolitan area in order to uphold NAFTA's commitments (Cabrera Becerra & Tenorio Tellez 2006). Like in other regions of Mexico, in Puebla the current wave of natural resource extraction manifests in the widening and deepening of the structure and infrastructure to facilitate the exploitation and control of a wide range of resources; the expansion of transnational agroindustry and the exclusion of subsistence economic practices; and the reorganization of territories and financialization. Together, these strategies have accelerated environmental destruction. To attract investors, industries were granted unlimited access to water. To that end, deep-water wells were drilled in the Indigenous communities of San Buenaventura Nealtican, Santa María Acuexcomac, Nealtican, and Acuexcomac. Overexploitation of the deep-water wells was soon noticed by these communities. They denounced the government of Puebla for failing to monitor water levels and overexploitation. They also engaged in direct action to protect water. For years, they faced government repression and co-optation tactics, which ended up dividing communities and facilitating the development of an additional hydric project.

As urban and industrial demand for water grew, in 2006 the government proposed the construction of a new deep-water well in San Francisco Ocotlán. However, it was unsuccessful thanks to the community's mobilization and the support of neighbouring communities and organizations (Campos & Ramírez 2009, 263–265). At that time, Nahua communities created the Organization for the Defense of Water and the Environment in San Pedro Cholula. With the slogan "Water is life, do not let it go", this organization drew attention to the illegal exploitation of water by industries (Hernández 2007). These communities also resorted to legal action by demanding the recognition of their rights as "pueblos originarios" or First Peoples, which are protected in Article 2 of the Constitution. In their Writ of Amparo, they asserted that as the original peoples of the territory they possess a socio-spatial organization inherited from the ancient Mesoamerican altepetl, which is the foundation of their legal traditions. They also claimed that their territory had been a fertile area that included rivers, creeks, and many water springs. The automotive and steel industries, the disorganized expansion of the city of Puebla, and the irresponsible overexploitation of water had produced dramatic changes in a short period of time (Schumacher et al. 2023).

The concession to Danone Bonafont to exploit volcanic aquifers in 1992 reinforced the historical dispossessions of these communities. The government of Puebla manipulated elections and fraudulently imposed a municipal government that agreed to the water concession without the consent of Nahua communities, who witnessed how their traditional water wells started to dry up. In the words of one woman activist,

> Our artisanal water wells are very important to our communities. They are part of our governance traditions and the way we have always administered water. We take from the Earth, but we always make sure that it is not excessive, that we respect her. For us, water is the essence of life (Tricks & Castillo 2021).

Struggles to defend water are also contestations over what constitutes legitimate authority and processes that are used to render existing Indigenous governance invisible. Transnational companies such as Danone Bonafont, Nestle, and Coca Cola are subsidized by the Mexican government and thereby incentivized to dispossess Indigenous communities from their aquifers. In contrast, establishing and maintaining reciprocal relations with water and well as collective discussions over how water is used and who uses it is the foundation of Nahua governance. At the root of this conflict is a way of seeing the world that rests upon a hierarchical distinction between life and nonlife, or what Elizabeth Povinelli (2016) calls "geontopower". From this point of view, water is nonlife and lacks agency. Therefore, it is just a resource that can be exploited. Even in discussions regarding water justice, it is humans and their rights to safe and clean water that are centered (Fejzic 2020,

518). From Povinellis' perspective, geontopower, colonial violence, and capitalism informs human relations to natural resources. However, as Kim TallBear argues, it is not just the non-human world that is rendered nonlife but also Indigenous and Black bodies whose humanity is de-animated (2019, 25). Refusing extractivism and the destruction it produces necessarily involves a refusal of the colonial violence that is inflicted on both human and more-than-human bodies as well as on human and non-human relations (Altamirano-Jiménez 2021). Refusal demands other ontologies and alternatives that center reciprocal relations and the practices that enable life.

The United Front of Nahua Communities and Kidnapped Water

On March 22, 2021, twenty Nahua communities decided it was time to liberate water (Tecpatl 2022). Prior to this moment, people had been visiting communities and talking to each other. They found out they were all concerned about water. They decided to organize as the United Front of Nahua Communities of the Choluteca and Volcano Regions to defend water and life. Members of the organization surrounded the Danone Bonafont Water bottling plant, set up tents outside, and placed large rocks alongside the road to prevent the water distribution trucks from leaving the site. This organization claimed that Danone Bonafont had illegally "kidnapped" water for 29 years. The United Front noted that the water plant had become a jail for water (Tecpatl 2022, 11). The image of kidnapped water offers an important way to think about water's subjectivity and relations as well as the violence inflicted against human and non-human bodies in Mexico in the expansion of the extractive frontier. To erase, kill, commodify, and kidnap bodies of water, land, and human and non-human entities destroys an understanding of life that far exceeds colonial and liberal conceptions of agency, humanity, property, and animacy. As the National Indigenous Congress notes, the destruction of land, water and Indigenous life forms are not "conflicts" but rather a long war against Indigenous peoples and the Earth (in Gutiérrez Luna 2017). These life forms are expansive; they involve movement, fluidity, plurality, and multidirectionality in ways that push us to keep different ontologies in view.

Although these initial actions by the United Front halted the company's extraction of water, these Nahua communities felt it was not enough. They initiated a consultation process to decide the course of action. One woman activist noted,

> We held many communal assemblies to collectively think about what to do next. These assemblies allow us to hear everyone's voices in our communities. We listened, we debated, and put our heads together until we came to an agreement. We decided to put Danone Bonafont and the state and federal governments to trial for the destruction of

our lands and water. We decided to enact our own justice, instead of asking for it (Tricks & Castillo 2021).

During the public trial, members of each community testified to the abuse of water and the ways in which all levels of government had failed to protect water. They found Danone Bonafont guilty of illegally capturing water. Together they entered the huge water bottling plant to liberate water by shutting down the illegal deep-water well the company used to store water extracted from volcanic springs. The action of taking over the water bottling plant quickly became international news. Organizations from Canada, the United States, and several European countries manifested their solidarity with the United Front, making this an emblematic struggle in Latin America. After the Bonafont water plant was occupied, the communities decided to transform it into a communitarian space, or Altepelmecalli (House of the Peoples), which was led by Indigenous women. The Altepelmecalli became a center for the confluence of peoples and struggles against devastation, dispossession, exploitation, and oppression. Movements against mining, pipelines, large hydroelectric dams, and movements for land and water defense were given the space to share their experiences and support one another. The walls of the water plant were painted by various visual artists, including with a large mural that read, "Ni la tierra ni las mujeres somos territorios de conquista" (Neither land nor women are territories of conquest) (Tricks & Castillo 2021). The United Front started projects focused on education, health, Indigenous women's rights and autonomy, and created communal radio stations and television channels. They also raised chicken and grew their own food. The organization noted that if the Altelpemecalli was to survive, it needed to be self-sufficient. Through this form of organizing, consensus, communal work, and self-sufficiency—all of which are grounded in Indigenous life—became pillars of political action. Several months after taking over the water bottling plant, the organization celebrated the return of water to the twenty Nahua communities.

The United Front organized and participated in multiple forums to articulate itself to other Indigenous struggles in Mexico and abroad. In September 2021, it participated in the webinar "The Fight against Danone in Mexico and Beyond" organized by Wellington Water Watchers and Keepers of the Water Wellington. The event brought together the United Front, the Six Nations Reserve of Grand River, Ontario—which had been fighting a Nestle water plant—and members of the Penobscot Nation in the United States. In this webinar, Indigenous activists insisted that the responsibility to defend water is not a local but a global responsibility (Pueblos Unidos de la Región Cholulteca 2022). In December of the same year, they organized the forum "Struggles for Water and for Life During the Pandemic". At that event, members of the United Front asked, "When did water, which makes life possible, become a commodity? How is that we have let it happen without a fight?" (Pueblos Unidos et

al. 2021, 3). From their perspective, water defense is a human responsibility that extends beyond Indigenous communities and borders.

What these communities learned through their shared experiences is that the extraction of water does not require much land. Unlike other types of extractive infrastructure such as pipelines, which cross extensive territories, water can be extracted from specific locations. An activist explained, "From one point, corporations can suck all the water from an entire region" (La Comuna 02 T3 2022). The absence of water, however, is felt extensively as it renders spaces unintelligible as historically constituted places. In a public letter, a member of the United Front and a former political prisoner who had opposed the construction of a deep water well in the community of Nealtican wrote,

> The government said the water is for all and that everyone needs it. We all need to eat but we do not go invading other communities' lands or stealing from the supermarket. It is important to ask for something to be given, Indigenous communities are no different. Consent is needed. It is necessary to establish a relationship of reciprocity both with water and with the community from which that water comes from (Flores 2014).

Nahua communities see consent as a process that extends to the non-human world. Water, as other entities, has agency, it needs to be motivated, engaged, and cared for. During community celebrations and ceremonies, water and land are feasted with food, flowers, and music. These practices are a fundamental part of maintaining and renewing consensual relations with these entities. Kidnapping water, on the other hand, fractures its inter-corporeal relations.

Through the defense of water, Nahua women activists have also shared their concerns and aspirations. Participants in the Dialogue among Women Activists noted,

> [As women] we see that the relationship we have with water goes beyond the everyday activities. It is a deeper relationship, it is spiritual... When we see that it is threatened, we respond with all the strength we have in our hands and heart (IBERO Puebla 2023).

Nahua women's responsibility to water is also connected to the role they play in their communities' subsistence economy and the rain rituals that attend to the seasonal cycles of corn. The leadership roles that women played at the Altepelmecalli was seen as an extension of such responsibility. However, in a public meeting, both the government and industries' representatives asked that women did not speak. The United Front refused, arguing women had the same right to express themselves. A woman activist from the organization Guardians of the River, observed, "They are preventing us from speaking

and no, we are not going to shut up! We are equals. We are never going to shut up again. We will say what we think, we do not want toxins in the water, we do not want water to go" (Oropeza 2019). Nahua women assume that they are part of a community in struggle. They see their bodies and that of their "compañeros" being hurt, repressed, and intimidated in different ways. Yet, they claim that resistance is a communal responsibility. As a member of the United Front observed,

> Yes, we know that as women we were educated to be silent, to stay put... Well, I guess we are also struggling against that education, against that imposition. We see our participation in the struggle as a responsibility, the defense of territory is something we must do. We are in this to defend life (IBERO Puebla 2023).

In this way, Nahua women demonstrate that struggles against colonial capitalist resource extraction cannot be separated from the fight against patriarchal structures of domination. Like water that flows from one place to another, connecting different entities and forms of life, Indigenous women's political practices connect plural bodies and struggles together. It is this political practice of connecting, of enacting relations that confluence as analytic attends to. While apparently isolated and dislocated, the convergence of plural bodies and struggles challenges the speciesist and gendered colonial capitalist logic that targets both the Indigenous and non-human subjects and their interdependent relations.

The unprecedented organizing experience of the United Front drew attention to Indigenous and colonial capitalist conceptions of water. As a battle ground and a powerful political force, water disrupts exclusionary relations of property and life. A woman activist noted, "When they [the government] saw that our resistance was strong and attracting international attention, they started using repressive force, national guards, state police, and military police to evict us from this space [the Altelpemecalli]... To evict the communities that were protecting water" (IBERO Puebla 2023). Although on February 15th, 2022, almost a year later, the National Guard and state police evicted the United Front from the water bottling plant, their struggle did not end. The twenty Nahua communities that constitute this Front joined a constellation of Indigenous peoples and organizations from different regions in Mexico and beyond in the "Caravan for Water and Life: Peoples United against Capitalist Dispossession". From this perspective, the struggle for life and water is a communal and global responsibility. It connects the self to all life across space, back to our ancestors, and forward to our descendants.

Conclusion: Towards the Confluence of Struggles for Life

What does it mean to defend life? How does the confluence of struggles for life help us rethink how our liberation as humans is connected to the liberation of the plurality of life that constitutes the Earth? In 2020, in the context of the COVID global pandemic, the Zapatistas decided to close their Caracoles or organizing centers. They also called upon all of us not to abandon our struggles and to find ways to co-resist. In October of that year, the Zapatistas announced they would embark on a planetary crossing for life, noting that this struggle is global. Throughout this journey they learned of mining projects, dams, agro-industries, pipelines, railways, and other infrastructure that destroy life. They showed us a cartography of superimposed extractive projects and how the assemblage of capital expands and moves across space and borders. The Zapatistas urged us to build an Indigenous internationalism that defends life (Durán Matute 2023).

Although Indigenous struggles are place-based, the fight for water and life activates a powerful form of relationality that invites us to consider how we might come together to form a mightier convergence. Confluence practices of bringing different bodies and struggles together involves intentional actions both individual and communal, in order to make something happen. Through these relational practices, our differences can be considered in relation to the fluidity and continuity of life, allowing us to make relatives through different routes and genealogies. Coming together involves paying attention to how the gratuitous colonial capitalist violence of resource extraction affects multiple bodies and places simultaneously and identifying how our struggles may be connected in order to find relational affinity.

Indigenous women have been instrumental in the process of connecting bodies and struggles together. They have not only sustained and cared for these struggles, but through their practices they have also challenged their organizations, communities, families, and non-Indigenous feminists to consider the ways they reproduce relations of domination. The Indigenous feminist practice of bodies coming together, or "acuerpar" in Spanish, involves establishing a reciprocal relationship to support, protect, and stand with others. It is a practice that starts at the individual level but that calls upon the collective to unite our bodies, our collective indignation and experiences, our rage, and our courage to act together, resisting colonial capitalist violence and the multiple layers of oppression (Cabnal 2015). In my view, acuerpar, like confluence, is a political practice can be extended to the more than human world to weave together the multiplicity of bodies and struggles into a mightier confluence that stands from and with the Earth. To defend land, water, and the Earth is to act of knowing how to reciprocate. The very act of coming together with the Earth and all of life destabilizes the colonial binaries that constrict our individualities, corporeality, and current realities while attending to the relational practices that can help us survive a world of drought, fire, and floods while we build a future where we can live otherwise.

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Note

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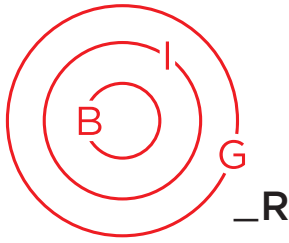
ESSAY

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISMS

SPECIAL SECTION

Fluid Internationalisms: The Ocean as a Source and Forum of Indigenous International Law

Andrew Ambers [i]
Rachel yacaaʔał George [ii]

To rethink 'the international' necessarily enables revisioning where sources of law can be located, how normative paradigms operate in situ, *and which processes foster cultural, political, and legal principles. In grounding this international reorientation in the ocean and ocean thinking, this analysis offers a brief point of entry into the worlds of Indigenous internationalisms from a coastal, oceanic reference of analysis. We underline not only how the ocean is an international law forum for Indigenous internationalisms, but also how they are vibrant spaces that foster connections between kin and generate legal principles through the methodology of reading seascapes. Through this process, what follows is a submerging of particular ideologies of 'the international' and an emerging account of 'the international' that facilitates a dynamic transcendence of thinking and being beyond state-premised borders, international relations, law, and sovereignty. Understanding oceans as Indigenous international law fora, as sources of Indigenous legalities, as physical interpretive legal methodologies, and as the connective structures that foster deep connections within and beyond an Indigenous nation, brings us into a socio-legal geography that suspends restrictive, colonial visions of 'the international' for a vibrant oceanic future. Recognizing and affirming these oceanic connections contributes to reinscribing Indigenous sovereignty at the scales of individuals, nations, and international relations.[1]*

Introduction

Public international law, as it relates to its primary subjects and objectives, is a misnomer. The international legal arena is not concerned with nations, but rather states and the governance of relationships between and among sovereign states as prescribed by international law. For Indigenous people(s), this consideration is often cognizable through a nation's social, political, and legal thought and practice. The conceptualization of the "nation" being synonymous with the "state" is deeply concerning from an Indigenous legal, political, and cultural perspective. The two do not neatly map onto one another, and while the former hypothetically can, among other equivalents in its class, encompass or constitutively

create the latter, the same cannot be said upon a reversal in logical flow. Here, we consider these overlapping, contradicting, and counter-claiming geographies of 'the international' to recognize how oceans are perpetually constituting law and are constituted by Indigenous law, whereby these currents render the ocean as an international subject and where these currents themselves are Indigenous international law fora. Legal reasoning by aquatic analogy is the primary referent of analysis to bring us closer to the intellectual, legal, and physical nature of the sea. Not only does this approach rupture state-centric conceptions of jurisdiction, governance, and law, but it also brings forms of Indigenous reasoning into

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the frame through reading seascapes. This necessarily asks us to reconstitute 'the international' and consider how the ways we decide to trace the cartographic and intellectual boundaries pertaining to international law will either reflect colonial ideological foundations or (re)constitute a past and future based upon Indigenous knowledges, ethics, and ways of social ordering that establish the vibrant patterns of Indigenous life.

The Internationality of Oceans: A State-based Perspective

From a state-centric grounding, one might refer to the ocean as a space of jurisdiction and ownership that is subject to the domestic law of the state whose land territory immediately runs along oceanward spaces and that becomes subject to international law at the point a state's (or multiple states') jurisdiction transitions into decreasingly sovereign waters until becoming international waters. Domesticated oceans are necessarily affixed to a state's land territories which become subsumed by jurisdictional acquisition into a state paradigm of sovereignty and are therefore presupposed as an extension of the territoriality of states to confer analogous exclusive territorial rights in 'territorial waters'. This means that oceans are positioned as a space normatively beyond and outside of state sovereignty with the exception of when state sovereign power can be exerted *from* the referent of lands *into* waters, rendering seas as spaces 'out there' beyond cardinal statehood. In this view, the ocean is situated among a statist imaginary that is culturally affixed to a particular object-oriented paradigm that recognizes the ocean as a series of constituent parts that are bound by definable state jurisdictional borders to govern and exploit sea resources, confer ownership rights that permit the exploration and capturing of the energies of the sea, and confined by the physical severing of aquatic spaces. Physical severing within ocean spaces includes the vertical processes in which waterbeds and waters are legally distinct, divided and severed from one another. Water, being physically transitory, is referentially or incidentally contained by horizontal severing via bordering of submerged lands that confer jurisdictional rights upward into ocean waters to states, international authorities, and/or the world at large.

Upon these factors, which depend upon the spatial position within various horizontal oceanic gradients of authority in state and international law, the sea is rendered an object most beneficial to be leveraged to secure more expansive jurisdictional and economic rights to benefit from the exploitation of the ocean. Through this particular, yet common and dominant statist lens, the sea is cognizable through this narrow and unsustainable understanding, and relationships that function beyond this state paradigm operate at a register that is indiscernible as international but apolitical or under the guise of (un)sanctioned action by a member of the state

in question. The ocean becomes international by virtue of the convergence of state legal systems, interests, and jurisdictions that perpetually encounter each other, in addition to the international law system establishing and enforcing standards within its competent spaces of authority particularly beyond states' domestic waters, but also within maritime zones where states hold varying degrees of authority, rights, and sovereignty. This view is certainly not the full picture of the ocean and to assume or suggest that this is *the* normative landscape of ocean law and governance would be erroneous and certainly contrary to a good life for generations of humans and more-than-humans before us, among us, and those to come. When we begin to rupture the standard units of 'the cognizable' from a state law perspective, we situate ourselves in a network of kinship ties and interconnections that transcend state borders and are embedded within Indigenous internationalisms.

The Internationality of Oceans: A Coastal Indigenous Perspective

From our perspective, the ocean is a source of life, space for healing, and a subject that requires individuals and collectives to be in continual relationship within all (in) actions. What connects us, as coastal Indigenous citizens, to an expansive world of vibrant Indigenous maritime cultures is the water and especially the ocean. The authoritative waves, the tides of knowledge, and the seas of intellectual guidance are all indicative of how deriving meaning and legal principles from reading, being with, and looking to and from the socio-physical space of the ocean is real, compelling, and possible. The ocean, then, becomes more than a physical or geographic space and emerges as an analytical, intellectual, and critical space of and for engagement. Oceans become legal through the vigorous interpretative processes they offer through the continual movement of their authorities and the knowledge that radiates thereof. By way of example, witnessing the strength of the ocean is not a passive act but an active one that can generate legal norms and rules and also the juridical interpretive processes to apply these very laws. The ocean, therefore, becomes a constitutive thread in a broader legal fabric from which fluid legal reasoning and aquatic analogies are nurtured, maintained, and reaffirmed. To grasp the robust social and legal significance, however, particular orientations of thought and practice in how law, international relations, and sovereignty operate ought to be suspended and submerged.

Not dissimilar to rethinking how law and sources of legal authority must be repositioned, so too the theory and practice of international relations. Oceans become international in ways that might not be initially deemed international in a state-based way of thinking. Travel across seas has been integral to the interconnection and international relations between Indigenous nations, a watery transportation passage for kinship, commerce,

and connection. From this, along with the legal and interpretive processes discussed above, it is clear that oceans are not definable by artificial state boundaries, their beds and water are not simply severable and rendered legally distinct, nor are they reducible to their materiality as measured by their potential output of resources that may be exploited. Rather, oceans are healing spaces that have been and continue to be in relationship with Indigenous people(s), commanding deep and enduring respect across generations. They provide avenues for travel to engage in Indigenous inter-nationalisms, to affirm familial and national identities, and to remain nested within the knowledge developed on and by seascapes. Presence with oceans, including their currents and knowledges, reminds us that these pathways of interconnection are not new but built upon enduring international relations by the generations that come before each of us as coastal Indigenous citizens. Engagement with waters, including oceanic knowledge that emerges from the sea, brings to the fore the ways internationalisms emerge from waters both in their physical and intellectual embodiments. Oceans may be seen as becoming international for their interconnec-tions they foster and also the genealogical and historical relationships that previous Indigenous communities nurtured and upheld.

To witness Indigenous internationalism in practice across the ocean, we only need to look so far as the annual Tribal Canoe Journey which takes place along the Pacific Northwest Coast. In 1989, Indigenous nations participated in the Paddle to Seattle, coordinated by Emmett Oliver (Quinault), during the state of Washington's centennial celebration in order to bring recognition of the vibrant maritime culture of coastal Indigenous nations. While in attendance, Frank Brown (Heiltsuk), who had carved a dugout canoe that was paddled to Expo '86 in Vancouver to honour the original transportation of coastal Indigenous nations, issued an invitation for nations to paddle to Bella Bella, British Columbia in 1993 for ʼQátuw̓as (People Gathering Together). Paddlers from 30 nations embarked on this journey to join a gathering of thousands in a celebration of the resurgence of culture and the honouring of our kinship relations within and across nations. Over time, Tribal Journeys has become an almost yearly paddle wherein Indigenous nations travel expansive distances across the seas, gathering together with other coastal communities to (re)kindle vital relationships interpersonally and with our more-than-human relations. Engagement with the ocean in this way calls on us to consider the responsibilities we maintain within these webs of kinship, how we might practice diplomatic and healthy relations, and how respect is fostered through these various intricate layers.

Several weeks in July and August are marked by a multiplicity of acts of Indigenous international relations. As nations depart from their shores, they are reconnecting to the ancient traditions of their ancestors who travelled by canoe generations before. Vital acts of governance were and are still carried out by canoe. This (re)connection with our traditional practices embodies the resurgence of our nations, the continual practice of our self-determination, and the exploration of sovereign protocols across nations. Coastal nations have frequently expressed the intimate connection they maintain with the ocean. Through Tribal Journeys, this vital relationship becomes centered once again as the ocean is upheld as a holder of knowledge, a caretaker of a multitude of relations encompassed within, on, and near its waters and as a path of travel drawing us into relations across vibrant waters. While there is a tendency within state-based discourses to understand relationships as solely interpersonal, Tribal Journeys emphasizes not only the interpersonal relations internal and external to our individual nations but also the foundational and lively relations we maintain with the more-than-human world. At every host nation along the way to their predetermined final destination, Indigenous nations honour the protocol necessary to maintain relations with self-determining nations by asking permission to come ashore and permission to leave. We honour and renew our relationship with the ocean as we paddle and practice ethics of care for the ocean and all life contained within its waters from the depths of the sea to the seascapes that we travel on. We engage in diplomatic practices aimed at renewing and rekindling relations with our relatives across nations such as through sharing meals, stories, songs, and dances. These processes emphasize interconnection through a multiplicity of relations necessary for our survival. Indigenous self-determination is deeply woven within these spaces.

Across these weeks, Indigenous nations traverse the jurisdictional boundaries of other nations, both those legible to state-centered discourses and those illegible. Dipping our paddles into the water, we slip across geographic boundaries that have been tied to state borders, but which do not match Indigenous conceptions of or adherence to territorial jurisdictions that are bound to the intimate relations we have maintained with our homelands/waters for as long as memory serves. Our acts of resurgence through Tribal Journeys not only affirm our continued cultural (re)production, but also a complex adherence to the protocols entwined with maintaining relations between distinct nations. These acts rupture state-centric conceptions of jurisdiction, governance, and law that have sought to force conceptions of the nation to become synonymous with settler colonial sovereignty and statehood.

By now it is clear that this understanding of the ocean, similar to the state-centric view, understands the ocean as international, but perhaps unsurprisingly on different grounds. Oceans are not international for the simple, but subjective and objectionable, position that they are governed under state law that, by its existence, excludes other states, nor are they international for

being objects of international law. Oceans are international for, *inter alia*, the connective forces they foster *within* and *between* Indigenous nations. The distinction in internationalisms between internal to and between communities is notable because it moves beyond state-centric international relations. This is the case because internationalisms often focus not only on the external or outward-facing dimensions that are readily cognizable within the field of international relations, but also the deeply personal, inward-facing dimension of Indigenous international relations that are rendered purely personal or apolitical from a state-based positioning (Corntassel et al. forthcoming; see also Brown et al. 2021; George & Wiebe 2020). This means that there is a distinctive understanding of international law, that being *Indigenous* international law. This species of international law is concerned with the relationships that govern and are governed by Indigenous nations within and among other Indigenous nations, states, members of nations or states, and with a multiplicity of interconnected relations across the vibrant international fora of oceans, lands, and beyond. This is not a nascent emergence of international law but one that particularly lacks attention affixed to a cultural, political, and legal grounding. Indigenous international relations and therefore Indigenous international law must have always existed. To borrow Saulteau law scholar Val Napoleon's contention: if we were to accept that Indigenous people(s) do not have law, which by reasonable extension includes Indigenous international law, it would necessarily mean that Indigenous societies are lawless (Miller 2021, 16:30; Napoleon 2019, 16). To suggest that Indigenous people(s) live absent of legal order within nations and also between nations would be grossly ahistorical, unsubstantiated, and erroneous.

When situated within the ocean, we become situated in a genealogy of relations that stretches back generations and connects us to a future chain of relationships going forward. Enacting diplomacies on the shores, engaging in Indigenous international trade and commerce through oceanic transportation routes, or creating and finding meaning while being on the ocean such as through Tribal Journeys links us to the international relations of the past and foregrounds ethical relationships of the future. Being with water reinforces these internationalist currents of oceans that transcend state borders and the international relations theories of today. Water, in this sense, quite literally can be considered the connective tissue that shapes authority and meaning in relations among kin internal and external to a sovereign political community. Analogous to the process of looking at case law, statutes, and international law treaties to discern legal principles and values, we can, do, and should also turn to the ocean to find and create social meaning, legal principles, legal rules, and normative orders from a coastal Indigenous law perspective. An interpretive method of reading seascapes is one way to sit within the knowledge that is expressed by the ocean, and recursively interpreted and expressed by Indigenous

people(s) through the knowledge of or developed with the sea. Following this legal and ethical thread, we begin to see that the ocean is not simply an object under international law but is an active participant in and forum for Indigenous international law that connects Indigenous nations and contributes to a growing Indigenous international legal fabric. This not only empowers Indigenous individuals and nations but also works toward an international legal analytic that can offer a more ethical approach to affirm Indigenous/Aboriginal rights in matters that would otherwise be restricted to the cultures of state and international law.

The Political and Legal Significance of Indigenous International Law

Indigenous nations' social, political, and legal practices have rigorous processes from theorization and development to application and adaptation. The recognition and affirmation of Indigenous nations as sovereign political units is not nascent. The fields of international relations, international law, and diplomacy studies, however, have not seriously grappled with Indigenous nations' own relationships with nations and states as forms of international law: *Indigenous international law*. These scholarly thresholds act as borders themselves, adjudicating what constitutes as being internal to the standard units of the domestic and a function of diplomacy. The extent of recognition regarding Indigenous people(s) and international relations reaches the threshold of participating in existing international venues and processes, such as the United Nations and international treaties. Recognizing and affirming Indigenous peoples' involvement in international political and legal venues is important but only paints a partial picture. Upholding the authority of Indigenous internationalism, which is deeply intertwined and associated with Indigenous international law, is a vital progression in honoring the sovereignty of Indigenous nations across the globe and indeed the very connections that Indigenous diplomats have forged for as long as memory serves. This process necessarily binds us to a reconsideration of the singular and associated meanings of international, law, sovereignty, and diplomacy. From where legal repositories and expressions live to how diplomacy and international legal ethics develop, a turn toward and viewpoint from Indigenous international law will transform how treaty diplomacies, border politics, ecological borders and trade will be interpreted, enacted, and honored as international relations in a function of international law. The vibrant bodies Indigenous international law offer rigorous pathways to address gender inequities and international relations; to govern sovereignty of individuals, nations, and states; to restore conflicts across the cross-cutting, conflicting, and overlapping geographies of 'the international'; and to create pathways for alternative Indigenous rights processes that honour Indigenous legal orders.

Conclusion

Oceans are not simply a mix of material and jurisdictional rights that, when partnered, confer exclusive and overarching powers to a particular sovereign political unit, but they are in and of themselves sources of law, regulation, and order depending on the legal interpretive frameworks deployed. This analysis suggests that the ocean has important international dimensions to deeply think about, including with respect to international fora, international histories, and international connections. The ocean can be seen as one important source of law, but so too are all relational dimensions of Indigenous life that will likely have international dimensions that express Indigenous international law, ethics, and guidelines for diplomacy. Rekindling the relationships that flow between the personal and every day with the international will reinforce the responsibilities we have as Indigenous citizens with one another and also the obligations that states and their citizens have regarding Indigenous law. Reimagining 'the international' and continuing to uplift Indigenous internationalism will foster meaningful relations across crosscutting, overlapping, and disparate collectives, geographies, and epochs for a brighter internationalist future.

Note

1 This essay is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 7–53.

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Galadzi (Bear)

Francis Dick
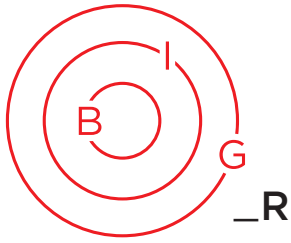
ARTWORK

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISMS

SPECIAL SECTION

Artist Statement

When I designed this print, I was living in the Kootenays, feeling so far and lonesome from my family and my home. To make matters worse, I was preparing to travel even farther away as I was invited to the United Arab Emirates for three and a half weeks to accompany 28 other women artists from around the world.

We were to spend 10 days exhibiting work from our homelands together. This painting I did before leaving for my trip. I thought about one summer, long before I moved to Victoria, when I took a summer job with two other community members working with three archaeologists at the original village site of the Nimpkish River. We spent five days at our site working throughout the day and then boating back to Alert Bay for the weekends.

We did this for two glorious months. It was amazing to live by the river, hearing and seeing the Nimpkish sockeye returning. The energy at the old village site was very much alive. We would hear voices of children playing and conversations in our language while in a half-sleep during a noon nap. At night, to protect our makeshift kitchen from the bears, we created an alarm of hanging pots and pans to alert us to our visitors. Noises and voices of passengers in a canoe that wasn't there echoed in the night. The experience was unforgettable. Of the many experiences I have had throughout my life thus far, this was the experience I thought about the most while in the Kootenays. How I longed to be back home.

This painting is representative of that time in my life. The spirit of the ancestors are depicted in the painting of the bear, the great bear, and the salmon that returns to the river Gwani (Nimpkish River). This print honours that time, that place, and the people with whom I shared this extraordinary experience with.

About the Artist

Born in 1959 into the musqamakw Dzawadaenutw Band of Kingcome Inlet, Francis is a member of the Kwakwaka'wakw Nation. Though she moved away to Victoria as a young adult, she has always maintained her ties to this village, and returned there in 1990-1992 to work as a social worker. After getting her Bachelor of Social Work from UVic. After two years of work, she moved back to Victoria and began to create art for a living. Over a decade later, her home is still paramount to her identity as an aboriginal woman and as a contemporary artist.

Her family is descended from the supernatural Wolf, Kawadelekala who became first of the Kingcome people. The image of this mythical being is prominent in much of Francis' art, acknowledging her contemporary ties to her cultural past. Francis says that "before anything else my work is about honouring my life process, my journey, through my fire, from places of pain and darkness to places that I might stand in my truth; my work is not a career, it is a way of life." This personal journey is reflected in her art, which is a product of her own emotional, spiritual and cultural awakening from her troubled past. Both Native and non-Native audiences have viewed Francis Dick's art as representative of human ability to overcome seemingly insurmountable challenges through journeys of self-discovery.

Although her primary forms of artistic expression have always been through her paintings, prints, and singing, she also works with gold and silver and does some work with wood. She is also an integral member of the artistic community: she offers drum-making workshops and is frequently requested to speak for various community organizations, women's groups, and university classes. In the last decades she has exhibited in dozens of shows including Urban Thunderbirds, Ravens in a Material World in 2014 at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and her work is a part of many private and public collections in Canada.
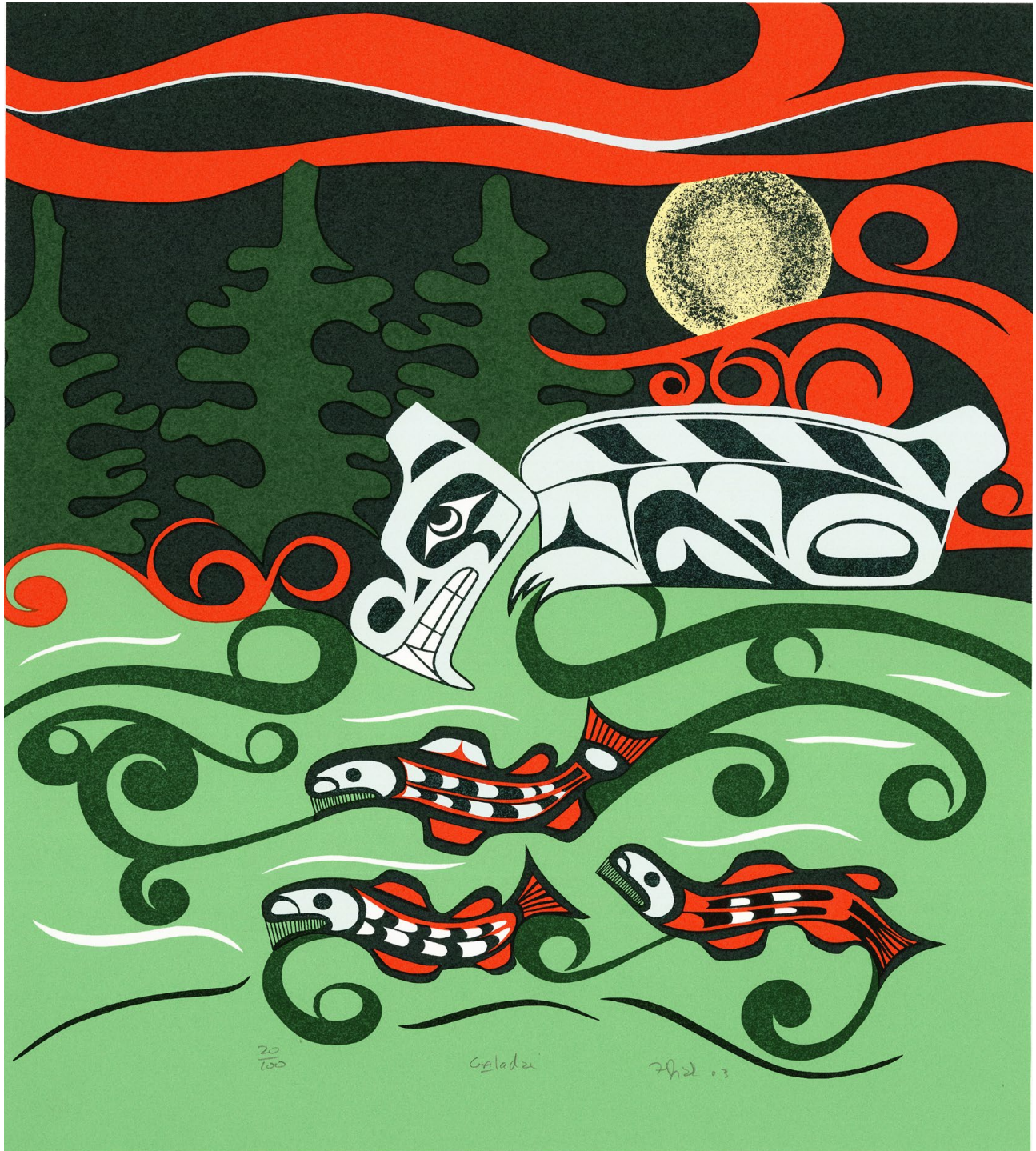
"Galadzi (Bear)" Serigraph. Copyright © Francis Dick 2003 (featured on cover)

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INTERVIEW

INDIGENOUS
INTERNATIONALISMS
SPECIAL SECTION

An Interview with Tiffany Joseph: Land and Water Stewardship in a Time of Crisis

Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel *

On November 3rd, 2023, Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel spoke with Tiffany Joseph. Tiffany is of Sḵx̱wu7mesh and W̱SÁNEĆ ancestry. She currently coordinates the Rematriate Stewardship project with the XAXE TEṈEW̱ Sacred Land Society. She describes herself as being "drawn to work that promotes wellness of our minds, bodies, and the environment in which we live, because the wellbeing of the land and the people is intertwined" (visit her website for more). The following conversation covers pollinators, extractivism, Palestine, and what it takes to show up for land and water defense.[1]

Jeff Corntassel: I'm here with Tiffany Joseph. We're here at W̱SÁNEĆ territory, and it's November 3rd in the afternoon.

Huy ch q'u Tiffany for taking part in this. I'll start out with asking you if you want to introduce yourself.

Tiffany Joseph: My name's Tiffany Joseph. I'm W̱SÁNEĆ, Sḵx̱wu7mesh, and Quw'utsun. My children are Cash, Nathan, and Calle Joseph-Sampson. I introduce their ninaṁin (Sḵx̱wu7mesh nickname) which are Esch'ech'ewat-tay, Nekilus, and Ayasnitat.

I'm from the Underwood Family family here in W̱SÁNEĆ, the Joseph family in Sḵx̱wu7mesh, and the Thorne family in Quw'utsun. My mother's mother is from Quw'utsun, and if you trace back further through my matrilineal line, going back even a few more generations, we're still here on the island up to Snuneymuxw. I grew up speaking Sḵx̱wu7mesh from preschool up until my early twenties, and then I started speaking SENĆOŦEN in 2015, so it's been 13—or wait—8 years—since I started learning SENĆOŦEN. And that's primarily the language I introduce myself in.

Jeff: Wonderful. Huy ch q'u for that. I still remember what you told our class, about how critical self locations are the passport to the territory. So sharing who you are, and your family, and where you come from is a way to make connections—possible connections—with people. And [a way to] to get permission to enter the territory. I quote you often, so Huy ch q'u for that.

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So, this first special issue is on Indigenous land and water defenders. And I'll start with the broader question: what does land and water protection look like for you? What does it entail?

Tiffany: Yes. So, being of Skx̱wu7mesh ancestry, we're freshwater people, and that's because we have mountains—like Grouse Mountain, Whistler Mountain, Mount Seymour—all within our territories, and they have these glaciers. We have the Capilano river, the Skx̱wu7mesh river, and other rivers within our territory and that's why that defines us. Those bodies of water define who we are, our territory, our responsibilities. And then, as W̱SÁNEĆ people, we're saltwater people, and that's because we spend just as much time in the sea as we did on the land, because we had villages throughout the Southern Gulf Island and the San Juan islands that we would travel to frequently for harvesting, for camping. [There] would even be seasonal summer villages on the islands. The [Saanich] peninsula was usually our winter village.

And so we have relatives—like salmon is a primary example, not just for Coast Salish people, but most of BC, because those salmon swim up the freshwater of the Skx̱wu7mesh territory and then they move to the next territory and to the next, right. It goes all the way into the interior of BC. Everyone has survived off salmon. We are just the first points of contact where the sea meets the freshwater, right. So, there's not just a responsibility to these bodies of water, but an identity with them. As W̱SÁNEĆ people, one of our first ancestors was the rain itself. So, to be W̱SÁNEĆ means I'm a descendant of the rain.

But the salmon—the creeks and the riverbeds are their nurseries. It's where they lay their eggs. It's also where they come to die. They call it the salmon spawn. Salmon, they come to lay their eggs and spawn, but shortly after they spawn, they die. So salmon are born within waters on the land, essentially, and then they go out into the sea. And W̱SÁNEĆ people actually go and fish out on the sea, that makes us unique compared to the rest of the Salish people who fish out on the rivers. So, we had reef nets, and that's a sacred gift from our creator. And so, to be a steward of the land and the waters means to identify with the water itself, whether it's fresh or saltwater. I have a joke where I say "I'm brackish water," because brackish water is salt and freshwater mixed.

But, with that knowing of identifying with the water, [we] essentially identify with these watersheds. Most watersheds are places that we have a responsibility for and, when I was growing up, I was always told that language comes from the land. Once I grew up, I was also thinking about—I'm like, well, colonizers are obsessed with land.

Jeff: Yes.

Tiffany: Therefore, that patriarchal lens that comes from colonization is gonna shape that concept of language, that language comes from the land. Well, what if it also comes from the waters? And so, throughout time I came to learn that like there's a—I think a spring in Tsawout. And this hydrologist traced the source of where that came from, and it was in the Puget Sound. And those are Coast Salish people, too, so I was like 'We really are connected through water.' It's connecting us in ways that we don't even know.

When you look at a map of the ecosystems—the biogeoclimatic zones—in so-called 'BC,' we are in the Coastal Douglas Fir geoclimatic zone. So 'bio' refers to the most dominant tree species within an area, 'geo' describes the fact that we're in a rain shadow, then 'climatic' is, like, how the climate is behaved.

We're in this rare ecosystem as Coast Salish people. It is the drier part of the West Coast, because people think of the West Coast—they call it the "wet coast," they call it the "Northern rainforest," you know. [...] And language—you can see, when you map out these biogeoclimatic zones, the Coast Salish language falls within that Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone.

Jeff: Wow.

Tiffany: And then, if you map out all the different watersheds, you could get more granular [view] of like, okay, why is this part considered this family's responsibility? I haven't done that mapping yet, but it connects just as much as the land does.

So, you can't really separate the land from the water, which is such a challenge as a caretaker because I might work with an organization [that only works] with terrestrial species, they only do terrestrial restoration. I'm like, "But it's for the water...?" [laughs] So in order to help colonizers, and settlers, and uninvited guests to understand why Indigenous land restoration [is] important, why restoration in general [is] important, you—it's unfortunate you have to center the human beings. And you have to be like "Well, these are food." And I feel like that's so—it's so different than our worldview.

But even within a colonial worldview, it's like baby level of development, like: 'This is food. This is why this is valuable to people. Like, don't you see how important this plant is, because it's food to these people, it's medicine to these people. Don't you see it's valuable now?' And I'm like, "You really want me to talk to people that way?" Because that's what I see settler organizations doing. [It's] how they talk to other settlers. And I'm like: "If that is how you work, and if you find it's effective, that is how you're

going to do things." For me, I don't work with these plants as food and medicine often. I'll pick berries, but I'll only pick what I'm going to eat. I'll literally only harvest what I eat in that spot right there.

Jeff: Right there.

Tiffany: That's the level that I'll pick. But I restore, because I feel like there's not enough, [and I] still I want other people to have enough. And maybe that's because we come from a gifting society where to be a respected person, you have to care for others. At the very least that's been imparted upon me: that, to be a good relative, you make sure other people are taken care of first. So, I don't want to be the one harvesting; I want to make sure that when my people harvest, we feel like we have enough.

But, going back to how I teach, I'm aware that I don't really have good feeling when I think of harvesting. I think 'How can I take when I know there's not enough? I need to make more.'

I feel good when I feel like I'm making more space for Indigenous plants and foods to exist, like, I'm taking out these invasive plants that are changing the soil so that only they can grow, I'm taking out these plants that take up so much space that they shade out everything else, and I'm letting everything else come to life. [There are] so many invasive blackberries—if I could cut them all down, how many native plants are going to come through on their own, without even the addition of planting? How many plants come through just by having light? That's very rewarding. Even if I just did a little bit, it does so much. That's why I do restoration.

When I teach others about the land—the water, restoration, being a caretaker—really what I just teach them is about good thoughts and feelings—ÍY, ŚKÁLEĆENS in SENĆOŦEN, ha7lh skwalwen in Skw̱xwu7mesh. I learned that from my grandma. The way she taught me that is she [said to me and my sisters] "Do you girls know the rule when you're cooking? You always have to have good thoughts and feelings when you cook food, because if you have anger or other challenging emotions, you'll be poisoning the food, but if you have good thoughts and feelings, you're putting medicine into the food." She's like "It doesn't matter what it is, if you put your good thoughts and feelings into your work, you make that food medicine." [...] That's whether you're a teacher, an artist, a singer—anything we do in life we should be having those good thoughts and feelings.

A core teaching for Coast Salish people [is] that when you bring a human being into the world you're here to nurture them and allow them to—I guess you could say 'self-actualize'—know who they are,

and know that they're here to serve a purpose, and [that] it's their right and responsibility to do so. So, you teach them how to do that in a good way, with good thoughts and feelings so that they're always bringing medicine into the world. [...] Everyone has their own purpose, and you can never impose your own will onto your child. You're here to hold space for them, so they can know within themselves what they're here to do.

Jeff: Beautiful. Well, you've already answered my next question.

(Both laugh)

Jeff: Maybe I'll shift a little bit to something you've talked a lot about in the past: pollinators, and the ways we often take some of these things for granted. We don't pay attention to the bee nations—even the plant nations, for that matter. Is there anything you want to share in terms of how to honour those contributions to land and water defense?

Tiffany: Yeah, I find that like there's—there's social justice movements that are about the well-being of people, [and] how people deserve to be treated with dignity. [...] That's very valid, but then it tends to be separate from the land, [and] tends to be separate from the environment, 'cause when I see an injustice happening to a whole ethnicity within their own homelands, I see 'those are caretakers of the land who are being at risk of being lost from the face of this earth,' and I can't take care of their land the way they can. I could never live in their biogeoclimatic zone. It's way too hot, it's way too dry, and even those foods might have too strong of a flavour [for me]. [...] But we all have a responsibility to care for the land, so that's an additional reason why we should all be in solidarity with one another and each other's well-being.

Jeff: Absolutely.

Tiffany: So many people are passionate about pollinators, and [that] became more predominant when people had a fear that we wouldn't have enough pollinators to pollinate the foods that we eat, because bees were dying. But when you look closer at [which] bees were dying, it's honeybees [that] were dying. Honeybees are not Indigenous to Turtle Island; they're from Europe, Asia, Africa, all these other continents. The actual Indigenous bees of Turtle Island are solitary bees. And I was like, wow, Indigenous bees are the ones that are actually threatened. Will people ever care about solitary bees, because they don't produce honey?

Again, it comes back to—this is like a food system way of thinking, where it's like 'that bee is valuable because it makes honey for me.' That bee is valuable

because we can 'keep' them, right? You keep honeybees and then you can bring them wherever you want to pollinate these different food systems.

Essentially honeybees are the same as cattle, or pigs, or chicken: they're just an industrialized animal. And it's heartbreaking when you think about it—just like when you think about chickens in cages, and you think about cows going to an unsacred slaughter.

So, a lot of people won't care, but at the same time you can't be too concerned about people not caring enough. I have to focus on how much I care, and I have to deepen that love and that sacred relationship. And it didn't take long, it just took a moment really, but even undoing this idea of like the use and the value of bees, right—they're not meant to be used at all.

Solitary bees only pollinate fifty to one hundred meters from their nest, whereas a honeybee can pollinate miles away from its beehive. So Indigenous bees—they stay close to home. Really close to home. And I see a respect there, right, like you only take what you need, and you know what's yours and what you're here to care for.

Also, many Indigenous bees won't pollinate plants that aren't Indigenous, because bees see differently than [us]. When you talk about pollinators people like to say "Oh, plant yellow flowers because pollinators like yellow flowers"—they don't see yellow the way we see yellow! Perhaps [that's] founded on an observation that seems true, but we don't know that they're looking at colours. But, we do know that Indigenous pollinators often don't pollinate non-Indigenous plants, so we need to plant Indigenous plants for Indigenous pollinators, because without those Indigenous plants you won't have Indigenous bees.

Jeff: Right. Wow.

Tiffany: But also, if you don't plant Indigenous plants, you don't have Indigenous people. So, a lot of people who care about nature, they can look at the correlation between Indigenous bees and Indigenous plants and they can devote their life to that. But they can live their whole life that way and think that Indigenous people don't matter. People can see that Indigenous people matter, but they might not see the value of the land itself. So, we have to educate [on] both those things. I don't know why—in my mind, how can any of that be separate? How can we separate people from nature; we are nature.

Jeff: That's amazing, yes. I never thought of bees as extractive, and I say that as I gave you a big tub of honey today as a gift. And (inaudible) pollinated

blackberries so it's appropriate to our conversation today, and it's a good lesson, really, to think about does that compartmentalization (inaudible). And also that extractive mentality: the bees are working for me to produce something for me that I can take, versus they're working for the ecosystem, or they're working for the people to promote health and well-being. So, compartmentalization is our enemy, I think, in this conversation.

Tiffany: We wouldn't have camas without solitary bees. We wouldn't have solitary bees without camas. We wouldn't have camus without W̱SÁNEĆ people. If camas is wiped out, we're wiped out. We might exist as human beings, but we're no longer who we would be with camas in the world, because it's our food staple from the land, in terms of a plant. Many Coast Salish nations within this transnational biogeoclimatic zone did controlled burns to maintain what is colonially known as a "Garry Oak" or "Prairie Oak" Ecosystem. If Coast Salish ancestors didn't do burns for thousands of years, the meadows would have been encroached upon by conifers such as firs and cedars

We [often] feel helpless in this world because of the harm being committed to the land—to the whole world—because of extractivism and climate change. We're in a place that could potentially be very climate-change resilient because it's a drought-tolerant ecosystem—at least in terms of the camas, and other plants within the Garry Oak ecosystem [within the] Coastal Douglas Fir biogeoclimatic zone.

And I'm like 'If I just focus my life on that, is that going to make a big enough change in the world?' I can never really know. But I know for sure it's my responsibility to devote my life to the lands of my ancestors. And if I fulfill my purpose to care for this land, maybe it's going to ripple out.

Not only by caring for my land am I making visible differences, I'm also being asked to educate people. I try to limit that because it is draining, but it also can be inspiring. I feel like I've made change, where things that I've said come back to me—I go to a conference and somebody's saying something that I said. Like the term "colonially known as"—I started saying that, it was on my website for a food thing that I was doing. Months later, people started saying that. I'm like, 'I guess I'll start saying this,' and people picked it up.

Jeff: So interesting.

Tiffany: Same with the term 'homeplace.' I started saying that, [then] I started seeing people saying that. [...] The reason I say that is because, again, that idea like homeland—land and water—nobody talks about the

water very much. Like, as saltwater people that's our identity, as freshwater people that's our identity, but we always talk about land. But you can't separate them, so it's just like 'ah, I'll just stick to homeland.' But we can say 'homeplace' because that's a literal translation of ÁLEṈEṈEȻ, which is territory.

Jeff: I'll remember that. What are some everyday ways that you honour those relationships to the lands and waters, and offer them protection or offer that stewardship, if you will?

Tiffany: Well, doing the talks that I do, teaching in classes—like UVic classes, like the Indigenous studies class —teaching with Leigh Joseph, [who is] my cousin from my Sḵwx̱wu7mesh side. I've been teaching with her for years, in her course.

Speaking when I'm asked—not every time I'm asked, because then I would only ever be speaking!

I'm doing my best to come back to something that is led by me personally, rather than supporting other people's work. I know that that's impactful and positive, [...] but I'd ideally like people to come and learn something I'm already doing, because then I know that I'm putting my energy into something that I truly one hundred percent believe in.

For me to one hundred percent believe in something it is caring for the land, but also caring for my people. 'Cause the one downside that I've experienced in caring for the land is that I haven't been able to incorporate caring for my people.

I think, also, it's important for me to say that I introduce myself and my family in terms of that identity, which is the deepest part of, like—it's almost the totality of who I am, in terms of family and nations, but also I'm Indigiqueer, [which] could also be known as two-spirit. I don't usually use that term, but I use it to help people understand that I'm Indigenous and queer. I use it often because for some people that specifically means to them [that] it's a gender-related thing, that they're not male or female—they're two-spirit. I also don't tend to use it because I think that [it] reinforces a binary, which I don't think reflects my people's worldview. So, I like the term 'plural-spirit' because of recognizing more than two, but I am accepting of two-spirit, as well.

Also, I have ADHD and I've done an assessment for autism, and traits I have reflect autism. So, I'm a neurodivergent person, and with that I find lots of gifts. But there's challenges where I can burn out easily compared to other people, or I hyper-focus when it comes to helping somebody heal. It's like I'll hyper-focus on them, and that's why I don't have enough energy for the land. So being able to help lots of people heal, as opposed to just one, because

we need a community. We all need to be healing together, and we'll get there together faster than if we did apart.

Jeff: Yeah, absolutely. I think—and you started off with an introduction and supplication, if you will, and I'm sure you get this question a lot: what protocol should I be aware of when visiting this territory? I don't know how you want to respond to that, but does it come up a lot, and do people honour what you tell them, or what you share with them?

Tiffany: The protocol of introducing yourself is just being transparent, essentially like 'I'm a guest here' and 'I'm an uninvited guest here.' When you introduce your parents—for example, when I introduce my parents and grandparents—it's like: how do you feel when you introduce your parents? Does that make you uncomfortable?

We emphasize doing things in person. One reason is what do we read, 'cause as human beings we can pick up when somebody feels disgust, arrogance, shame, pride, when—whether they're being humble, or what have you. We pick up on those things subconsciously.

Also, I often ask "Have you looked at yourself?" That's a lot of what I advocate for people to do. Now we're beyond that point; people need to take action towards these issues in terms of the environment and climate change, in terms of racial prejudices, and Land Back for us specifically. We're past the point where people can do their healing through self-reflection so that they're not committing colonial white oppressive harms to our people. We just have to get it together. But, being able to see if somebody actually feels comfortable in their body—you're not a safe person if you don't feel a certain level of comfort in your body.

There's also the fact, like, 'why are you here?' When you introduce yourself, you state what you're here to do.

Too often people have an agenda. They have their own intentions and projects that they want my or my community's input on. People need to come to community ready to support what's already going on and being led by that community. On occasion, however, people show up and have work or a project that aligns with plans an individual or community already wanted to get in the works, and joining an outsider's project might be fortuitous and they have the capacity, resources, and also respectful ways of relating that make it a good fit, We're in a time where we have to act now. It's unfortunate—it feels like the relationship-building part is being lost, but that's the reality of a climate crisis, we don't have a lot of luxuries of time that we used to have, and that means when we did have those luxuries, people used

it to their own benefit rather than valuing relationship building and collaboration. [...]

That's why ideally things happen in person, because you can feel deeper than a people's good intentions, you can feel like: 'Are you actually ready to do this work that you're asking me to be a part of with you?'

So ideally people will be taking time now and, moving forward, when they come to our communities [they'll be] willing to show up and support the community's work and build relationships. Recognize that yeah, you want Indigenous leadership, but you're probably not ready. You want to do the right thing, but you actually don't know how. But at least here is a place you can learn to do that, or at least here you can be a part of this thing you say you want. If you want to be part of an Indigenous-led project, we'll provide that, and if you genuinely want that then you're already getting what you want. Does that make sense?

Jeff: Yes.

Tiffany: This is an Indigenous-led work, by showing up you're a part of that, and that's what you said your intention is so: done!

Jeff: There you go. It's full accountability—immediate accountability—really.

Tiffany: Yeah. Because a lot of what people do, they extract us. Like 'I have this thing going on over here, you do that, I get to have this on my resume, I get to have this on my website, get to have this in my bio. [...]

Jeff: And using you to leverage their own salary increase or marketability. Yeah, it's outrageous. And yet it happens a lot, I think in academia as well. It helps build people's names.

Tiffany: Yeah. Mostly academia and non-profits.

Jeff: Yeah. You've answered a lot of these questions already, so I'll go back to what do you think is crucial for ensuring that our future generations thrive? And I think about that a lot, that's why I ask it. What is it that I want my daughter to know? But also her kid, our relatives, the plants, the waters themselves—what needs to happen so that they thrive? Also (inaudible) that you were talking about earlier.

Tiffany: Mhm. I have to like provide a little bit of context about what's going on right now.

Jeff: Sure.

Tiffany: It's November 3rd, 2023. People have started waking up to the genocide of Palestinians on October 7th. So not even a whole month. But this has been going on for decades, and I started learning about it maybe eight years ago. So, in the grand scheme, I'm still kind of new to this, but compared to people who just woke up to this a month ago I'm not new to this.

I've been sitting with this sadness that the colonization that came to my people in the 1800s basically only landed on the Palestinians in the early 1900's—[that's] like when it started, but the real Nakba in the 40's after World War II—like, that's so recent, and yet it's happening so fast.

They've been being killed so violently and quickly, and their land stolen so fast compared to us, and it's painful what happened to us, and it's horrible and it's genocide. People invalidate that because the ongoing genocide isn't happening so fast. It's a slow torture and erasure of genocide that we experience as Indigenous people of Turtle Island. And then, Palestinians are going through it and people are denying it's genocide, because it's people who previously survived genocide who are committing this genocide, but it's not all Jewish people committing this genocide—it's Israeli Zionists.

[It has] nothing to do with any identity—it's with greed, and a very sick person, very sick people, who want to be able to control the little bit that's left of Palestinian-occupied land. Which is insane to me. They stole like 90, maybe 99% of the land, and they're like 'we need to kill every last one of you so we can get that last little bit'.

That's the context of what I'm about to say. This would've been true 38 years [ago], [on] the day I was born: What we need to do for the future generations is walk out. All of it needs to stop now.

Trudeau has not said anything about a cease fire in Palestine, and yet he's trying to go to mosques to get a photo op. Trudeau is committing genocide to Indigenous people, but he's putting all this money towards IPCA's, and to different programs within different ministries. Yet, is he stopping these pipelines? No, he's now made it the financial fiscal responsibility of Canada. He's not honouring Indigenous people here anymore than he's honouring Palestinians. So, we need to just stop being apart of the system. Not just Indigenous—everyone needs to, because it's not just Indigenous people's lives at risk, it's not just Palestinian lives at risk now. It is us and the world.

And we know—now more than ever—that millions of people don't want a genocide to take place.

We know that I think it's 90% of British Columbians don't want old growth to be logged to death—to extinction. We know there's more of us than them, and yet we are powerless. No, actually, we are more powerful, so we need to stop participating in these

things that give all of these wealthy people power, because we have been giving them our power for far too long. We need to take it back for our children, for our grandchildren, because if we don't, we're losing everything. It's just facts.

Jeff: So that could be seen as land back, and then what I've heard more recently is water back. Is that what that could look like or is that just a part of it?

Tiffany: Yeah it really is—each and every person has autonomy. That is a core teaching of Coast Salish people. Your child, they came to this world for a reason, but because of colonialism, capitalism—it takes away that, and it's like you have to do this form of education, you have to get this form of a degree in education to be able to do the work you want to do. Also, to do the work you want to do there's somebody else to decide if you're ready or not. That's not our way. For your children to be able to grow up in a different way, your child needs to know their autonomy. You also have your autonomy; our children are only going to know that when they see us do that ourselves.

We also need our elders to do that. They're the ones who survived residential school. We have all our pain about that, but they're still here. There's not as many as [those] who have died, but [many are still here]. [...] And what if they stand up? What if they understood, like, this is your land, and people are going to follow you because you're an elder and they look up to you, and you're a leader. I would love that, I would be on the ground crying right now if our elders were like 'we're standing up for Palestine, we're standing up to Trudeau and this bullshit.' I'd be crying with pride with my fist in the air because my elders are standing up for our land and our water, and our children, and our future generations. So yes, it's Land Back, but it really comes back [to]: 'Do you remember that you're sacred?'

Jeff: Yes... The closest I saw—in terms of groups of elders doing that—was in Hawaii, standing against the desecration of Mauna Kea, and they were on the front lines... Huy ch q'u.

Last question: Is there anything we haven't discussed around land or water defense that you think we should talk about?

Tiffany: Well I know there's probably a lot of people who've worked—like non-Indigenous people—who've been stream keepers and things like that. But a lot of them die of cancer, and it's probably because those streams are contaminated. It's literally what they go there to do is remediate something, and they get sick. So, land defense can make you sick. Water defense can make you sick, because those places are contaminated, right. I don't want that to go unnoticed.

I'm not a person who's really been on that ground level in the way a lot of other people [have], whether they're an environmentalist working for an NGO, or a land defender defending against mines or the oil sands. If I was, I'd be sick right now. I have to recognize that to even be healthy is a privilege. To be able to walk out in the streets is a privilege. [...]
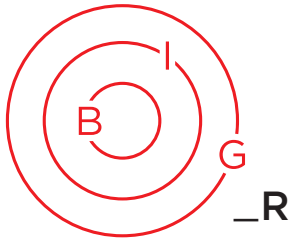
We have so much power even as people who feel powerless. So, land defense, water defense, it can mean walking out of your job and it can mean getting other people to walk out of their job until all of this is dealt with.

Canada owns 75% of mines across the world. Like, they say Britain invaded 80% of the globe: Canada's not far behind, and yet they're the "peaceful" country. Like that's fucking crazy! And that goes back to what we were talking about before we started recording: this polite, gaslighting type of oppression that Canada does. Like 'oh don't bring up conflict, we're peaceful.' That's the antithesis of what peace means. You have to be a part of conflict, you have to face consequences. You have to have those hard conversations. You can't just be like no we're peaceful—you're the problem.

Jeff: Well Huy ch q'u. Huy ch q'u for speaking your truth today, and for sharing this with us, and for all the work you do every day.

Note

1 This interview is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 7–53. The interview has been abridged; the complete interview is available online.

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INTERVIEW

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISMS
SPECIAL SECTION

An Interview with Loreisa Lepine: čisélqən tθə sx̌ənəšəns ə tθə iləkʷsiləŋ ɬtə (Following the Footprints of Our Ancestors)

Hannah Gentes *

On November 6th, 2023, Hannah Gentes spoke with čésəliťəšən (Loreisa Lepine). Loreisa is the first officially recognized and "ongoing" Indigenous Land Steward at the University of Victoria. Loreisa's work involves the creation and prioritization of reconnection to land for Indigenous students in their homelands (ləkʷəŋən territory). Loreisa leads the A Place of Medicine *restoration project in the courtyard of the David Turpin building at UVic. Their conversation covered being in relationship to the land, navigating colonial education spaces, and plant revitalization.* [1]

Hannah: What does land and water defence and protection look like for you?

Loreisa: I think the importance of defence and healing is recognizing where it's safe for us currently and where can we make safer spaces to use our voices, harvest medicine in order for us to maintain relationship to land. A lot of people don't have spaces to connect to the land which means they don't have consistent opportunities to connect back to their spirit. It's important to recognize that I have a place to call home, and so: what is my role in defending that safety and security?

Hannah: You say defending that security and safety for Indigenous people to be able to connect to the land, and it makes me think about the deep human need for belonging. How does belonging feel to you? How does it feel to belong to the land, and what does that looks like?

Loreisa: For me, having a sense of belonging is suicide prevention. There's a fear around saying those words and the detriment it has done to our people in not knowing where we belong. It's important to know where you belong and to know what you give to the land, and what the land gives you. This connection doesn't allow you to ever question your place or your purpose—your purpose is to care for the land and the land's purpose is to care for you. To have it be that simple but that deep is something that needs to be re-introduced. Belonging is a huge part of being in relationship with the land.

* **Hannah Gentes**, Saulteaux-Métis and European ancestry, MSc student, Humanities BA with a Double Major in Indigenous Studies & Environmental Studies, University of Victoria.

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Hannah: And do you feel like it needs to start at the land to feel like you can belong anywhere that you are?

Loreisa: I feel like starting at the land is the easiest place to safely be in your own mind because when you place yourself somewhere, you need to be aware of your mindset and what you're giving to the land in reciprocity. You can also feel at ease in how you carry yourself or who you feel like you have to be. All the land is asking of you, is for you to remember that it's your relative. This allows you to feel that ease to not have to be anything but yourself. That's a start—that's a really important and gentle introduction to who you can be.

Hannah: You are talking about finding your purpose through this work—what did it feel like, or what has your experience been like finding your path and purpose in this work?

Loreisa: It may seem dramatic, but it felt like a death and a rebirth—it felt like a death to the expectations of who I felt I needed to be to fit into a colonial system and then a rebirth with understanding that I come from very powerful magic. I come from a matriarchal lineage, and so it took a lot to dismantle what it felt like to be in a system that wasn't built for me. But at the same time, it felt empowering to not put aside the beliefs that got me here, and the beliefs that got the women I come from here. The more I spoke up for myself and the more that I really solidified what my core beliefs needed to mean in this space for me to feel safe, really allowed the opportunity for me to understand that I'll never just speak for myself, I can't. The weight of me navigating my way to where I am now and, in the position I'm in now, allowed me to recognize that anything I have gone through that felt difficult, will always make it easier for the next people coming after me. That's something that really allowed me to hold some compassion for myself in moments I felt I wasn't ready, or felt I wasn't enough, and really allowed me to sit in little wins and little joys and in the process. There's a lot of check marks we need to check to feel like we're accomplished in something without really recognizing that the journey is a very important part of it. Especially, the healing that comes with recognizing and finding your chosen family, especially in the workforce.

Hannah: This dichotomy is really amplified doing this work on campus, which is such a highly colonized area. I wonder what it it's been like for you to try and balance teaching folks who aren't from this land how to interact with the land, as well as the people who grew up on this the land, but also not exhausting yourself and having to always be that teacher?

Loreisa: I think for me at the beginning, I did feel pressure to be that teacher. What has helped me through that is not allowing the people who I have chosen to be

a support system in this work, assume I can be their teacher as well. Sometimes, I need them to be the teachers. I can't always speak for myself—sometimes I need to speak through someone who's voice and experience holds more weight and who knows how this system works, and how long it actually takes to make change.

A lot of Indigenous people navigate imposter syndrome coming into colonial education spaces. We need to be aware of who we feel we need to be to feel safe in these spaces. It's been a really important learning experience to recognize that I have a position that's built for me to show up as myself. Not a lot of systems are built for that, especially for Indigenous people and Indigenous women. I'm very, very grateful even to have had difficult opportunities to learn from that have allowed me to ask for help unapologetically, and sometimes in grief. Grief has to have a place everywhere—because everything can't always be in fear, and everything can't always be in joy.

Hannah: What are some important protocols and practices that visitors to ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ lands and waters should honor?

Loreisa: So, each territory, each nation, and each revitalization project has their own protocols, and has their own safety practices solidified around previous interactions of joy and previous interactions of harm. So, it's important to recognize that the project I co-lead—A Place of Medicine—has it's own protocols, PEPÁK̲EN HÁUTW̱—an Indigenous non-profit based out of W̱SÁNEĆ territory—has their own protocols, so there is a basis around how to be a good guest and how to support. It's also important to consider what your relationship is with allyship and what your education is around the territories you're on.

There are basic protocols and, especially as Indigenous people, there are teachings we inherit, and we know how to show up for each other. There is a lot of learning around different family practices for people who are just beginning their journey in how to show up for Indigenous people, so I feel like it's very individual to who needs support and how they ask to be supported.

Hannah: You have to take the time to build those relationships, first with yourself. I feel like a lot of folks don't know how to do that work first in order to learn how to build relationships with others and with the land. What do you think is crucial for ensuring our future generations thrive?

Loreisa: Having safe spaces to harvest, safe spaces to practice medicine, safe spaces to revitalize our language, safe spaces to collaborate and opportunity

to interact with other Indigenous knowledge holders and Indigenous women. As well as safe spaces for our people to come into and rediscover self-care practices for Two-Spirit relatives and all our relatives who don't align with the usual narrow-minded acceptance of who we get to be. This starts with listening the wants and needs of Indigenous people.

It's very crucial to recognize how we're showing up for our relatives now, and how we interact with other nations in the work that we're doing to heal together. Systems built around supporting our mental health are not consistent—and so, how do we implement wellness practices to support mental health, depression, anxiety, ADHD, and our disabled relatives. We need to understand who isn't supported, and then move forward and know how we can better support each other.

Hannah: Did you feel like growing up you had those safe spaces?

Loreisa: No. I was speaking about it the other day on a panel and recognizing that I'm the person I needed when I was a kid. To be a completely out, gay, Two-Spirit woman leading a revitalization project that is now doubled the plant species to almost 100 and to be someone who can be of witness to 12-year-olds planting their first plant and this being maybe their first connection to land is amazing. With every person I have interacted with throughout my job and throughout my career, I've seen my little self in all those experiences.

I can speak to what I didn't have but instead I choose to [feel] a humble gratitude in recognizing that every single opportunity over the last year in this project has allowed me to heal the grief around what I didn't have. And honor that in the same breath, I'm giving a beautiful opportunity for someone to never question what it's like not to have it.

Hannah: This highlights all the different generations of healing that need to happen at the same time. Like our elders and all the healing that that needs to happen from when they were children, we also need to heal our inner children. What are some ways that we share Indigenous knowledges and practices around land and water relationships with future generations?

Loreisa: Storytelling. That includes telling our own story and feeling safe in our truth—that not all our journeys have been big, bright, and beautiful. And being honest about how we grieve and how we cope, so we can better show up as our full selves, now and wherever we are in our healing journey.

How we take care of ourselves and how we take care of our spirit is so important. It can look like finding chosen family—finding adopted elders that can be your grandparents, who can teach you if your blood family doesn't have the roots necessary for you to learn what you feel you need to feel connected to land, connected to teachings or connected to language.

Part of our journey will be dealing with that grief that we're not going learn how we thought we were going to learn, and we're not going to learn from who we thought we were going to learn from. A really important lesson for me in grief that I had while starting A Place of Medicine project was me speaking to a colleague about how I wasn't going learn from our ancestors about our medicines. My colleague—in the same breath—said, "Of course you're going to be learning from the ancestors—you're learning from the plants—it doesn't look the way you thought it would, it doesn't look the way you wanted it to, but you're still learning from our ancestors, it's just the plants. They are the same."

In that moment, that's exactly what I needed to hear, that we're not always going to learn from a physical being, instead we're going to learn from our relatives that aren't human. There's magic that comes from being able to honor that every single breathing being on Earth can give us a teaching and it's our role to choose how we'd like to accept those teachings and choose how to honor them.

Hannah: I think we often talk about our connection to land, and I feel like a lot of us know that water is part of that, but I think it's sometimes overlooked in conversations around this—the importance of water and how healing it is, and women's connection to water too. What are some everyday ways that you protect and honour a relationship to both lands and waters?

Loreisa: For me, the first thing that comes to mind is recognizing what capacity I have to be in reciprocal relationship with the land and water. My relationship can look different and has to look different every day, depending on what I have to give to the land in reciprocity. As well, it's really humbling to recognize how much you need to be there for yourself and in your breath when you're connecting to the ocean, and when you're connecting to water. It's really important to recognize how you protect yourself and how you protect your spirit when being in relationship to the land and the water because you have to be fully present—you can't leave.

If you're going to the ocean or being in relationship to the land, you need to be there for yourself at the same time. This includes having to take deep breaths to calm yourself, because the ocean is freezing cold in the fall and winter. Also, there's very little that compares to how it feels to have your hands in beautiful rich soil that's in an area—a really beautiful

Garry oak ecosystem—that's been protected and taken care of by ləkʷʷəŋən people for thousands of years, and having opportunity to take in the magic that comes from that experience.

These are very important, big practices, but they're also simple. Even just dipping your toes in the water—you have to be very present with yourself. It doesn't allow you to run. We need to be aware of how we are protecting ourselves, and how that weaves into how we protect the land and water so that we can come home and at the same time come home to ourselves fully.

Note

1 This interview is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 7–53.

INTERVIEW

INDIGENOUS
INTERNATIONALISMS
SPECIAL SECTION

An Interview with Cheryl Bryce: Decolonizing Place for Indigenous Food and Land Sovereignty

Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel *

On February 4th, 2023, Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel spoke with Cheryl Bryce, Songhees Nation member and knowledge-keeper who focuses on land and Indigenous food sovereignty. She founded and continues to lead the lək̓ʷəŋən Community Tool Shed, an initiative that brings people together to decolonize the land and reinstate indigenous food systems (learn more at the Facebook page, Community Tool Shed, and Cheryl's Instagram). The following conversation covers kwetlal (camas) food systems, traditional land management, and sharing knowledge.[1]

Jeff Corntassel: Cheryl, maybe you can start by introducing yourself.

Cheryl Bryce: Ok, my name is Cheryl Bryce. I am a member of the Songhees nation, traditionally known as lək̓ʷəŋən. Some of what I do is traditional harvesting within the kwetlal food systems, and I think that's what we're talking about today.

Jeff: Thank you for being a part of this. Maybe I'll start with the general question of: What does sustainability mean to you? It's got all sorts of meanings. I've seen it have a darker meaning, especially when corporations take it over, and I've seen it have almost no meaning when other environmentalists take it over. So, what does it mean to you? Or is that a useful term for describing the work that you do?

Cheryl: Mm, it's interesting you should say that. I did a presentation recently; and it was very much talking about all different parts of what it/that kind of means to me when we start looking at environmental planning. And I veered off on a few things, but explained that I couldn't veer off on those other things. Like, it's not just about creating a plan, or conserving and protecting. It's many other things: it's the people, it's the connections, it's the stories, it's the songs, it's the trading of kwetlal, as well. To me, it's a food system, and it really encompasses more than 'sustaining the land' so-to-speak, as most people would think of it. As far as protecting it or planning to manage what's left.

Jeff: So it's about sustaining those practices?

Cheryl: Yeah.

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Jeff: And that ethic?

Cheryl: And it's reinstating these Indigenous food systems throughout our traditional territory as well, that's an important part of it. It's also creating awareness and finding ways to work together; it's ensuring that the knowledge is passed down through the generations, and done appropriately, and getting people ready to take it on.

Jeff: Ah, perfect. How do we share knowledge across generations, and, since you mentioned that, what are some ways that you think are working for sharing that knowledge? You and I have been working together for years on pulling invasives, and things like that. But there is so much knowledge that you shared with folks from Songhees, as well as from other nations, or even non-Indigenous peoples. What are some important things to consider when sharing that knowledge?

Cheryl: Where people are at, and—if they're ready—how much are they ready to take on. You don't want to give it all at once.

Usually, traditionally what we do is a bit at a time. Like for me, it was as I was growing up. And I didn't know I was being taught; it was just something my grandma was taking me out to do. To harvest, or prepare foods, or telling stories, or telling history. It was just on the land, and it was just something we did.

Jeff: Yeah.

Cheryl: And it was just something over time, so I think it's important to respect that it's going to take the time it needs to slowly share that knowledge, and how much is shared. Some people get certain parts of the knowledge, other people get other aspects of the knowledge depending on where they are at in life, right? And [there are] strengths they can see in the family.

And beyond—I guess beyond family, and beyond community—that's a tricky one. That one I think is more of a way to, for me anyways, to share enough that people understand that it's still important, that we're still connected to the land and our territory and our foods and everything, and we still have that connection, even though you might see it as a park or someone's back yard. We are still connected to these places and this land through our ancestors and our future generations really. So, it's not to teach people how to do it, and go, it's not a do-it-yourself.

Jeff: Right.

Cheryl: Interaction—it's educating to the point where people can understand why it's still important to us, and how we're still connected to the land and how we

can work together to re-instate these food systems. It's really a way of how we work together.

Jeff: Absolutely. Yeah, you've made the comment before: when people ask to see your traditional digging stick, you'll pull out your Canadian Tire shovel, right?

Cheryl: (Laughs)

Jeff: And how often people want to see a certain look, or action, that fits in with their maybe colonial mindset, or frozen-in-time mindset.

Cheryl: Yeah, well… It's an entitlement for some folks that they can't lose. They want to know every little detail, like "What do you use to dig?", "How are you cooking and sharing that?", and "Where do you harvest?" You know, the Indigenous folks are going to say "I never share where I harvest, do you?" And I went "No!" (Laughs)

But when it came to the old way with the camas, they had to, because it was a lot of work. All the family and extended family would come in. But that was the whole point of the death camas; it is being moved around so that people couldn't raid your fields.

Jeff: That makes sense. Do you think it still plays a similar role today? The death Camas?

Cheryl: I still move it around, yeah, I still move it around.

Jeff: And do you think people are aware enough of death camas and how that's deadly? And that they have to know, they have to be with someone who knows what they're doing…

Cheryl: Yeah, and I usually just put that disclaimer when I'm doing a public presentation: "This isn't to teach you how to do it". It's just teaching you it's important to me, my family, the community, the future, and our ancestors. But it's just looking at ways we can work together, and it's… individuals finding their way in how they can contribute to where they live… As a guest.

Jeff: And I think, in the past when you and I have talked about kwetlal, you said about 95 percent of it has been wiped out?

Cheryl: Yeah. It's less, I think.

Jeff: So, it's actually gone down?

Cheryl: Quite a bit.

Jeff: Quite a bit, and so it's going in the opposite direction?

Cheryl: Yeah.

Jeff: Or in the negative direction?

Cheryl: Yeah. What did they say, about 75 percent of [B.C.'s population] is in Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo. [That's the highest population density of B.C..] Which is within that Coastal Douglas Fir Forest area, right?

Jeff: Right.

Cheryl: And that of course has a lot of unique ecosystems, like the Gary Oak ecosystem, as most people know it. But, [this area has] a higher amount of diversity as well as species at risk now because of development.

Jeff: And it's been mainly extraction, development...

Cheryl: Development, isolating what's left so there's no connecting corridors between the different communities of kwetlal food systems.

Jeff: So almost creating these islands?

Cheryl: Yeah.

Jeff: And has the pulling of invasives helped?

Cheryl: Oh, for sure. I think it's not expanding the land base that's needed, but it's helping with what's left. [And] it is, as far as people learning about it and re-instating it in their back yards, encouraging it to happen in their parks as well... That is happening. And more people are coming to myself and others, about their management plans in parks. It is helping what's left so [that] they aren't colonized by invasive plants. It's also addressing climate change in that way, because removing those fuels—often broom, some of the woodier species right, they're really fuel to fire, and one of the common things on the island and the coast is the increase of fires.

Jeff: Yeah, absolutely. It's almost like fire management as well, like traditional land management.

Cheryl: Yeah.

Jeff: One of the things you said, several things you said, have really stayed with me. One of them was to not serve camas at a pit cook, right? Because of the shortage and the scarcity...

To really impress upon people how scarce this is, and [say] "We're not going to just share it, so you can have a taste. And, that entitlement I guess it comes back to so...

Cheryl: Yeah, and it really brings home how important it is, right? That there's so few left, and just having those colonial vegetables in there really demonstrates that impact on our foods, on the land, on our health, really.

It really encourages that conversation of colonial harm, and I think it's probably a hands-on way of seeing it.

Jeff: Yeah, absolutely. And I think another thing you said at our last pit cook, that you don't want to be talking to future generations and [hear them] say "I don't know what camas tastes like."

Cheryl: Yeah. Well, I'm not an Elder, but when I become an Elder, I want to be able to share camas. Not talk about what it used to taste like.

Jeff: That would be devastating, wouldn't it?

Cheryl: Yeah.

Jeff: So let's talk a little bit about trade; And so, camas was, you know—kwetlal is traded, even the story of Camosung (q'emásənj) seems to have that story of trade embedded in it.

Cheryl: And the star sisters.

Jeff: So, what would that trade network look like, and what are some ways to think about it now?

Cheryl: To be honest, I didn't work with very many students, because I usually found they came with an agenda, and it was just adding more work for me. But this one student came in and she asked "What can I do to contribute to what you're already doing, that's helpful and useful to you, but I could also use towards my honours paper?" So, I went "Ah, well here's the big picture." And she goes "Well, I'm just doing an honours," so we pulled it down into a public pit cook. That was what I wanted to publicly do at UVic, to be able to have that larger conversation. That bigger picture was to educate of the general public and my own community about kwetlal food systems, and why they're so important to protect and re-instate, and [that] our role is very important, and we need to continue that work. And that, of course, is reinstating as much as we can within our traditional homelands, because that's where a majority of it has been impacted. Opposed to, like our reserve lands...

Jeff: Right.

Cheryl: ... Not as impacted as off-reserve and is the larger part of our territory. So [it's about] getting out, educating, re-instating, finding ways to work together. The Community Toolshed was one of the ways. Other folks can do what they feel they need to do, whether it's management plans within their municipalities, contributing, or doing invasive species removal. It's just finding ways that we can get everyone working together because it's very urgent. I'm seeing more and more, and I'd see it 20 years ago, so it's even more urgent now. People are aware, but

it's still happening. Victoria's becoming very dense in population and more development is happening every day. It is greatly impacting what's left. You know, we've been saying five percent [of kwetlal] is left, but we've been saying that for a couple of decades now. It's surely three percent, even less, maybe.

Jeff: And would you say that, you know, those trade networks, did those trade networks go all up and down the coast?

Cheryl: Yes. So where UVic is now is one of the places where trade historically took place. And it was celebrated, camas was celebrated, and it was traded, and we would trade like razor clams down south, sturgeon into the Fraser area, and then oolichan up north. All kinds of different things were traded.

Jeff: Right.

Cheryl: So, it was highly sought after. It was very unique. It's not something you commonly found, in what you now know as Canada. It's pretty isolated to the southeast end of Vancouver Island.

Jeff: Right. And would you say, that-did it go all the way down, to, let's say, the far part of Turtle Island? Like to California?

Cheryl: More to Oregon, I think it might be...

Jeff: Oregon? Okay.

Cheryl: ... I think it might be a tip of California... But, in large part, Washington and Oregon.

Jeff: Okay.

Jeff: And would you say that trade still takes place? In maybe smaller or more informal ways?

Cheryl: Probably in smaller ways, for sure. And by public pit cooks, or pit cooks that are open, and a lot of nations will come to participate. It's a smaller part of it, where people bring food from their community and they share it at the pit cook. It'd be amazing to be able to see that, you know that's one of my long-term hopes, is that it's to the point where there's enough camas that we can sustainably travel, or trade, sorry, and Travel with it (laughs) up and down the coast and trade, but to trade the kwetlal.

Jeff: That would be amazing.

Cheryl: And to have those huge celebrations, I mean there was multiple pit cooks, you could just imagine the UVic grounds and there would be multiple pit cooks of all camas, and just how that would have been conducted would have been amazing. Yeah, I think it was Della Rice from Cowichan who came

to one of my pit cooks and she said "You're like orchestra conductor. You're like, "Just get everyone moving!" And you're just standing in the center, and just pointing and just getting everyone moving". and I'm like, "I hadn't thought of it that way!" (Laughs)

Jeff: Yeah, it's pretty amazing to watch.

Cheryl: Ah, I just think of myself being bossy but.

Jeff: No, not at all, not at all

Cheryl: (Laughs)

Jeff: It's leadership...

Cheryl: ... That's a good way to see it.

Jeff: And, so would you say—that's the other part I was going to ask, is about gender relations, or kind of roles and responsibilities; it was mainly lək'ʷəŋən women who would be in charge of the kwetlal and the trade, as well...

Cheryl: Yep. Men and women took part in the work for sure, but usually it was the head woman of a family that would oversee the work that had to take place on the land throughout the year. Bringing people in to help with the work on the land, for- whether it be harvesting or preparing sites, and, she would decide who, how it would be divided amongst those who came to help and within the family, and how it would be traded.

Jeff: And would you say that those roles have been challenged by colonization?

Cheryl: Oh yeah. (Laughs) Well you know, the Hudson Bay was our first "box store" and it went right onto a kwetlal food system and many other very important areas as well. The women continued, lək'ʷəŋən women continued to do the harvesting, and we do what people might call a prescribed burn, but we'd just call it like a traditional care to the land, with a low burn.

Jeff: Okay.

Cheryl: To move the shrubs further back, and the firs further back, and they almost burnt the fort down, so it was almost a push to oppress the roles really.

Jeff: Yeah, so burning—almost burning—the fort down, was an act of resistance?

Cheryl: Yeah!

Jeff: Yeah.... that's interesting to think of even prescribed burns as a form of resistance.

Cheryl: Yeah. When I started talking with the municipalities a bit more about doing them, it was a flat out "No". 20 years—like, was it the late 90s? —it was just a flat "No, there's no way." And so we just kept talking and talking. And it eventually came: "Well, maybe we should." There's more of that conversation now, about using Indigenous practices to decrease issues with wildfires and with climate change. And some are fine with listening.

Jeff: I think prescribed burns are something you and I have been talking about for a while, and it seems like there's maybe more of an openness...

Cheryl: Now.

Jeff: ... To addressing climate action and climate change.

Cheryl: Yes. We were doing them out on the island, and I'd like to get another one out there soon. And slowly making them bigger and moving it around at different times.

Jeff: Maybe one at UVic?

Cheryl: Yeah. (Laughs) Ah, that might be, how would that go over? (Laughs) What kind of conversation would that lead to?

Jeff: I think there's—I wonder, it's hard to know if it would be more likely at UVic or you know, so called "Beacon Hill", or Meeqan.

Cheryl: Yeah, well that's where the conversations have been happening mainly. That was one of the municipalities that flat out said "No." But now, they're more interested in having one.

Jeff: Yeah, that would be pretty powerful.

Cheryl: I think it was that meeting you attended with me too, it came up as well. When was that? Was that 2014?

Jeff: It sounds about right.

Cheryl: Yeah, with the city of Victoria, with the mayor and council.

Jeff: I remember that.

Cheryl: And they, they were actually a little more willing to do it, whereas before it was the opposite. I had better luck talking to staff, and people on the ground, and no political support. But now it's kind of switching.

Jeff: Seems like it is, slowly switching, and now there's a UVic climate and sustainable action plan. I headed up the Indigenous group, and the goal was to have the university sign agreements with ləkʷəŋən peoples around management of the land, and things like that, restoration.

Cheryl: Oh, oh good! I have been talking to Songhees about creating an M.O.U. with UVic. So, we can start ensuring that the research that's being done on our land, is held by us.

Jeff: Excellent.

Cheryl: And that we hold the knowledge and that, they can't just go out and publish it anywhere they want or travel the world and share that knowledge in any way they want. Because that's happening. And then especially with the work on our islands.

Jeff: Yeah, that makes total sense.

Cheryl: And in our communities.

Jeff: Well, that's part of O.C.A.P. too, with the ownership, control, access, and possession. And that should be embedded in research. Thinking about Songhees and even the position of chief and council system, what does nationhood look like for you?

Cheryl: I mean (laughs), traditionally speaking, we didn't have a chief and council, or like a band office, right?

It was family groups. And that's how we governed ourselves traditionally, is through family groups. And everyone has a voice, when it came to anything that needed to be addressed. No matter how small or large it was, everyone came together. The men, the women, the children, all sat together and discussed what the issue, and what they felt needed to get done. And they would send their speaker, so that person became the head family speaker to go speak to the other family groups or if it was another community, that community, on what they would like to do about the issue.

Jeff: Okay, so family to family?

Cheryl: Yeah. We still do it, even though we are, still in this colonial system. The Indian Act is still alive, and we're still running through chiefs and councils and band offices for everything, and housing and what not. But yeah, I think we're finding a way. I think as all Indigenous peoples, we're finding a way to utilize that, while still practicing our traditions and traditional ways. So, we have family groups—often they're brought in, making sure every family group's represented when there's a conversation about anything in the community, or anything that needs to be addressed in our traditional lands, as far as what the council's leading.

Jeff: Is your family group, is that Chekonein?

Cheryl: Yeah, my family groups are my—one of my ancestors is the first signature on there, and another one I think he's third or fourth. They really are all family. I have ties to the different groups, but predominantly yeah, Chekonein, whereas UVic is now, so it's Saanich and San Juan islands, what you now might know as Oak Bay as well.

Jeff: Yeah, I think that'd be the first thing to take back, is Oak Bay.

Cheryl: Yep.

Cheryl and **Jeff:** (Both laugh)

Jeff: You know, kind of tied to food systems and trade is representation, and I was thinking of you and I talked a little bit about stqéyəʔ, and the story of that wolf. What's been missing from that conversation?

Cheryl: Our voice. I think the nations voice. I remember interviewing—and my sister did most of the interviewing really with the members—but I remember interviewing some of the members, and reading what my sister had interviewed as well, and when we were doing the marine use plan. And it was all small at first, and with the idea of it growing, but the focus was in and around [Tl'ches], so Discovery and Chatham Island. Every single member wanted stqéyəʔ, to be protected. And that more needed to be done to ensure he was provided that space to thrive and continue. So I think there needs to be more of a voice from the nation and I think someone like Mrs. Alexander has exploited and stqéyəʔ, to the point where he left, is my thinking. She [Alexander] was getting way to close. She was always on the island. She was trespassing on our island to take her photos for her book. And just even by water she was doing the same thing—just constantly stalking him really. You know, we asked her to not do this, and she threatened us—the nation, me, others—that she would sue. So really I think, I think that needs to be viewed kind of differently, and how that's done right now, she's kind of being seen as somebody who's doing some great thing for stqéyəʔ, but they're not really seeing her impact on stqéyəʔ, to the land and to us, and the damage she has done.

Jeff: And she's undermining Songhees sovereignty.

Cheryl: Yes. She would challenge it. She's basically saying she can, she's not trespassing if she stays below the foreshore.

Jeff: And she didn't get the name right, either, did she?

Cheryl: No, she's spelling it wrong.

Jeff: So misrepresenting stqéyəʔ on all fronts?

Cheryl: She's appropriating too, really. She wasn't given permission to use it in any way.

Jeff: Where does that stand now, has stqéyəʔ been returned?

Cheryl: I haven't heard of him being returned, I'd have to double check though.

Jeff: Okay. We talked about a lot of things, so here's a larger question: What are your aspirations for future generations?

Cheryl: Yeah, well, you know within my own family I've been preparing a family to get ready, to take a lot of this on, and they're helping for sure, for pit cooks, yeah I mean they've come. And various nephews have come out to help.

Jeff: Yeah, that's wonderful.

Cheryl: Yeah so just that. As well making sure that knowledge is shared and passed down, continuing in the community as well, to see if there's ways we can work together. Outside of the community is definitely going into schools and you know—they're now doing them in gardens, I remember like, decades ago going in and encouraging schools to actually create native gardens. Not necessarily to take it and appropriate it, but to create awareness. And then some of [those] plants can be reinstated into the grounds.

Jeff: Well, yeah, and you had that beautiful vision of being able to trade kwetlal freely, and have it travel freely to other communities, and have abundance.

Cheryl: Yes. So, for me, it's like getting people to help with the work… Ya know? It's one thing to create this space, but they need to help with the work as well.

Jeff: Yeah. I think it's time to get our Community Toolshed going again.

Cheryl: Going—yeah, I've been thinking about that, actually. I was like, 'I should start doing, hauling some more pulls'. The nation has—I'm thinking within the community, as well—there's some spots that they would like to have the pull.

Jeff: Sure.

Cheryl: Some pulls done, but right now I'm just having that conversation of creating a plan with the nation.

Jeff: The last question is: is there anything that we didn't discuss that you think we should be bringing into the conversation?

Cheryl: I think in a large part we might have covered

what you're needing, but I think to me, of course, just to recap kwetlal is an important food system still to the lək̓ʷəŋən today, especially to me, and the work is, there's a lot of work to do, there's a lot to do. Of course, within the community we also, outside the community within our ancestral lands, there's a lot of things that need to be addressed, I mean, it's one thing to reinstate them, but there's a lot behind that, that still needs to be worked on. When we start talking about doing this in municipalities, I mean there's this whole systemic racism we could probably go into, and all of the other colonial practices that still kind of continue in our governance system and in society at large right? And just changing that thinking—it's a huge undertaking. And that's something that I'm seeing more and more people challenging: misinformed individuals that kind of feel entitled to tell Indigenous folks, especially me, what I can and cannot do. So, it's nice to see that. It's still happening, but it's nice to also have more support. And I think back 20 years ago, or even beyond, it's like, it wasn't

there. Not very much of it, and there was not much of a conversation about camas, and there was no space created for that conversation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. And that conversation back then was so different. It was not respectful, or acknowledging our important role in managing and taking care of the future.

Jeff: So Hay'sxw'qa. Thank you so much for taking this time to speak with me...

Cheryl: Thank you.

Note

1   This interview is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 7–53.
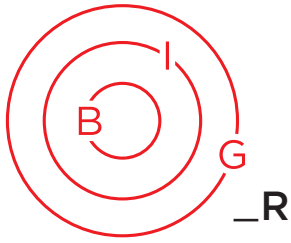
POETRY

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISMS

SPECIAL SECTION

This poem is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel.

things I am sick of

Jana-Rae Yerxa

About the Artist

Jana-Rae Yerxa (M.S.W., M.A) is Anishinaabe from Couchiching, First Nation, located in Treaty #3 Territory. She is an advocate, educator, writer, and poet whose work is grounded in Indigenous feminism and decolonial frameworks. Jana-Rae is faculty and curriculum developer in Anishinaabe Gikendaasowin at Seven Generations Education Institute.

things I am sick of
by Jana-Rae Yerxa

cherry-picking traditionals
contradicting themselves constantly
white comfort over indigenous ontology

humbly, arrogant traditionals
recycling colonial hierarchy
elevating those upholding the patriarchy

pretending they are for the people
when they are for the power
don't you know this is how you kill flowers?

if every child matters, when did it become
that the voices that really matter
are the matters of bosses of tribal orgs
chief and councils and whoever else
they appoint to boards

am i the only one bored of boards?

i've returned to my homeland lands
rich with true Anishinaabe power
land, language, culture, ceremonies
so why we acting like colonial cronies

this may have become tradition
but it is not our tradition
can we just stop colonialism
and put it into remission

october 3rd
the anniversary of treaty 3
hundreds of anishinaabe families
gathered to negotiate while still free

our ancestors heeded
the wisdom of the collective
not a select few of aboriginal elite
but who cares...that's just my perspective
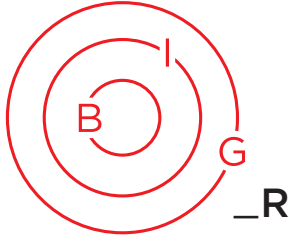
POETRY

INDIGENOUS
INTERNATIONALISMS

Call to Prayer

Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio

About the Art

"Call to Prayer" is a poem that attempts to capture and portray the experience of standing in the malu (shade and protection) of the sacred. Whether that malu is cast by monument, an altar, or a mountain, the poem depicts the kuleana (responsibilities and privileges) of recognizing our pilina (intimacy and relationship) to that which is kapu (sacred). The poem travels through the knowledges of faith, courage, devotion, fear, and aloha via the perspective of a Kanaka Maoli wahine who lives in the malu of our kupuna (ancestors) while continuing to endure the ongoing wake of settler colonialism, displacement, and alienation.

Call to Prayer stands in the malu of the Mihrab, Shangri La's most sacred stolen artifact. And in her magnificent shadow we come face to face with the violence that resulted in her displacement to Hawai'i. We cannot look away, not from her outstanding beauty, and certainly not from the generations of brutality that has allowed us to be in her company. The Mihrab powerfully calls us back to our own sacred places, and in that moment we are invited into a mutual recognition, an unexpected intimacy between peoples, 'āina (lands, or that which feeds), and mo'olelo (stories and histories).

While this original poem was written in 2021, the most recent genocidal attacks on our Palestinian 'Ohana in Gaza by the State of Israel have further deepened and expanded its meaning. While our loved ones face genocidal extermination, we stand, around the world, insisting on a critical truth: all life is sacred, all 'āina are sacred. We condemn any oppressive regimes that would attempt to exterminate our peoples (whether kanaka or Palestinian) and contaminate, bombarded, and settle our lands. Any national project that requires wholesale extermination and displacement of Indigenous peoples is an affront not only to justice, but to life itself. Our commitment to each other will not allow us to be silent. Our duty to our shared histories, will not allow us to stand idly by. May all our akua (gods and elemental forces) and kūpuna (ancestors) gather around us, may they cast their malu of protection upon us, may they strengthen us in this lifelong pursuit of liberation, justice, and freedom for all occupied and oppressed peoples. Amamua noa.

About the Artist

Dr. **Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio** is a Kanaka Maoli wahine artist / activist / scholar / storyteller born and raised in Pālolo Valley to parents Jonathan and Mary Osorio. Jamaica earned her PhD in English (Hawaiian literature) in 2018 from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Currently, Jamaica is an Associate Professor of Indigenous and Native Hawaiian Politics at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Jamaica is a three-time national poetry champion, poetry mentor and a published author of the award winning book *Remembering our Intimacies: Mo'olelo, Aloha 'Āina, and Ea* which was published in 2021 by the University of Minnesota Press. For more information, visit https://jamaicaosorio.wordpress.com/

Call to Prayer

If I have *Faith*
It is only because
I know what it means
to stand at the foot of a mountain
my whole body a prayer
the whole island a monument
and to see
the piko
shining through the mist
I still feel her before me
Even from hundreds of miles away
Anytime I have the strength to look to the horizon

If I have *courage*
It is only because
I have watched our moʻolelo remake themselves in my generation
I have seen an island born from pō
From a whisper in the quietest parts of ourselves,
Here
A promise that we refuse to forget or forsake
That this place is ours
Only so much as this place is us
And I have held it in my hands,
The birthing of our worlds
Pō, turned light, turned pūkoʻa, turned slime turned gods in a time of mere men
I have watched the call of the intrepid summon Manaeakalani
every morning
in the hands of our kuaʻana
Maui, fishing us each
One by one from the dark sea of this forgetting

If I have *devotion*
it is only because
I have traveled into the poli of our akua
I have crossed the piko
from wākea to wākea
and sailed upon the dark and shining road of kāne
deep into the realm of our ancestors
and I have returned,
with the knowledge that to lay in the bosom of our kūpuna
is to commit yourself to the prayer of memory
to cast your eyes upon Kuehaelani
and to pull her shimmering body from the skin of the sea

If I have *anger*
It is only because
I know the stories of our loss
Kiʻi burnt to ash
Stones and koʻa removed
Now the foundations of Billionaire estates
I am aware
That nearly anywhere we walk
We are trampling upon the ʻiwi of our kūpuna

I know the moʻolelo of the hundreds of thousands dead and dying
I have seen the signs of the separating sicknesses
Born again, like Haumea, in every Hawaiian generation
I know the names of the thieves
The crooks in finely sewn suits
Praying to their capital
As they pillage
And loot our holy cities
Leaving us with nothing
But a whisper of what we once believed

And yet I still have *aloha*
But only because
I am still here
With all my kūpuna beside me
And when I stand in your malu
You
Tower over me, like a recollection
Like a mountain
With so many stories I will never know
In languages I will never speak
Thousands of miles away from your home
And the ʻāina and alchemy that made you
The hands that formed you
Like an island, consecrated
You are here
Pointed even in the wrong direction
A desecration
And still your kaumaha
Is not foreign to me
You feel more family
Than stranger
And in your magnificent shadow
I hear our calls to prayer

POETRY

Unsold and Indivisible

Jess Háusťi

INDIGENOUS INTERNATIONALISMS

SPECIAL SECTION

This poem is part of the Special Section: Honouring Indigenous Land and Water Defenders, edited by Jeff Ganohalidoh Corntassel.

About the Art

Jess is interested in how poetry as a form and the natural world as a space of images and relationships can give shape to human identity and experience. They explore this through storytelling practices that bridge Indigenous feminism, kincentric ecology, and the links between body sovereignty and land sovereignty. Jess thrives in the belief that place-based identities and Indigenous knowledge systems ground us in embodied ancestral wisdom and connectedness that empower us to steward and defend our motherlands with the same love and care we would employ in tending to a loved one; this belief is core to their practice of writing and organizing.

About the Artist

Jess Háusťi is a parent, writer, and land-based educator from the Haíłzaqv (Heiltsuk) Nation in Bella Bella. They live and work in their unceded ancestral homelands where they focus their practice on community building, food sovereignty, and Indigenous culture and language resurgence. They serve their community and region as Executive Director of Qqs Projects Society and Lead at Coastal Foodways, and support decolonial philanthropy as Co-Lead at Right Relations Collaborative. Jess is the author of *Crushed Wild Mint*, a debut poetry collection from Nightwood Editions (2023), and a collection of essays forthcoming from Magic Canoe Press in 2024.

For more information, visit https://www.jesshousty.com/

Unsold

Understand when I tell you
that I do not want your fucking money.

Money is a weapon
that white men wield
to feel powerful

and I do not aspire to be a white man.

Look around me;
I am rich.

Count the salmon scales
stuck to my skin
as I prepare the smokehouse,

the little feathers caught in my hair
as I work on geese,

the footsteps of all the dances to come
when the deer that feeds me
also gives me rattles for my apron
and all of the grace contained
in its hooves.

There is no generosity in money.

What you call a resistance movement
is not about resistance at all;

it's about utter, joyful
submission
to the wisdom of the higher laws
that guide me.

You got the movement part right, though.

Those deer hoof rattles
urge a brown kid to dance.

Indivisible

Sometimes we pull down the mountains;
sometimes we lift the edge of the sea.
However we transform what surrounds us,
you are welcome here.

This land is your body,
your shapeshifting body, soft and malleable
as the blackest of good earth.

This is what I teach my children:
your body is a creation story
unfolding into a motherland,
into a government,

into futurity.

First we stand in awe, and then we love it,
and then we protect it: your body and the land,
the land and your body,
your fingers that learn to pick the tender nettle
without being stung and your shoulders set
against the wind that causes all the birds
to congregate at the shoreline, trembling
with joy.

You are updraft, root, stars;
you are branches and waves;
you are prayer and flood and power.

This is what I teach my children:
how to hold the land like a loved one
against your breast, how to render yourself
indivisible from what sustains you –
your flourishing only and always mutual.

There is a motherland waiting for you,
surrounding you, holding you.
There is a motherland and it is your body,
and it holds you,

it holds you, it unbraids you until you stand
in the fullness of your power.
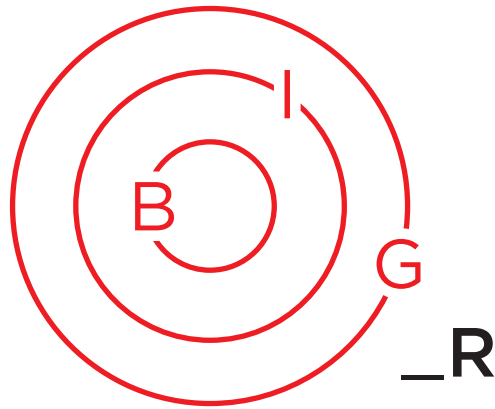
PORTFOLIO

BIG_Review publishes portfolios of artist collections related to the world of borders—whether political, material, cultural, or conceptual borders. Portfolios are chosen by the Chief Editor and featured on the cover of each issue, and, like all *BIG_Review* publications, available for free in open-access Creative Commons licensing, unless otherwise specified.

Documenting Border Barriers
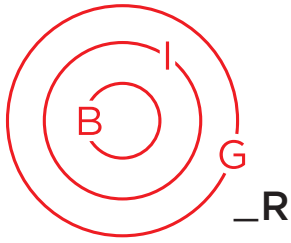
Pamela Dodds

PORTFOLIO

Chief Editor's Choice

About the Art

Documenting Border Barriers is an ongoing research-based artwork in etching and relief printmaking that addresses the exponential rise in fences and walls that have been built on the borders of nations and territories to keep people out. Each print details a specific border barrier in the world today, based on documentary photos, texts, and reports.

The technique combines drypoint etching and relief printmaking. Drawings are scratched into a rectangular plexiglass plate using an etching needle and abrasive tools. A thick ink is then spread on the scratched surface and wiped clean, leaving ink in the abrasions. Finally, the plate is pressed on paper with a manual etching press. Surrounding details are omitted to portray the razor wire, cement, and steel with visceral immediacy. An impression of landscape and sky are evoked with an under-printing of wood grain patterns. In some prints, printed window screen creates the impression of chain link. The prints, each unique in detail yet similar in composition, bear witness to the violent policies of exclusion and lack of concern for the lives of people on the move.

About the Artist

Pamela Dodds' artwork in printmaking, painting, and drawing explores personal vulnerability and the complexities of human relationships. She is inspired by a curiosity about how human beings succeed or fail to engage across barriers, whether intimate, societal, or historical. Her work is exhibited regularly in solo and group exhibitions in Canada and the USA, and also in Spain, Norway, the UK, and Mexico. She has been employed as a master printer and educator and invited to speak in university classrooms and conferences. Her work has received generous support from Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, and Gottlieb Foundation (NY). Collectors include Boston Public Library, Massachusetts, Purdue University, Illinois, Capital One Bank, Ontario, and Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio.

Documenting Border Barriers debuted at Open Studio Printmaking Centre Gallery, Toronto, in 2022, and has appeared at Border Walls and Borderlands International Colloquium, University of Quebec, Montreal (UQAM), 2022, and Museo de Arte, Nogales, Mexico, 2023, in partnership with Association for Borderlands Studies, AZ. A selection of the prints was presented at the International Biennial of Contemporary Printmaking, Trois-Rivières, Quebec, 2023. Future exhibitions are pending.

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Website: www.pameladodds.net

On social media:

https://www.instagram.com/pameladoddsstudio/

https://www.facebook.com/pameladodds.visualartist/
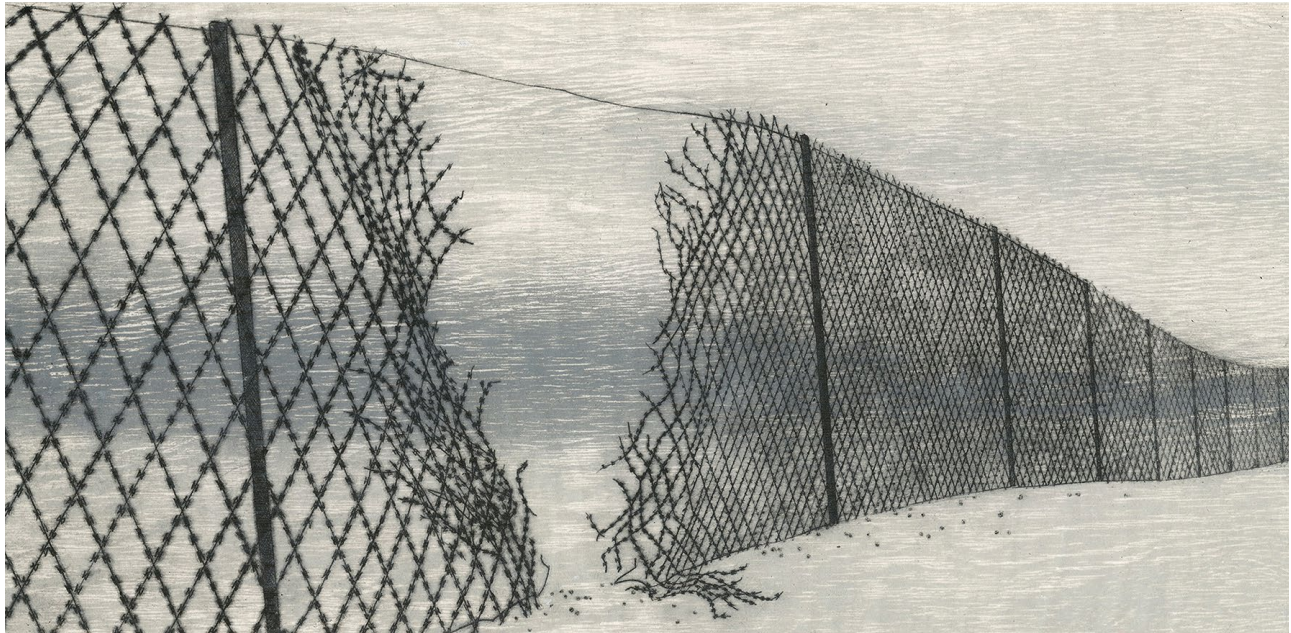
11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper   *© 2023 Pamela Dodds*

South Africa—Zimbabwe Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: 40 km / 25 mi. **Length of Border**: 225 km / 140 mi.

Date Started: 2020. **Built by**: South Africa.

Location: On the South Africa side of the Limpopo River, which is the border, in the area of the Beit Bridge Border Crossing, the busiest border post in southern Africa. During the apartheid era, South Africa barricaded its borders with lethal (continuous charge) electric fences. In the 1990s the power was turned off. The fences fell into disrepair as migration and daily crossings increased.

Description: 1.8 m/ 6 ft. fence made of razor wire mesh.

Purpose and Context: Anti-migration, anti-Covid-19. Migration to South Africa is primarily for economic reasons. The new barrier was included in Covid-19 emergency actions, but as soon as it was erected, the "border jumpers" easily cut holes in the thin razor wire mesh. The expensive, yet ineffective fence became a political scandal. As yet, no new barrier has been built. Instead, military patrols and daily arrests have increased.
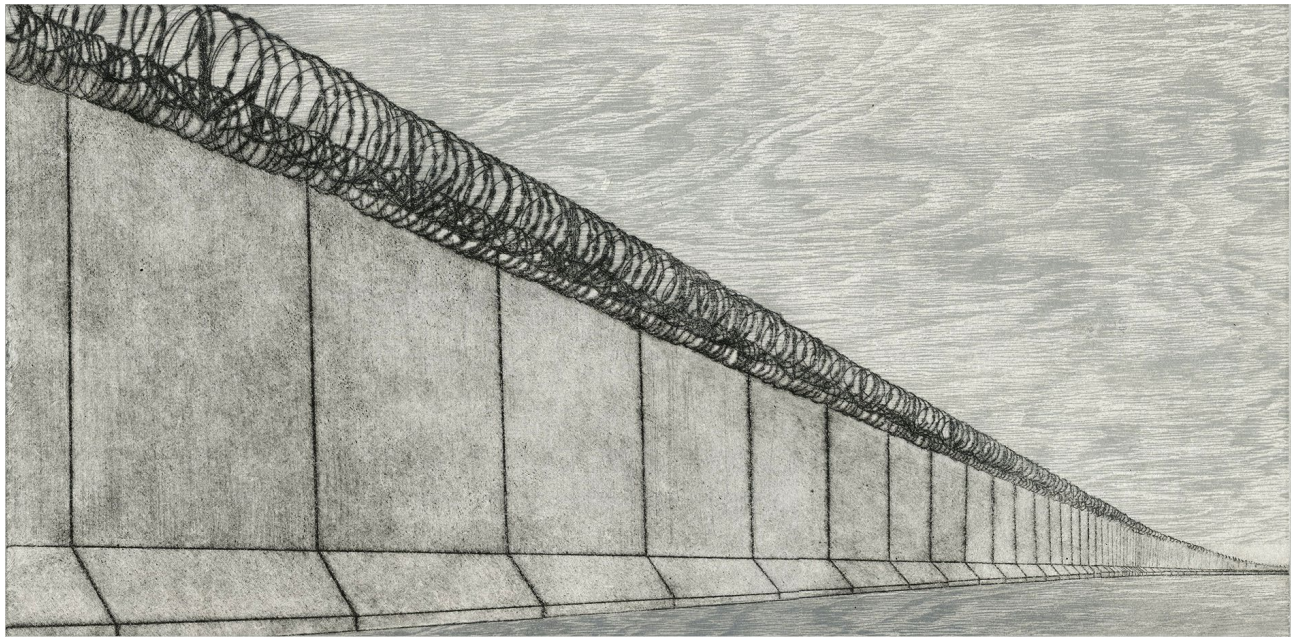
11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper

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Turkey—Syria Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: 828 km / 515 mi. **Length of Border**: 909 km / 565 mi.

Built: 2014–2018. **Built by**: Turkey.

Location: The entire accessible length of the border.

Description: 7-ton concrete blocks topped with razor wire. Each block is 3 m / 10 ft. high and 2 m / 6.5 ft. wide. Fortified with 120 surveillance towers, military patrols, thermal cameras, land surveillance radar, remote-controlled weapons systems, imaging systems and seismic and acoustic sensors.

Purpose and Context: Anti-migration. Turkey accepted nearly 3 million, mostly Syrian, refugees through this border. Many people continued migrating into Europe. But as European countries began barricading their borders, Turkey built the wall to prevent further migration. The EU and Turkey have made several deals to control migration into the EU including financial incentives to Turkey for retaining refugees, forced return of migrants to Turkey, and re-opening talks of Turkey joining EU.

11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper

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Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)

Length of Barrier: 248 km / 154 mi. **Length of Border:** 248 km / 154 mi.

Built by: North Korea, China, UN. **Date Started:** 1953.

Location: The DMZ between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and the Republic of Korea (South Korea) is centred on the 1953 Korean Armistice cease-fire line along the 38th parallel, bisecting the peninsula coast to coast.

Description: From the cease-fire line, the DMZ extends 1 km / 0.6 mi. to both the North and the South. It is one of the most heavily militarized borders in the world, patrolled by thousands of soldiers with tanks, artillery, surveillance robots, and over 1 million landmines. An additional fenced buffer zone extends to the South ranging from 5–20 km / 3–12 mi. from the line. The border features tourist attractions, including binoculars to glimpse the other side, while vast remote areas have reverted to natural ecosystems.

Purpose and Context: At the end of WWII, Korea was divided into the USSR-occupied North and USA-occupied South. Northern invasion of the South in 1950 instigated the devastating Korean War. With the 1953 Armistice, the DMZ was established, yet the two Koreas remain technically at war. The border is completely sealed. Families are permanently separated.

11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper

Bulgaria—Turkey Border Barrier

11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper, 2023

Length of Border: 513 km / 319 mi. **Length of Barrier**: 150 km / 93 mi.

Built: 2014–2017 **Built by**: Bulgaria

Location: Along the border. During the communist era, this border was highly militarized and barricaded with a barbed wire anti-exit barrier. It was dismantled in 1989.

Description: 4.5 m / 15 ft. steel and chain-link frame filled and topped with coils of razor wire; some sections have been cut by traffickers and migrants.

Purpose and Context: With the rise in people migrating through Turkey to Europe, the new anti-migrant barrier was built. As the Greece–Turkey border barrier has been increasingly fortified, migration to Bulgaria has increased again. Most try to cross through the Strandzha Nature Park, often walking for days through the forest without food or water. Pushbacks and violence, including lethal violence, are common.

11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper   *© 2021 Pamela Dodds*

India—Bangladesh Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: 3140 km / 1950 mi. **Length of Border**: 4097 km / 2545 mi.

Phases: late-1980s, 2008, 2010 with ongoing upgrades and technological enhancements.

Location: The barrier follows the Radcliffe Line, infamously named for Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who in 1947 drew the boundary partitioning British India, despite never having visited the country. The barrier intermittently follows the entire border, almost completely encircling Bangladesh, bisecting numerous villages and communities.

Description: Parallel 2.5 m / 8 ft. barbed-wire fences on either side of double rolls of barbed wire. Some sections electrified. Brick walls divide some villages. Sonar sensors are used in delta areas. Surveillance includes flood lights, underground and underwater sonar, armed patrols.

Purpose and Context: Anti-migration, anti -cattle and -drug smuggling. The barrier has divided families and communities. Most migrants are Bangladeshis trying to cross for economic, family, health or environmental reasons. Reportedly this is one of the most dangerous borders in the world. The border guards are known to lethally shoot people with impunity, causing as many as 6 deaths per month in some years.
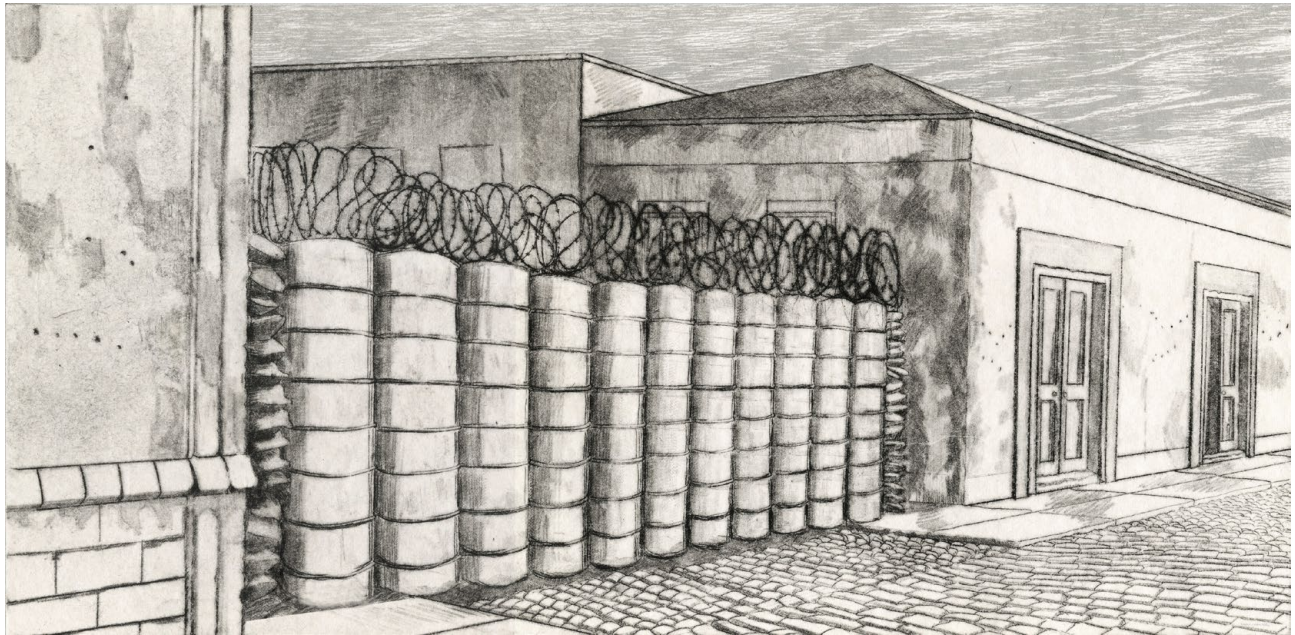
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Cyprus UN Buffer Zone and Barrier, at Nicosia

Length of Buffer Zone Barrier: 180 km / 112 mi. **Length of de facto Border**: 180 km / 112 mi.
Date Started: 1974. **Phases**: 2021: Anti-migrant barriers added. **Built By**: Cyprus, UN

Location: The island of Cyprus is recognized internationally in its entirety as the Republic of Cyprus. The Buffer Zone bisects the island, including the capital city of Nicosia, separating the Turkish North from the Greek South. The North is a *de facto* state recognized only by Turkey. The new anti-migrant fence fortifies a 20 km / 12 mi. rural area along the Buffer Zone.

Description: Anti-migrant fence: Coils of razor wire. The Buffer Zone, which varies in width from 10 metres to 7.5 km / 32 ft. to 4.5 mi., includes fences, walls, stacked sandbags, cement-filled oil barrels and barbed wire. Forbidden areas are either dusty and inert, or have reverted to natural ecosystems.

Purpose and Context: Established in 1964 and extended in 1974 after the short-lived Greek coup d'état and subsequent Turkish invasion of the North. There are about 8 legal border crossing points. Asylum seekers arrive in the North from Turkey and cross the Zone in remote areas to reach the EU. Cyprus has the largest per capita percentage of asylum seekers in Europe. The new barrier disrupts farmers' access to their fields and villages.
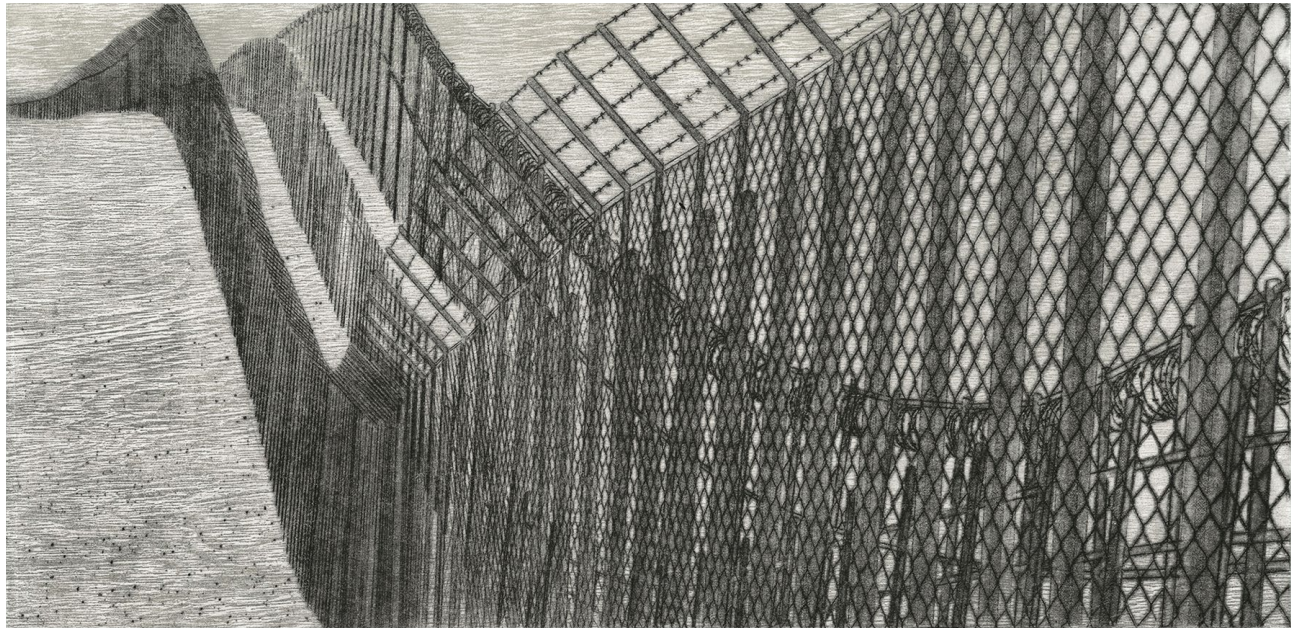
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Spain—Morocco Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: 8 km / 5 mi. (Ceuta) and 11 km / 6.8 mi. (Melilla). **Length of Border**: 8 km / 5 mi. and 11 km / 6.8 mi.

Built by: Spain, EU. **Phases**: 1993, first fence; 1995, second parallel fence; 2005, third parallel fence.

Location: Completely surrounding Ceuta and Melilla, two tiny Spanish territories about 400 km / 250 mi. apart, located on the Mediterranean coast of Africa, bordering Morocco.

Description: Parallel fences of increasing heights, 2.5 m / 8.2 ft., 3 m / 9.8 ft., 6 m / 20 ft., with barbed and concertina wire. Surveillance includes video cameras, microphones, infrared cameras, watch towers, military patrols, helicopter patrols. Ceuta and Melilla are included in Spain's Integrated System of External Surveillance (SIVE), which operates elaborate high-tech surveillance of Spain's maritime borders.

Purpose & Context: Anti-migration. Makeshift refugee camps near the border face violent harassment and raids from Moroccan security forces. Groups of migrants periodically storm the fences in large numbers to overwhelm Spanish patrols, in hopes that just one or two people might succeed in entering Ceuta or Melilla/the European Union.
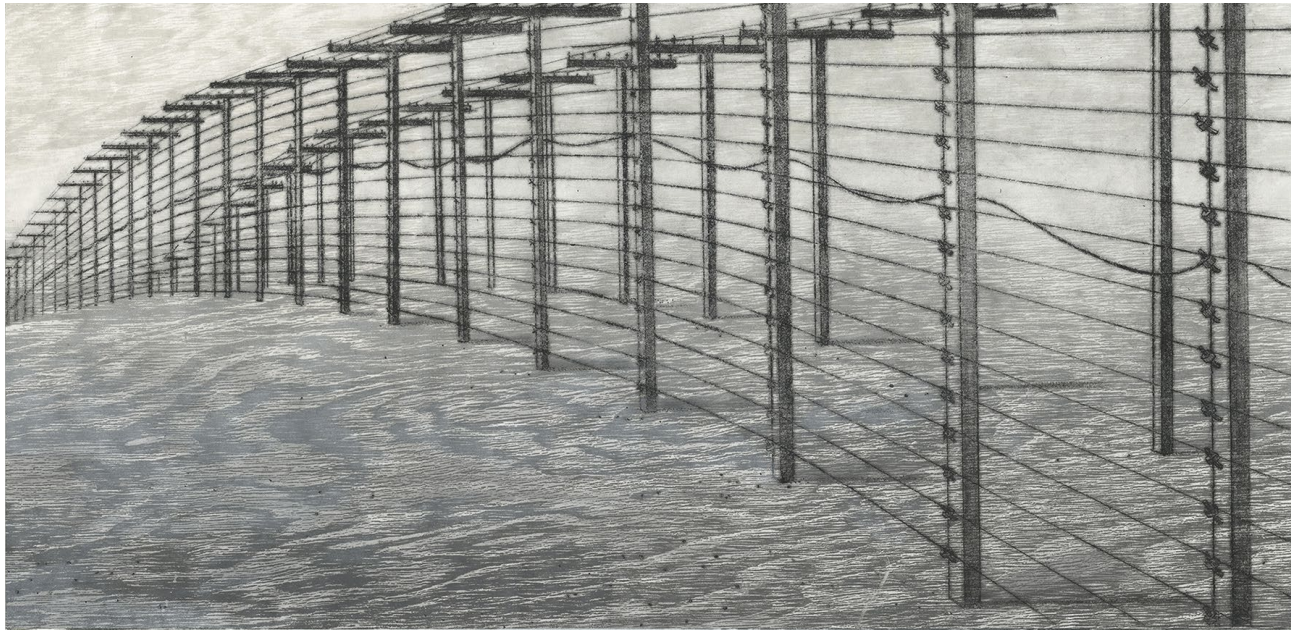
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Uzbekistan—Afghanistan Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: 144 km / 89 mi. **Length of Border**: 144 km / 89 mi.

Built: 2001. **Built by:** Uzbekistan.

Location: the length of the border, which follows the Amu River.

Description: Barbed wire fence and a second, taller, electrified barbed-wire fence, land mines, armed patrols. One of most heavily guarded border in the world.

Purpose and Context: Anti-migration. When the USA invaded Afghanistan in 2001, Uzbekistan immediately built the barrier to prevent Afghan refugees from crossing the border. Afghans could still visit legally on short-term tourist visas via a single crossing point, known as the Friendship Bridge. With the US withdrawal from Afghanistan 20 years later, in 2021, the Uzbek government closed the border completely. Due to international pressure, the government agreed to permit Afghans already in the country in August 2021 to apply to extend their visas. But no new visas are being issued. The country refuses to register any refugees.

11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper   *© 2020 Pamela Dodds*

USA—Mexico Border Barrier

Length of Barrier: segments totaling 1126 km / 700 mi. **Length of Border**: 3145 km / 1954 mi.

Date Started: 1993. **Phases**: 1990s, 2000s, 2010s, 2020s. **Built by**: USA; in 2020s some funding from state of Texas and private funders.

Location: Approximately 1/3 of the border is barricaded, in the west, bordering California/Baja, Arizona/Sonora and New Mexico/Chihuahua to El Paso, Texas/Ciudad Juarez, and parts in the East including Brownsville/Matamoros. Harsh terrain, treaty rights and private property thwart wall-building in most of Texas.

Description: Concrete-filled steel barricades topped with 1.5 m / 5 ft. anti-climb plates, totaling 5.5–8 m / 18–27 ft. and extending 2.4 m / 8 ft. underground. Many areas have second parallel fence. Long-distance cameras, motion sensors, flood lights, drones, helicopter and ground patrols. Older barriers: Surplus military helicopter landing pads, placed vertically. Low, anti-vehicle barriers in remote areas: crisscrossed welded segments of surplus railroad tracks. In 2023, Texas installed a 300 m / 1000 ft. floating buoy and blade barrier supporting a submerged mesh fence, at Eagle Pass/Piedras Negras.

Purpose and Context: Anti-migration. The expanding barrier, along with restrictive border policies, results in many people taking extreme, often lethal risks to cross through hostile desert terrain. In September, 2023, The UN's International Organization for Migration reported that the USA–Mexico border is the world's deadliest land route for migrants. Thousands of migrants remain camped or detained at the border in squalid conditions.
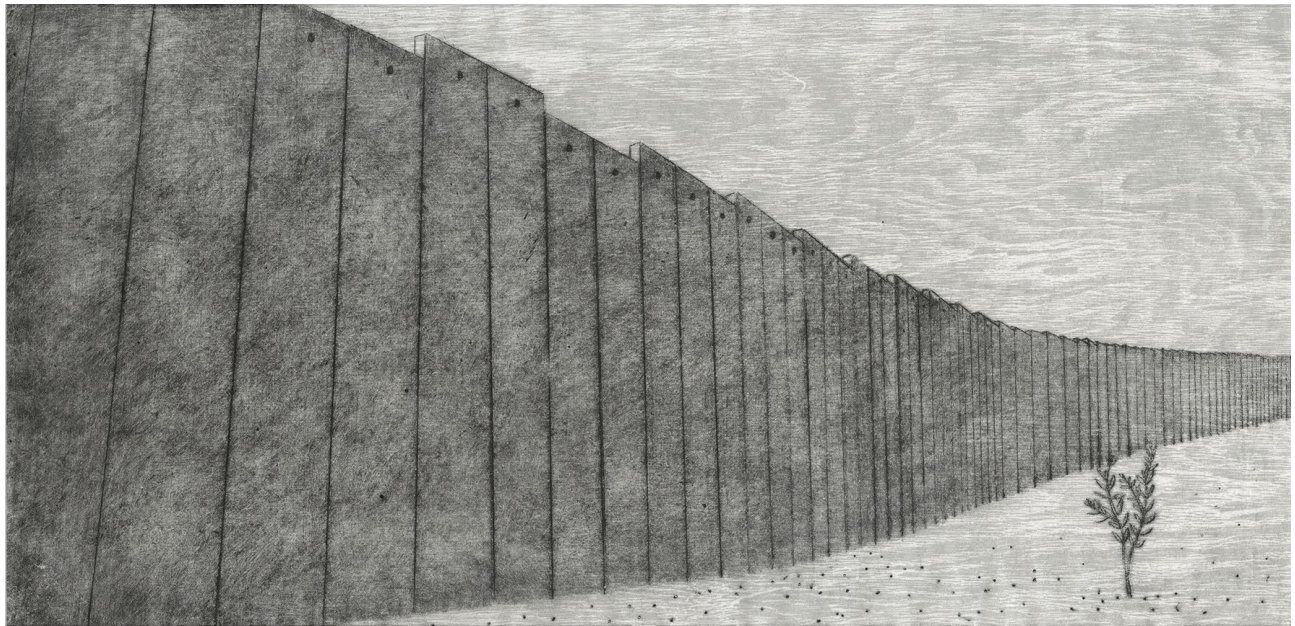
11x19 in. / 28x48 cm, drypoint etching & relief print on paper

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Israel—West Bank, Palestine Barrier

Length of Barrier: 709 km / 440 mi. **Length of de facto Border:** 320 km / 199 mi.

Phases: 2003, 2004, 2006, 2012 and ongoing. **Built by:** Israel.

Location: The barrier roughly follows the internationally recognized borderline but is twice as long, extending as far as 20 km / 12 mi. into Palestinian territory, often encircling many of the more than 250 Israeli settlements which have been built in violation of international law.

Description: 42 km / 26 mi. of the barrier is concrete, standing 8 m / 26 ft., fortified with watchtowers. The remainder is a high-tech, multi-layered fence system of barbed wire, much of it electrified and surveilled, flanked on either side with additional fencing, ditches, and military access roads, averaging exclusion areas of 60 m / 200 ft.

Purpose and Context: Israel began building the barrier during the suicide bombings of the 2nd Intifada in the early 2000s with the stated aim of reducing militant access into Israel. However, the barrier also functions as a land grab, severing Palestinian farmers from their fields and olive groves and is just one part of a complex system restricting movement of Palestinians within the West Bank. Thousands of homes and olive trees have been destroyed on the pretext of building the barrier. In 2004, the UN International Court of Justice declared the barrier illegal under international law.
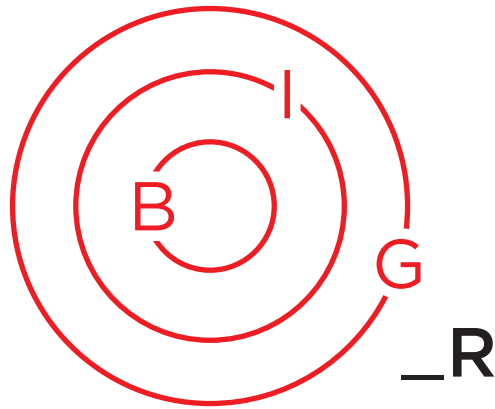
ARTICLES

BIG_Review articles are long-form explorations of borders in a globalized world, presenting original research from diverse disciplinary backgrounds. All articles undergo at least two double-blind peer reviews, drawing on the expertise of our Editorial Board and a wider network of borders scholars, subject to the discretion of the Chief Editor. Like all *BIG_Review* publications, articles are available for free in open-access Creative Commons licensing.
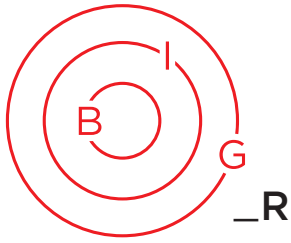
SPECIAL SECTION

Border Renaissance

Edited by

Astrid M. Fellner,
Eva Nossem,
and Christian Wille

ARTICLE
SPECIAL SECTION

INTRODUCTION
What is Border Renaissance?

Astrid M. Fellner *
Eva Nossem **

This issue investigates the return to borders, gauging the impact of this recent renaissance of borders in political and media discourses and cultural representations of borders and borderlands. The geographical focus of the individual papers lies primarily on Europe with brief references to North America and Asia. Zooming in on questions of recent border conflicts, tensions, and struggles, on the one hand, and questions of identity, language practices, and forms of belonging, on the other, the essays highlight border rebirth and revival, also presenting new research on recent developments in territorial/spatial and cultural border studies. Coming from a wide variety of disciplines, such as geography, cultural studies, literature, linguistics, and political sciences, the authors explore the renewed interest in borders and the many instances of borderizations.[1]

Introduction

Borders are once again at the center of attention, and they have emerged as a focal point of heightened awareness. With the military invasion of Ukraine and a bloody war raging in Europe, the achievements of European integration of the last 30 years have become seriously endangered. The current conflict in Europe has, however, not only cast a shadow on the accomplishments of European unity, but it has also disrupted the post-World War II global equilibrium. Clearly, we live in times of "polycrisis", a multiple and interconnected scenario of various crises "where disparate crises interact such that the overall impact far exceeds the sum of each part" (World Economic Forum 2023, 9). Also, the resurgence in border-related issues is not confined to a specific continent, as instances of border-related violence and trauma have risen worldwide. The current Israeli/Hamas conflict has caused tremendous pain and sorrow on both sides of the Israel/Gaza border. As can be observed in the deaths along the U.S.–Mexico border and in bottleneck passages in Central America, or in and around the Mediterranean, geopolitical crises like the repercussions of the Arab Spring or conflicts originating in a colonial or Soviet past, conflicts in the Ferghana valley or in the Nagorno-Karabakh region, the tug-of-war between Hong Kong and Beijing, or even in the crisis of a former colonial power itself, such as in the case of Brexit, the border has taken the stage again and has become more versatile, mobile, and fluid, but by no means less powerful than in previous centuries.

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Especially over the last decade, a discernible shift has become apparent within Western policies, characterized by an emphasis on the regulation of migration and the orchestration of mobility. This shift has engendered a paradigmatic transformation in border governance mechanisms, culminating in their high-technologization and the proliferation of border infrastructure. The confluence of factors, one can say, has ushered in a novel epoch of borderization, akin to a renaissance of border-related paradigms. The ongoing influence of the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated this trajectory, amplifying the unprecedented proliferation of nascent and revitalized borders to unparalleled proportions. It is pivotal to underscore that the significance of borders transcends the realms of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants, extending to encompass denizens of border regions. Those residing in border regions are grappling with the ramifications, as their accustomed lives are disrupted by stringent border controls, closures, and often border violence. In conclusion, the global landscape is being reshaped by the renewed centrality of borders, fueled by transformative events and evolving global dynamics.

The Renaissance of Borders? More Than 'More Borders'

During the 1990s, there was a prevailing sentiment of envisioning a world without borders, particularly following the collapse of the Iron Curtain (Ohmae 1999 [1990]). This era was marked by dreams of an interconnected global community, where barriers between nations seemed to be diminishing. However, the landscape drastically shifted in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks. The once-optimistic vision of borderless interactions was overshadowed by a stark reality: the proliferation of borders in various forms. The new borders were not solely confined to physical boundaries but encompassed an intricate web of security measures, ideological divisions, and heightened scrutiny. Since then, the very concept of borders has taken on multifaceted dimensions, encompassing not only geographical lines but also socio-political, cultural, and perceptual divides. Clearly, while globalization led to increased interconnectedness, it has not erased the significance of borders. Instead, it has highlighted their adaptability and enduring relevance. The post-9/11 era emphasized the need to balance security concerns with the openness that characterizes a globalized world. In the process, it became evident that borders were not relics of the past but pivotal aspects of shaping contemporary geopolitical dynamics. Over the past few decades, there has been a noticeable uptick in discussions centered around the securitization of borders, underscored by the emergence of border walls and fences. The proliferation of such physical barriers has become a prominent trend, giving rise to assertions that the world is witnessing a surge in the number of borders. While at the end of the Cold War there were 15 border fortifications in the form of border walls, there were already 70 in existence around the world in 2017 (Vallet 2017). According to Élisabeth Vallet, the total number of walls more than tripled in the 20 years after the end of the Cold War (2014, 1–2). These walls, as she states, "are artefacts of a new era in international relations and of a new understanding of the very idea of the border" (ibid., 2).

This new meaning of the border highlights the growing emphasis on security concerns and the implementation of tangible measures to control and safeguard national boundaries. The notion that there are now more borders than ever is reflective of the heightened attention given to fortifying and demarcating territorial limits through the construction of various forms of barriers. When we speak of a *border renaissance*, we might, therefore, mean that there is a resurgence of borders, that is a quantitative increase in the number of borders.

The question then arises whether there are really more borders now than ever and whether the increase in numbers leads to the new centrality of borders in public and academic discourse. If we count border fortifications, then yes; in the 21st century more walls are being built than ever before. But is not the discernibility and potency of borders more crucial than sheer numbers? The heightened visibility and emphasis on borders due to factors such as securitization, border walls, fences, border closures, and stricter border controls is certainly a more powerful factor to borderization than countable borders. As Jussi Laine has stressed, "We have witnessed a consistent drive for ever stricter border and migration policies, which are not limited to mere border management but become an inherent part of a wide range of polices and societal practices" (2021, 746). This evolving landscape speaks to the complex interplay between security considerations and the changing dynamics of cross-border interactions. What is certain is that the rise of security concerns, geopolitical shifts, and changes in migration patterns has led to increased discussions and actions related to border fortification and control. And this can give the impression that there are more borders in a broader sense, even if the actual number of international boundaries remains relatively stable.

What is Border Renaissance?

What then do we mean by the term *border renaissance* in this volume? In the opening article of this special issue, Victor Konrad is asking the following question: "Are we simply witnessing border *renascence*, a revival of the statist boundary, increasingly dormant in globalization? Or, is the *renaissance* of the border new growth in a newly defined era arising from the confusion, bewilderment, puzzlement, and incomprehension of the border in the early twenty-first century?" (Konrad 2024, this issue).

Distinguishing between *border renascence* and *border renaissance*, Konrad's question sets the tone for this issue, with the following articles aiming at providing answers to these questions.

Most papers address the perplexity of borders in the 21st century. This leads us to think of the current border perplexity as the defining moment of and the triggering point for the renaissance of borders. Perplexity allows us to "think about the experiential contradictions of globalization as a series of processes that often overwhelm subjects" by "marking the tension between overlapping, opposing, and asymmetric forces or fields of power" (Ramamurthy 2003, 525). Border perplexity, the manifold forms of confusion, insecurities, and feelings of incomprehension around borders, is closely related to senses of crises. And the papers suggest that the confusion and bewilderment with regard to borders in Europe stem from practices like "covidfencing" (Medeiros et al. 2021) and the sealing off of Europe during the migration management crisis, as Christian Wille argues. The new "age of borderization" (Wille 2024b, this issue) is characterized by at least three crises—the Global Financial Crisis, the Refugee Crisis, and the COVID-19 Crisis, as Ondřej Elbel suggests (2024, this issue). Generally, crises are viewed as breaks or ruptures, which separate two "states of normality" from each other (Redfield 2005, 335), but it has become clear that for most of the time we live in a constant state of emergency (Fellner forthcoming 2024). The current crises have generated new opportunities for the growth of populist leaders and populist ideas, which circulate in the media, as the three discourse analyses of selected European newspapers and political campaigns in this issue show. All around the world, the new forms of borderization that mark this feeling of border perplexity "constitute a challenge for the democratic system as a whole" (Mogiani 2024, this issue). Clearly then, we are witnessing a new era in which the border comes to matter prominently in all spheres of political, social, and private lives.

This border renaissance gives rise to a series of problems, ranging from violent border escalations, terrorism, the rise in nationalism, the erosion of democracy, migration, and threats such as economic crises, health and humanitarian crises, as well as the sharpening of social inequalities. Clearly, what we are witnessing in the 21st century is a *renaissance* of borders, engendered by a crises-induced border perplexity, more so than a *renascence*, a mere proliferation of a statist border. This assessment of the situation can be substantiated by looking at the different histories and usages of the two terms.

When proclaiming a *border renaissance* in recent times, this view invokes the emergence of a discernible period or phenomenon, akin to the historical European Renaissance, marked by a resuscitation and flourishing of the very idea of borders. This construct draws parallels with the historical epoch in 14th to 16th century Europe, in which the cultural, artistic, and intellectual realms experienced a reawakening and blooming, signaling a comparable resurgence today in the relevance and vibrancy of borders within our modern context. The question is how the achievements of the Great Renaissance, such as book print and the establishment of (written) vernacular languages, which engendered the epochal transformations, developments, and discoveries this period brought forward in the spirit of a new philosophical and humanist thought, can be translated into present times and set into relation to the developments centering on borders which we have been observing. We can attribute a similar innovative potential to the technological advancements initiating the Information Age in the middle of the last century, which, paired with an accelerated globalization and a spiraling market, has yielded the current polycrises. Borders, in this nascent new world, oscillate between protective barriers and filters aiming at maintaining and securing the established world order and its distribution of wealth and resources, crystallization points of (geo) political as well as socio-cultural battles, and creative spaces spawning new ways thinking and a vital cultural production.

Much like other *renaissances*, like the American Renaissance in the 1850s, the Harlem Renaissance, the Southern Renaissance, or the Chicano Renaissance, which all ignited a rejuvenation of human creativity and thought in the arts and in literature, the notion of *border renaissance* signifies a revival in the significance, malleability, and potency of borders within the intricate tapestry of contemporary geopolitical and cultural dynamics. Surely, in our times borders are increasingly moving into the center of aesthetic negotiations (Fellner 2021; Schimanski & Wolfe 2007, 2017; Schimanski & Nyman 2021; Konrad & Amilhat Szary 2023). Conspicuously, border cultural productions and narratives of border crossings have gained prominence beyond the classic border literatures, such as Chicanx literature, and have encompassed postcolonial, diasporic, and intercultural literatures, becoming globally important in narratives of (im)migration, diaspora, and flight (Fellner 2023, 20). In fact, because of the increased attention that questions of mobility and migration have received, one can say that there has been a downright "border turn" in literary and cultural studies (Schimanski 2017; Fellner 2023). By invoking the term *border renaissance*, we then elicit a profound recognition of the evolving role of border literature and art (dell'Agnese & Amilhat Szary 2015). Kirsten Sandrock's article in this issue shows that the recent resurgence of British bordering practices has resulted in a rise in border literature, so-called BrexLit (Shaw 2018). Conspicuously, as works by postcolonial and Black British authors show, British borders are globally entangled with the legacy of empire and the colonial histories of race and class.

As has been stated by many critics, the border, as a marginal place on the fringes of the nation state, can be seen as a privileged place of representation in which something new arises through the meeting of multiple cultures and through the act of cultural translation (Fellner 2023, 21-25). Borderlands represent places of "politically exciting hybridity, intellectual creativity, and moral possibility" (Johnson & Michaelsen 1997, 3) and are areas in which border culture emerges (Konrad & Amilhat Szary 2023). They are also areas which can produce "hybrid counter-energies" (Said 1993, 335), i.e., resistive energies and creative forces that have the potential to interrupt, denaturalize and dismantle hegemonic border formations. A true *border renaissance* in the arts and literature then also provides a space for explorative investigations of new ways of border knowing, and the undoing or unknowing of conventional understandings of borders, focusing on interactions between material and immaterial manifestations of the border and the various forms of medial, visual, literary, and other cultural expressions (Fellner & Burgos 2021).

The term *renascence* was formed within English by derivation from the word *renascent* (Oxford English Dictionary 2023) and was introduced by Matthew Arnold in 1868 as a synonym for the French loanword *renaissance*.[2] In our context, though, as Konrad suggests in this issue, a difference can be made between the two terms: "The renaissance border aims to diminish lines of control that are excessive and counter-productive to mutual engagement at the border. [...] The renascence border, on the other hand, built on distinction, division, alienation and othering, revives directions of colonialism and imperialism" (Konrad 2024, this issue). While doubts remain that the border, even after experiencing its own renaissance, might move away from its colonial, imperialist, and racist filtering function, we do agree on the productivity of distinguishing the two concepts when making observations about today's borders. While border renascence surely is ubiquitous at the moment, border renaissance is characterized by an augmented importance that goes beyond mere delineations on maps. Rather, it symbolizes a versatile and adaptive landscape where borders intersect with cultural, economic, political, and technological factors.

Towards a Border Modernity?

The resonance of border renaissance thus lies in its capacity to encapsulate the evolving nature of borders as dynamic constructs, which in an era of unprecedented connectivity and at times of polycrisis embodies the renewed significance and multidimensional potency of borders in navigating the intricacies of our modern world. During the past 20 years, the field of Border Studies has grappled with these societal challenges, evolving into a multidisciplinary endeavor that examines the multiplicity, complexity, and

multi-scalarity of the border that goes against the dominant hegemonic, common-sense understanding of the binary logic of the border (Laine 2016; Parker & Vaughan-Williams 2012; Wille 2024a). Concepts such as borderscapes (Brambilla 2015; Brambilla et al. 2015) and bordertextures (Weier et al. 2018; Wille et al. forthcoming) have been developed, which critically question the manifold interconnectedness of rules, semantics and other constructions that arise through and around borders. Clearly, as Konrad has reminded us, the renewed importance of bordering processes asks for a recalibration of the study of borders (2021, 2). Can this proliferation of scholarly attention to borders bring about a border modernity which can yield transformative outcomes? Does the multifaceted resurgence of the study of borders in current times have the potential of mirroring the transformative spirit of all other cultural rebirths? If border renaissance is a resurgence of borders, a "strong, active, and vibrant renewal" (Konrad 2024, this issue) which arises out of a state of border perplexity, then border modernity refers to the new era that builds on the creative energies unleashed by the intensification of borders and bordering processes. Concurrently, this new time born out of border perplexity requires not only new ways of thinking about borders but also a re-thinking of the understanding of modernity, away from a metropolitan notion of modernity towards a modernity that arises in the borderlands.

As Mary Louise Pratt reminds us, the Euro/American-centered version of modernity that followed the Renaissance in the 14th to the 16th centuries, that is "metropolitan modernity",[3] can best be described as an "*identity discourse*, as Europe's (or the white world's) identity discourse as it assumed global dominance" (Pratt 2002, 27–28, emphasis in the original). As she explains:

> The need for narratives of origins, distinctive features, and reified Others, and the policing of boundaries combined with the slippery capacity to create and erase otherness as needed are the signposts of identity discourses. Hence, the centrism of modernity is in part ethnocentrism, though it does not readily identify itself in this manner. (Pratt 2002, 28)

Framed as an identity discourse, modernity can be understood as a project which has marked some people(s) and cultures as modern while relegating other cultures to a position of alterity. Clearly, the metropolitan discourse on modernity entails a way of thinking about history in terms of capitalist development and imperial expansion. It is in this sense that Walter Mignolo has viewed colonialism as the "darker side" of modernity in his *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Coloniality "is constitutive of modernity—there is no modernity without coloniality", Mignolo has famously

argued (2000, 3). Critics have shown that, in fact, there have been other modernities, "alternative modernities" (Gaonkar 2001) or a "peripheral modernity" (Sarlo 1988; Fellner 2018). The rise of a border modernity in the wake of border renaissance in current times could contribute to a rethinking of the "constitutive relations between metropolitan modernity, on the one hand, and colonialism, neocolonialism, and slavery, on the other hand" (Pratt 2002, 29).

The current renaissance of borders is akin to the phenomenon that John Morán González made out for the early 20th century in Texas. In *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican American Literature*, he defines border modernity as "the full capitalist incorporation of south Texas into national and global economies as a consequence of colonial duress" (2010, 9), arguing that Texas Mexican writers portray it "as a communally traumatic experience" (2010, 10) marked by "erosion of civil rights, the loss of ancestral lands, and an explosion of violence, physical and symbolic" (2010, 10). Mexican American literature, in other words, offered important cultural work in the development of a model for communal survival in times of crisis. As González explains:

> Given the traumatic reorganization of everyday life for Texas Mexicans throughout the early twentieth century, the social conundrum was not so much about whether or not to (be)come modern as much as the necessity of negotiating the currents of border modernity that were rapidly changing labor relations, gender roles, linguistic and other cultural practices, and the very sense of a coherent, knowable communal identity. (2010, 10)

The current moment of polycrisis can also be considered a communally traumatic experience of rupture. The future trajectory could accentuate an even more brutal and racially biased approach to border control, perpetuating violent biopolitics that marginalize and oppress vulnerable populations. Building on González's understanding of border modernity, which in contrast to the metropolitan modernity of the time, focused on the "radical displacements of modern life" that "developed within the dynamics of racial domination" (2010, 10), we see in the current renaissance of borders the potential of a transformative border modernity, a type of new thinking that comes from the border and that goes against populist, xenophobic, and racist discourses. From the perspective of the periphery, the current moment could also take a different turn.

The 21st-century border renaissance could usher in a paradigm shift, a new way of border thinking, as articulated by scholars like Walter Mignolo. This perspective suggests that amidst the challenges of biopolitics and border control, there lies an opportunity for a new way of thinking (about and from) borders. This entails moving beyond conventional notions and exploring alternative approaches that encompass

collaboration, empathy, and inclusivity. The question, of course, arises whether the cultural and political work of Border Studies can really go beyond dominant hegemonic understandings of the borders and offer a new framework that can nurture the seeds of a transformative border modernity in times of crises. The impending emergence of a new modernity following the border renaissance is poised to be shaped by the intricate intersections of borders with cultural, economic, political, and technological dimensions. Border modernity will be underpinned by the renewed significance, adaptability, and vitality that the reinvigorated concept of borders brings to the forefront. It will acknowledge that borders are not stagnant barriers but living entities that respond dynamically to changing circumstances, and it will engage with the complexities of migration, security, and societal transformations, fostering an environment of resilience and innovation.

Many border studies critics are currently engaged in carving out a framework that can offer "new directions at the post-globalization border" (Konrad 2021; see also Laine 2021). As Konrad writes, "This framework is dynamic, and therefore temporary, merely offering a preliminary structure much like the scaffolding that surrounds and contains the emerging edifice of border studies epistemology" (2021, 2). We cannot foresee at this moment in which ways technological advancements will play an instrumental role in this new border modernity, with borders adapting to harness the potential of digital realms. But the increased permeability of borders in virtual space might have the potential to lead to a modernity defined by connectivity, information sharing, and the democratization of knowledge.

In this evolving landscape, the symbiotic relationship between borders and cultural dynamics could yield a modernity that embraces diversity and recognizes the fluidity of identity. Will the interplay between borders and political frameworks have the power to reshape governance paradigms and will it be able to foster an inclusive modernity that accommodates a multitude of perspectives and values? The current moment of polycrisis which is deeply concerned with coming to terms with the many challenges leaves little hope for a renewal. But maybe it is too early to make a prediction. It is our hope, though, that the thoughts and ideas brought forth in the articles in this volume will be a starting point in the right direction.

The Resurgence of Borders: Where Are We?

As the articles in this issue show, the contemporary resurgence of borders manifests itself in an increasingly harsh and discriminatory border regime characterized by the utilization of advanced technologies, reinforced security measures, and a heightened emphasis on exclusionary practices. The potential for a positive transformation lies in harnessing the adaptability and

renewed vitality that characterize this border renaissance. By embracing new ways of border thinking, societies can break free from the constraints of entrenched prejudices and fear-based policies. This approach could lead to innovative strategies that address migration, security, and global interdependence through cooperative frameworks, constructive dialogues, and cultural exchange.

This special section provides such an open space for investigations of the return to borders, gauging the impact of this recent border perplexity, which has led to a renaissance of borders in political and media discourses and cultural representations of borders and borderlands. The geographical focus of the individual papers lies primarily on Europe with brief references to North America and Asia. Zooming in on questions of recent border conflicts, tensions, and struggles, on the one hand, and questions of identity, language practices, and forms of belonging, on the other, the essays highlight border perplexity and bewilderment, but also border rebirth and revival, presenting new research on recent developments in territorial/spatial and cultural Border Studies. Coming from a wide variety of disciplines, such as geography, cultural studies, literature, linguistics, and political sciences, the authors explore the renewed interest in borders and the many instances of borderizations.

The issue opens with a written rendition and translation of a speech that Jean Asselborn, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg gave at the conference "Border Renaissance: Recent Developments in Territorial, Cultural, and Linguistic Border Studies" on February 4, 2022, in which he talked about the different "stress tests" that the EU has had to undergo in the recent years (Appendix). The following articles are then prefixed by the opening article by Victor Konrad, who raises the guiding question of this issue whether the notion of border renaissance can "illuminate the broadening and deepening of border complexity," going beyond an account of a mere "revival of statist boundaries". Christian Wille then analyzes the situation in Europe during the COVID-19 period, placing the idea of border renaissance within the context of theoretical deliberations in times of renewed forms of borderization. The next three articles deal with media reports and medial representations within the EU. Ondřej Elbel deals with the geopolitical challenges and nationalistic narratives that have defined recent European political discourse, which has challenged the so-called "Schengen culture" (Zaiotti 2011) that before had prided itself on free cross-border movement. His analysis of news articles from six major European newspapers exposes the context of the border debate as it has evolved under the impact of various crises since the 2010s, foremostly the 'migration crisis' and the COVID-19 crisis. Alina Mozolevska's article also provides a critical discourse analysis on European discourses of the politicization of borders, zooming in

on the construction of borders and new narratives of exclusion and inclusion in French right-wing populist discourse. Kamil Bembnista's analysis then shifts the focus to the German–Polish borderlands, providing an insight into multimodal discursive practices in German and Polish regional newspapers in the period between 2007 and 2019. The two concluding pieces attempt to make sense of the border complexity in Europe by addressing cultural and societal implications of the renaissance of borders. Marco Mogiani's argument entails that the recent European re-bordering practices in fact constitute a challenge for the democratic system as a whole. Drawing the importance to new forms of bordering practices, he shows that the resurgence of borders in Europe also implies new forms of racial discrimination, political and economic power, and colonial violence. The legacy of Europe's colonial past is also addressed in Kirsten Sandrock's article. Offering a literary analysis of recent works by postcolonial and Black British authors, Sandrock shows in which ways literary texts that address Brexit offer important spatial epistemologies of empire that are still prevalent in 21st-century debates on borders in Europe.

As the articles show, the concept of *border renaissance* implies foremostly a resurgence in the importance and vitality of borders.[4] Clearly, it also mirrors the cultural, artistic, and intellectual rebirth inherent in the term renaissance when it comes to the study and academic analysis of borders, which is critical of the recent trend of border securitization and borderization. In this context, *border renaissance* refers to a renewed significance, adaptability, and potency of borders and Border Studies within contemporary geopolitical dynamics. The term implies that borders are not only static barriers but dynamic entities that respond to shifting global paradigms. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, the renaissance of borders reveals the intricate interplay between discourses of migration, security, trade, and identity in which borders emerge as pivotal agents in shaping our lives. As it becomes clear, the current moment holds a dual potential. While it could steer towards an even more oppressive and divisive border regime than before, it also offers a gateway to a fresh way of conceiving borders. Here we hope to offer a lens for viewing the idea of border renaissance as a springboard for a new thinking about borders in a post-globalized world.

Notes

1 This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158

2 As Arnold said, "The great movement which goes by the name of the Renaissance (but why should we not give to this foreign word, destined to become of more common use amongst us, a more English form, and say Renascence?)" (1868, 751).

3 According to Pratt, metropolitan discourses on modernity refer to the way in which "modernity talks about itself at the center, that is, in Northern Europe and North America" (23). The center/periphery distinction is important for Pratt, as "[t]he idea of modernity [...] was one of the chief tropes through which Europe constructed itself as a center, as *the* center, and the rest of the planet as a—its—periphery" (27, emphasis in the original).

4 Some of the essays in this issue were first presented as papers at the closing conference of the Interreg VA Greater Region project "European Center of Competence and Knowledge in Border Studies" in February 2022. Others were especially commissioned for this special issue. The editors of this issues want to express their thanks to Laurie Ross for her help with translating and Arwen McCaffrey for proofreading.

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Appendix

"Borders in Europe During a Pandemic: What Lessons Should We Learn from the Crisis?"

— Jean Asselborn, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, 2004 to 2023.

Speech at the Conference "Border Renaissance: Recent Developments in Territorial, Cultural, and Linguistic Border Studies" via video connection (Zoom), Friday, February 4, 2022.

LE GOUVERNEMENT
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
et européennes

Mr. Theis,
Prof. Dr. Birte Nienaber,
Prof. Dr. Astrid Fellner,
Dr. Kreft,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be able to attend this conference today at the invitation of the University of the Greater Region Center for Border Studies. I regret that due to scheduling reasons it was not possible for me to come to Saarbrücken in person, and I therefore welcome this opportunity to be able to virtually share a view from Luxembourg with you on this important topic. The ambition of the UniGR-Center for Border Studies is to become a center of European excellence, and experiences we have had during the pandemic have shown that it is more important than ever to draw attention to and respond to the specific needs of people in border regions.

Like many others, my ears pricked up upon hearing the title of this conference: A "Renaissance of Borders"? In the EU? This is something that must not be allowed to happen, and I therefore welcome the fact that this conference is not only dealing with this issue, but also with various other disturbing tendencies that have arisen in recent years. Our common Schengen area has had to cope with three major stress tests in recent years: the terrorist attacks, the migratory movements, and the pandemic. This third stress test must not be the fatal blow that heralds the end of the freedom of movement we hold so dearly. Particularly in the context of the corona crisis, the issue of borders has once

again come to the fore in the day-to-day work of the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when, in often hasty knee-jerk reactions, the almost forgotten borders once again became impermeable and border controls or even closures were back on the agenda.

Overcoming borders has always been a constant objective of Luxembourg's foreign policy. This is not at all surprising because a small country—Luxembourg is only a few square kilometers larger than Saarland—will likely prosper even less than larger countries behind closed external borders. It is, of course, about the need to join a larger economic area and ensure the free movement of workers, but, more importantly: to guarantee a harmonious coexistence across borders. Furthermore, in the light of our history, we Luxembourgers have always been aware that it is essential for us to promote European integration in order to preserve the country's independence in the long term. Integrating territories and transcending borders—both in the minds of the people as well as physically by removing the barriers—was and is a policy of peace and at the same time a part of the Luxembourg reason of state.

Thirty-five years ago, the Schengen Agreement was signed. Incidentally, this was an initiative that was initiated by the three Benelux countries. Since 1985, the charming wine-growing village of Schengen in Luxembourg has been known far beyond Europe and is the epitome of what we throughout Europe understand to be a borderless coexistence. In the meantime, these achievements have been incorporated into European Union law as what is known as the Schengen acquis.

Schengen does not simply mean the abolition of border controls and the free movement of persons. Schengen means freedom and is—alongside the euro—one of the most tangible achievements of European integration policy. This is an achievement that is crucial to defend. As the last two years since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic have shown, this achievement is by no means as secure as we would have hoped.

The new border closures and border controls that started in the spring of 2020, as well as other indirect measures such as quarantine measures, were a real source of trauma for our region and have deeply shaken confidence in open borders. No other region in Europe has grown together as much as the Greater Region, which alone has more than 250,000 cross-border workers, the majority of them in Luxembourg. That is about 10 percent of the cross-border workers in the entire European Union. The Greater Region in which we live is a highly integrated and interconnected area—one in which Europe is lived out and experienced, day in, day out. For decades, family, economic, and professional relationships have been established and strengthened here beyond the borders. People have trusted that this border will never again be an obstacle between our

countries and have aligned their lives accordingly. This is the result of decades of work.

It is now time that we learn the right lessons from this crisis. Europe is growing together at the borders. That is why the border regions must be treated with particular care. Important decisions are still all too often made on the basis of national borders as a concept. The regions at the EU's internal borders, which have extremely close ties, account for 30 percent of the population, which corresponds to about 150 million people. Luxembourg has inspired a very concrete proposal from the Benelux countries and the Baltic countries to initiate a debate at the EU level: in the future, the specific situation of cross-border communities should be systematically taken into account in national and European decision-making processes. In the future, this "cross-border check" that we are proposing is meant to be just as much a matter of course for legislative proposals as taking proportionality and subsidiarity into account.

We are also committed to incorporating the lessons we have learned from the recent crisis into the current reform of the Schengen rules. The special protection of border regions and citizens, whose way of life—if not their lives themselves, as we saw in spring 2020—depend on open borders, should be better anchored in this framework. Freedom of movement should once again become the rule and not the exception. Luxembourg is committed to this with concrete proposals in the discussions at the EU level and counts on the support of the Member States in particular who have had similar experiences as we have had here in the Greater Region.

Luxembourg will do its utmost to promote this new European approach to internal borders during its Benelux Presidency this year. We are also pleased about the active support we have received from the Greater Region. In a letter to Commission President von der Leyen in December 2020, the previous Saarland Presidency of the Greater Region already pointed out that the specific realities of a highly networked region such as this one should be taken more into account, also and especially in times of crisis. I am pleased that the French Presidency now wants to go into more depth on this very idea in a "white paper", in which all representatives of the Greater Region will jointly learn the lessons from the crisis in order to allow them to become a part the pan-European debate. Incidentally, it is also clear here how important it is that local decision-makers, who strive every day to do justice to cross-border realities, make themselves heard by their central governments, which are sometimes very far away, be it in Berlin or Paris or anywhere else in Europe.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the debate on the future of borders, however, I do not simply want to focus on the internal European dimension, but also want to say a few words about our European external borders.

The recent treatment of refugees on the Belarusian border shows how the tone around the EU's external borders has intensified. Negotiations on a common refugee policy within the EU have been stalled for years. This is mainly about relieving the burden on the countries of arrival in the south and redistributing those entitled to asylum.

Recently, however, we have noticed with concern that some Member States have been considering securing their external borders by means of fences and walls. Luxembourg has spoken out clearly against the financing of permanent walls on the external borders, as was demanded by around a dozen Member States. In such a debate, one must not succumb to populist temptation, but rather work on concrete and humane solutions.

A fortress Europe will find it difficult to remain a model of cosmopolitanism, humanity, and innovation. Those who reflexively put up barbed wire at the sight of thousands of people seeking protection do not put human well-being first. This will not make it any easier for Europeans to bring their message of universal human rights to the world in a credible manner in the future.

In addition to human suffering and economic consequences, the COVID-19 pandemic has also stimulated a variety of forms of cooperation and revealed cross-border dependencies and solidarity, which must now be organized and strengthened through European and national measures, taking full account of the specificities of cross-border regions.

We must place cross-border cooperation where it belongs—at the heart of the European integration project. It is at the borders where citizens experience the real benefits of European integration.

Thank you for your attention.

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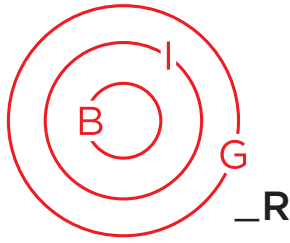
Border Renaissance in a Time of Border Perplexity? The Question of Renaissance/Renascence in a Post-Globalization World

Victor Konrad *

This essay explores questions of why and how there can be a border renaissance in a time of border profusion and confusion. Are we simply witnessing border renascence, a revival of the statist boundary, despite globalization? Or is the renaissance of the border new growth arising from incomprehension of the border in the 21st century? With reference to research in North America, Southeast Asia, and Europe, this article examines the entangled state of the border to discern what is unaccountable from what is complicated and to differentiate rebirth and revival of classical border thinking from that which addresses the perplexity of borders. In my view, a renaissance in border studies flirts with a return to the archaic through definition and explication of borders everywhere. A true renaissance in border studies must confront the entangled state as process, spirit, style, form, and other influences at once rooted in the classical and portrayed and performed in a post-globalization era of border rediscovery. The goal of this essay is to confront the notion of border renaissance, not to diminish the concept, but to reveal the fuller meaning and impact of border rebirth and revival.[1]

What is new about borders in a post-humanistic world, where humans are waking to the limits of their environment, and in an era of post-globalization, when boundaries are multiplying in number and complexity? Can the notion of border renaissance illuminate the broadening and deepening of border complexity, more than just account for a revival of statist boundaries—a renascence of borders? How do we situate the ideas of border renascence and renaissance into emerging border theory and discourse?

In this article, I explore the questions of why and how there can be a border renaissance in a time of border profusion and confusion. Are we simply witnessing border *renascence*, a revival of the statist boundary, increasingly dormant in globalization? Or is the

renaissance of the border new growth in a newly defined era arising from the confusion, bewilderment, puzzlement, and incomprehension of the border in the early 21st century? Renaissance and renascence are synonyms, yet when these terms are applied to borders, a subtle and potentially rich differentiation is possible. Border renaissance is envisioned and theorized as a new order of border comprehension and realization as well as a clarified imaginary to illuminate border theory. On the other hand, border renascence is viewed as a more limited, somewhat reactionary, and constrained process and product of state control and confinement of the border. I argue that both border renascence and border renaissance emerge from the entangled state of the border in the 21st century, but whereas border renaissance transcends the entanglement with the

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creation and innovation of border spaces and places, border renascence only confirms and defends state presence at the border. For border renascence, the emphasis lies in reformation, the revival of something that has been dormant. Border renaissance, I suggest, is a rebirth that goes further to a strong, active, and vibrant renewal, where phoenix-like a new era is born. Renaissance becomes capitalized.

With reference to research in North America, Europe, and Southeast Asia, I examine the entangled state of the border to discern what is unaccountable from what is complicated and differentiate the rebirth and revival of classical learning and wisdom about borders from what simply addresses the perplexity of borders. My central argument is that a true renaissance in borders and in border studies must confront the entangled state as process, spirit, style, form, and other potential influences at once rooted in the classical and formative period of border studies and portrayed and performed in a post-globalization era of border re-discovery.

The goal of this discussion is to confront the notion of border renaissance, not to diminish the concept, but to reveal the fuller meaning and impact of border re-birth and revival, and the study of this avowed renaissance. In my view, a renaissance in border studies flirts with a return to an archaic and chaordic definition and explication of borders everywhere. Our approach needs to unpack border complexity and explicate border perplexity to reveal the nature of the 21st-century border in dislocated time and space and substantiate the essence and meaning of border renaissance in a context of post-humanism and post-globalization. At the same time, our approach to borders in the 21st century needs to capture the substance and unveil the connections of entanglement.

The essay is organized into several sections that contribute to a more incisive understanding and appreciation of border renaissance, and to differentiate renaissance from renascence. After establishing a border renaissance lexicon, the study builds a framework for understanding border renaissance in three steps. The first step is to explore the emergence of the idea of border renaissance. Then, I show how creating borders of the state has extended the dichotomy of reformation and renaissance. This discussion enables us to evaluate border theory at a crossroads. The theoretical discussion then is enlarged and illustrated within three regional contexts: the Canada–U.S. border and North American borders and borderlands, China's border with Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, and Europe's multitude of live and raw edges. Drawing from these examples, and the theoretical discussion, the 'renaissance border' that I put forward is idealized as intertwining cultures, societies, and space in advanced places where, according to Jussi Laine (2021), ethical choice and equal representation prevail.

The conclusions, however, express that a substantial gap remains between idealization and manifestation of the renaissance border.

A Border Renaissance/Renascence Lexicon

In 1912, Edna St. Vincent Millay, the renowned American poet, published her well-known poem *Renascence* (Millay [1912] 1991, 1–8). The memorable first stanzas read:

> All I could see from where I stood
> Was three long mountains and a wood;
> I turned and looked the other way,
> And saw three islands and a bay.
> So with my eyes I traced a line
> Of the horizon, thin and fine.
> Straight around till I was come
> Back to where I started from;
> And all I saw from where I stood
> Was three long mountains and a wood.
>
> Over these things I could not see;
> These were the things that bounded me;
> And I could touch them with my hand,
> Almost, I thought, from where I stand.
> And all at once things seemed so small
> My breath came short, and scarce at all.

Millay contemplates the limits of vision and experience, then death and burial, and new birth. She continues to encompass sky and land within and beyond her reach and concludes that the borders of body and mind may be surpassed by heart and soul. In the poem *Renascence*, the insights for border studies lie in the notions of revival and rebirth, yet also in a continuing predestination and sustained confinement, even in revelation. I would argue that renaissance remains elusive for Millay, that she takes the reader to the edge of realization, the renascent border. She concludes:

> The world stands out on either side
> No wider than the heart is wide;
> Above the world is stretched the sky,—
> No higher than the soul is high.
> The heart can push the sea and land
> Farther away on either hand;
> The soul can split the sky in two,
> And let the face of God shine through.
> But East and West will pinch the heart
> That can not keep them pushed apart;
> And he whose soul is flat—the sky
> Will cave in on him by and by.

Reading borders in this powerful finish conveys the impasse where the human being is obliged through faith to make sense of the bounded world. This is a world of renascent borders.

Before we explore the notion of border renaissance, it is both useful and necessary to familiarize ourselves with the terms emerging in the discourse of border change and evolution. Arising from the time/space dislocations inherent in globalization (Harvey 1990), the information overload that has accompanied the explosion of information technologies (Graham 1998), and the shift toward a world of flows (Castells & Cardoso 1996), borders now are viewed as in *motion* (Konrad 2015; Nail 2016) and *mobile* (Amilhat-Szary & Giraut 2015). States, which once used borders unequivocally to establish boundaries of sovereignty and territory, have become *entangled* as people, goods, ideas, and all manner of allegiances that transcend borders. Entangled identities, for example, are evident in the component nations of Europe and the construct of the European Union (Spohn & Ichijo 2016). Entangled heritages convey the uses of the past in relating the postcolonial nature of Latin America (Kaltmeier & Rufer 2016). The *entangled state*, however, has mounted resistance to these border-blurring tendencies with border re-building in the form of tangible enhancements including walls, fences, and other physical barriers, and raised already formidable restrictions against the movement of unwanted people and unwelcome ideas. Borders have gained new credence, "shifting to geo- and body-politics of knowledge" and 'borders' in the 21st century have become what 'frontiers' were in the nineteenth century (Mignolo & Tlostanova 2006). Yet is this reconstruction of borders renewal and revival, or simply transformation?

One argument for the significant renewal and revival of borders in globalization is their redefinition and adaptation to dealing with the burgeoning global cultural economy (Walker 2007). The cultural economy—people, enterprises, and communities that transform cultural skills, knowledge, and ideas into economically productive goods, services, and places—which consists of components such as cinema, television, fashion, music, publishing, videogames, architecture, and advertisement, crosses boundaries yet may also be bordered. This bordering invokes new technologies and novel approaches based on expanded conceptualizations of borders and borderlands.

Is this *turning point* in the construction and maintenance of borders, evidence of a culmination of what borders once were, and a climax in border thinking? Or do our theories of borders at this point constitute merely another crossroads in border epistemology? Two other aspects support a significant turning point. One is that borders are viewed increasingly as post-humanistic, that is out of the control of humans and gaining from the invocation of nature (Nail 2019). A second aspect is that borders are now beyond globalization, and a part of the post-globalization geopolitical force-field (Konrad 2021). A significant and growing literature now addresses the post-humanistic border and the post-globalization border, and this literature supports the notion of a turning point in border thinking. Whereas the notions of post-humanistic border and post-globalization border are key concepts to understand the turn toward both border renascence and renaissance, they do not convey a complete explanation of border reformation in the 21st century.

In order to achieve a border renaissance there needs to be new growth from both learned profusion and prevailing confusion. Border reformation amounts to a lesser change toward national aggregation and delineation. This is border renascence, and border renascence is focused primarily on the revival of the statist boundary.

Border Renaissance: Emergence of an Idea

Joshua Hagen (2018, 1), in commenting on the state of borders and boundaries, estimates that "by the turn of the twentieth century, border studies could justifiably claim to be experiencing a renaissance". Hagen attributes the renaissance to the breakthrough of viewing borders as a process. Other leading scholars in border thought, notably David Newman (2006a, 2006b, 2010, 2016) and James Sidaway (2011), see "something of a renaissance" in border studies as early as the 1990s. Newman (2006b) accounts for the renaissance in part due to the crossing of disciplinary boundaries by researchers. Vladimir Kolossov and James W. Scott (2013) attribute a renaissance in border studies in part to the emergence of counter-narratives to globalization discourses of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The counter-narratives are buoyed by the fact that borders in the 21st century have become ubiquitous.

David Newman (2010, 87) refers to the Green Line between Israel and the West Bank as the "renaissance of a border that never died" and constructs the notion of renaissance around the renewal of resistance at and distinction of the border. According to Newman (2006a, 143), "lines continue to separate us" and this continuation of separation at the border is at once traditional and evolved, established and novel. The idea of renaissance emerges from the twist in what is and what it appears to be.

In the early modern period, borders were drawn between humans and imagined others with renaissance technologies of difference including the visualization of the unbelievable and the fantastic, the relegation of beasts to peripheries, and the creation of natural philosophy (Fudge et al. 1999). In Renaissance drama, ideas were seen to have borders just like countries do (Hopkins 2016). In the 20th century, ethnic groups framed their cultural revival in terms of a renaissance. The borders of new ideas, however, remain aligned

with political boundaries. *Border Renaissance* (Chicano Renaissance) is portrayed in the emergence of Mexican-American literature and art (Gonzalez 2010). This is an aesthetic and political rebirth, and a vital turning point in the Mexican-American struggle. In 1936, the Centennial celebration of Texas independence cast Texas Mexicans outside the imagined community of Texas and the United States, yet this turning point enlivened and expanded Mexican-Americans and Latinos in the U.S., generally, to imagine their distinct place in the United States of America.

Elsewhere in the world, Peace Parks and peacebuilding are aligned with an African border renaissance (Griggs 2000; van Amerom & Buscher 2005). Back along the contemporary Mexico–U.S. boundary, the complex imbrications of culture and economy create a border renaissance in Tijuana (Walker 2007). In Europe, new policies of EU integration transform internal borders into valuable places for integration in a renaissance in territorialization (Darnis 2015). Branding Canada, and establishing difference from the United States, involves a significant shift from "bordering out" to "bordering in" strategies, and constitute a renaissance of Canada's commercial diplomacy (Potter 2004, 55–56). Additional references to border renaissance are relatively sparse in the literature, but this may change as more border scholars explore the implications and dimensions of the border renaissance concept (Wille 2021; Wille et al. 2021).

Renascence: Borders of the State Extend the Dichotomy of Reformation and Renaissance

Weaving the hegemonic fabric of modern sovereignty, and creating borders of the state, has its roots in the early modern period, and is often expressed as originated in the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) (Elden 2013). The Treaty of Westphalia ensconced a framework for modern international relations emphasizing state sovereignty, mediation, and diplomacy. Borders emerged as the manifestation and articulation of this framework. Codified borders of the state are in effect a renaissance, because the borders once established become an indelible mark on the land and in the mind, and, one could argue, that all successive adjustment and alteration of boundaries is essentially reformation. This position expands the dichotomy of reformation and renaissance because each cumulative step of reformation extends the distance from the original imaginary of the border, and creation of a geopolitical renaissance. Beyond this renaissance, a hegemonic fabric of modern sovereignty and a vital, yet predictable, lattice of global borders evolve with each step of reformation. One could argue that, in the 21st century, borders, buffeted by globalization, forces of post-modernity, and now post-humanistic and post-globalization inclinations, have again metamorphosed into something new and different. This reformation may be characterized as renaissance, yet it may also be viewed as renascence.

According to Antonio Gramsci (Gramsci 1992, 2012; Jones 2006), the unity of modernity is paradoxically the result of division, and identity is difference with subordination. Cultural hegemony is the dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society using cultural institutions, and the normalization of capitalist ideas, to maintain power in capitalist societies. In Gramsci's view, the process of *reformation* expressed the need for national aggregation of the masses. Alternatively, *renaissance* expressed the need for the autonomous development of intellectuals. Gramsci saw this dichotomy as more evident in the European south. Following Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Gramsci envisioned the state as a partial fusion of 'mass' and 'reason', 'religion' and 'philosophy'. This is bourgeois culture's most powerful source of hegemony.

For Fabio Froscini (2012), the hegemonic fabric of modern sovereignty emerged through division within the state as well as between states. He postulates that reformation and renaissance together express two sides of modern state power, but they are rarely synthesized except in the German Idealism of Immanuel Kant and Friedrich Hegel. The culture of modern Europe repeats the antagonisms of society and re-establishes no longer given substantialities of reformation and renaissance.

If we focus this discussion on borders, we may recognize reformation in the constructs of the European Union (EU), the United States–Mexico–Canada trade accord (USMCA), and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Renaissance is more readily recognized in the post-globalization and post-humanistic border. Twenty-first-century borders re-engage the reformation/renaissance dialectic of the modern era, but also integrate the notions in novel articulations of bordering and boundary relations, including the concurrent vitalizations of European nationalisms and post-nationalisms, and the flexible bordering of Indigenous minorities along China's extensive border with Southeast Asia.

The confusion and profusion of bordering and boundary relations emerging from the impacts of globalization, resistance to these impacts, significant environmental change, and a global pandemic, all have contributed to border perplexity. Yet, it remains to be determined whether this is learned profusion, or a "natural system" effect, rather than information overload (Muller-Wille & Charmantier 2012). Are the entanglements discernable and perhaps by design, or are they chaotic? Is entanglement of borders a precondition to renaissance or a stage in reformation?

The entangled state in time/space dislocation is revealed at the border (Figure 1). We may differentiate separable states (state B and state C) from entangled states (state A and state C), and also discern different degrees of entanglement (state A and state B, versus state A and state C). The space between separable states is incised and decisive as portrayed by the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between South Korea and North Korea. Most spaces between states, however, display some degree of entanglement, and this entanglement varies along numerous axes of engagement, agreement, tradition, practice, and more. The border becomes both a turning point and crossroads as the border calibrates and expresses degrees of variation from the hegemonic fabric of modern sovereignty, all the while as the border sustains the underlying matrix of the fabric. Studies of the transformation to renewal in border regimes, for example, the changing national identity structures in the broader evolution of the European Union (Wille & Nienaber 2020), illustrate a relational yet discernable move from a process shift to a complexity shift (Wille et al. forthcoming). This shift to border complexity reinforces the notion that our thinking about the entangled state and its borders is at a crossroads. Chiara Brambilla (2023), in a current contribution to border studies, forwards rethinking borders through a complexity lens by articulating *complex textures* associated with borders. This work, following the French philosopher Edgar Morin, points to alternative political subjectivities and agencies in order to disentangle the border and cultivate a politics of hope.

Border Theory at a Crossroads

Although numerous and significant milestones and breakthroughs in border conception and theory building have occurred during the past four decades (Michaelsen and Johnson 1997; Newman and Paasi 1998; van Houtum 2000; Kolossov 2005; Brunet-Jailly 2005; van Houtum et al. 2005; Paasi 2005; Popescu 2011; Nail 2016; and recently many more), border theory remains at a crossroads, uncertain about which direction(s) to pursue. Is this juncture a renaissance in border studies? I would argue that border studies in their current situation could be envisioned as a border renaissance, if border specialists are able to discern and articulate, and differentiate, the prominences and interstices in the emerging framework of border theory (Konrad 2021). That is, can we ascertain what is essential and significant to creating a renaissance in border studies? A true renaissance demands knowledge beyond the *topography* of borderlands, borderscapes, and border agency and mobility. Otherwise, the 'border turn' will remain reactionary, antithetical, and a time when we are mindful largely of the branded border that is spectacularized, and anxious of our belongingness within and beyond borders (Konrad 2021, 716–718).
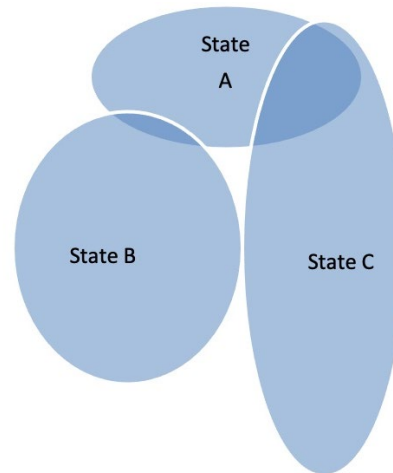
Figure 1. The Space Between Separable and Entangled States. Image prepared by the author.

The saga of how border theory has arrived at a 21st-century crossroads is entangled. There are numerous interpretations offered by scholars seeking a comprehensive theory of borders, and concluding, generally, that this goal remains elusive, and that we are indeed at a crossroads in border studies (see for example, Agnew 2008; Newman 2006a, 2006b; Paasi 2005; Scott & van Houtum 2009). Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary and I offer an overview of these efforts in the second chapter of our recent book *Border Culture* (Konrad & Amilhat-Szary 2023). This current overview and critique traces the emergence of classical border theory from Boas (1940) to Barth (1969) and on to Minghi (1963), Prescott (1965), Gottmann (1973), and others. It engages with the debates about the path to a comprehensive border theory (Agnew 2008; Newman 2006a; Paasi 2005; van Houtum 2000; and many more), and the emergence of critical border studies (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2014). It evaluates the contributions of a growing number of extensive multidisciplinary projects addressing borders in globalization and 21st-century borders. Concurrently, Thomas Nail's monograph *Border Theory* has offered an inverted framework (Nail 2016), and a post-globalization framework has been suggested by Konrad (2021). None of these theoretical contexts has yet garnered sufficient traction within border studies to predominate or elevate border theory consensus. Nevertheless, I would suggest that there is ample evidence that a consensus is growing in border studies, and that numerous new perspectives are contributing to a renaissance in border studies.

Meanwhile, the question of border renaissance also involves an enlarged and more balanced view of the entangled state of the border through celebratory and derogatory portrayal and performance. Substantial advances are evident in understanding the imagination of borders and the complex interactions of humans

with borders. The border may be a political construct, but to achieve, sustain, alter, manage, and remove borders, engages an extensive range of human agency beyond the political. The notion of border renaissance encompasses and is catalyzed by this expanded agency.

The fluorescence of border renaissance, I argue, is expressed in the intersection of aspects of this broader agency in the entangled state of the border. Although it is difficult to de-construct this border renaissance, it is possible to discern the components that contribute to its realization, and potentially illumination. Many of these components are discussed in the recent literature on interdisciplinary border studies. I will identify a selection of these components and then develop examples in the following case studies. Foremost among the components is *creativity* expressed in the bordering process, as well as in resistance to bordering (Heraud 2011). Borders and borderlands are also imbued with *spirit* (Hondagneau-Sotelo et al. 2004) and *style* (Alvarez and Collier 1994). These aspects characterize and brand borders.

There are many forms of borders and bordering (Konrad & Nicol 2008). One form that is increasingly evident is the *embodiment* of borders (Silvey 2005). Borders express *poetics* (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007) and *texture* (Fellner 2020a, 2020b). These components contribute to a *design* of borders (Kanai 2016). The border is a *text* and a *document* (Hicks 1991). Accordingly, the border enables *languaging* (Nossem forthcoming), and there is a *language* of borders (Konrad et al. 2019). Borders may be synonymous with *violence* and *warfare* (Staudt 2011) and they are complicit in *trauma*, *pain*, and *dislocation* (Schimanski 2019). All of these components of portrayal, performance, and stark reality, among others, engaged separately and in coordination, enliven and enlarge the border and contribute to border renaissance.

To achieve illumination of border renaissance, "overreliance on an idealized [notion] of entanglements, blurriness, or intertwining cultures, societies and space in the borderlands"[2] needs to be surpassed. As Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) has demonstrated in her visionary work, entanglement is multifunctional, ranging from a strategic response to imperialism, de-centering whiteness, and undermining the myth of the democratic nation-state based on borders and exclusions, but care must be taken not to conflate entanglement with equality or justice. Also, a focus on complexity without consideration of how power is wielded may render invisible the violence at the border. Dislocation, homelessness, Indigenous dispossession, and even death may be reduced to "theatre" or a broader range of performance, rather than material and meaningful loss and devastation. Border renaissance, like border renascence, is not necessarily illuminated as an advance in ethical, considerate, benevolent, and altruistic bordering.

Renaissance Border: Intertwining Cultures, Societies, and Spaces in Advanced Places of Ethical Choice and Equal Representation? Or, Renascence Border: Borders Lashed to the Evolving Nation State?

What could the renaissance border look like? In part, it could be a substantive advance beyond the confusion and dysfunction of the early 21st-century border. Also, the renaissance border could exhibit the intertwining of cultures, societies, and spaces in advanced places of ethical choice and equal representation. Entanglement would persist, but there could be greater logic and efficacy, more emphasis on what works and less perpetuation of what does not work. However, this vision needs to be tempered and grounded by the human propensity to amass and display power and engage in violence, often centered at borders. To portray the renaissance border, I offer an array of characteristics drawn from border research to color the vision. To develop the portrayal more fully, I also draw attention to the aspects that convey border renascence, thus outlining the conditions that take borders into a distinctly different direction and keep it tied umbilically to the evolution of the nation-state.

Table 1 lists the components of the divergence of border renaissance and border renascence. This is not necessarily an exhaustive characterization, yet it outlines major components of divergence and enables a comparative analysis. If we read across the table, the divergence of the renaissance and renascence borders becomes evident. The first component listed for the renaissance border is a celebration of entanglement and intertwining at the border, whereas the pursuit of the renascence border focuses on disentanglement and distinction at the border. Another step toward border renaissance is to view and engage reformation and renaissance as a continuum rather than a dichotomy. This is an approach consistent with allowing for a gradation of difference and a blurring of distinction rather than the focus on reformation in the move toward border renascence. Whereas, the renaissance border advances the core logic of balanced border effect, allowing for give and take, back and forth, and levelling out of border impacts, the renascence border maintains that borders divide, and it sanctifies this position. Accordingly, advocates of the renascence border are adamant that walls secure borders. Inherent in the idea of the renaissance border is the position that "walls don't work" (Dear 2013, 1), a position that has been proven repeatedly in human history from classical times to the Berlin Wall. Yet, the wall as a simple solution and panacea for entanglement, continues to appeal, and stands as a formidable barrier to the realization of border renaissance.

By taking down border walls, both metaphorically and physically, it may be possible to achieve and to expedite some of the other components of border renaissance.

Foremost among these is the rekindling of commonalities and connections that walls complicate if not prohibit. With walls, the state is more adept at establishing differences and enforcing division. Moreover, without the prominent, divisive symbol of the wall, cross-border agents and agencies can create and rejuvenate symbols of cooperation more effectively. The goal of border renascence is to emphasize symbols of distinction and building on these to extend mechanisms and tools for control, and ultimately border abuse. The renaissance border aims to diminish lines of control that are excessive and counter-productive to mutual engagement at the border. Thus, the renaissance border is constructed largely with responsible border imaginaries and valid border claims. The renascence border, on the other hand, built on distinction, division, alienation, and othering, revives directions of colonialism and imperialism.

The idealizations of border renaissance and border renascence, portrayed in the foregoing discussion and summarized in Table 1, simplify what is a complex and often impenetrable entanglement of states (and polities), societies, cultures, economies, and different people at the border. Separation and simplification at the border are increasingly difficult, given the increased mobility of people and ideas in successive eras of globalization and post-globalization. Furthermore, there are growing sentiments and initiatives, particularly among "borderlanders", to sustain and celebrate entanglement. In our contemporary world, replete with chaotic migration and environmental degradation, border people claim that entanglement is necessary for sustainability.

Table 1. Components of the Divergence of Border Renaissance and Border Renascence. Table prepared by the author.

Toward Border Renaissance	Toward Border Renascence
Celebrate entanglement as well as disentanglement	Pursue disentanglement
View and engage reformation and renaissance as continuum rather than dichotomy	Focus on reformation
Advance the core logic of balanced border effect	Borders divide
Walls don't work	Walls secure borders
Rekindle commonalities and connections	Establish differences
Create and rejuvenate symbols of cooperation	Emphasize symbols of distinction
Diminish lines of control	Extend mechanisms and tools for control: border abuse
Pursue responsible border imaginaries and valid border claims	Revive colonialism and imperialism

Yet, a danger is inherent in the valorization of border renaissance without consideration of how entangled state borders fashioned through cross-border cooperation and many forms of integration actually create layers of law and practice that are frequently manipulated by the most powerful actors, usually the nation-state, to enact violence, evade human rights, detain people, and then deny accountability. Anna C. Pratt and Jessica Templeman (2018) illustrate how overbearing state sovereignty performed by Canada and the United States constrains and diminishes Mohawk territorial rights and practices in Akwesasne through the Shiprider Program.

Can we advance beyond the separable to the entangled? What constitutes the active boundary between these states? Can articulation of this boundary lead to a fuller understanding of borders, and a renaissance of border studies? As Figure 1 (above) illustrates, there exists a theorized space, or at least a surface, between the separable and the entangled and this surface differs from the partially to completely entangled. I would suggest that this active boundary requires more exploration and theoretical consideration to advance our understanding of bordered space, and possibly lead to a renaissance in border thinking.

The Canada–U.S. Border and North American Borders and Borderlands

Along the extensive Canada–U.S. border, and North American borders generally, interwoven north–south and east–west process textures vary regionally (Fellner 2020a; Wille et al. 2021). North American border regions retain signature borderlands—Alaska–British Columbia cordilleran enclaves of cooperation, cross-border integration of New England and the Atlantic Provinces, the Tijuana–San Diego urban compact—yet, in these and other North American borderlands, the borders are being pushed back to binaries, and the antithetical border is taking hold. North American borderlands continue to exude creativity, style, spirit, and other features of border renaissance but the border has slipped into a danger zone. As emphasized in the case of the East Indian family attempting to cross the Canada–U.S. border near Emerson, Manitoba, caught out of their element, and frozen to death, North American borders have become perilous spaces where undesirable crossers are frozen at and in the border (Gowriluk 2022).

To cross, it is now mandatory to delineate and confirm where one belongs. This primary imperative has, over the past two decades, revived the dormant basic requirement of identity verification and shifted the border space into a state of renascence. However, the lines of control and resistance as seen in most North American border contexts, from El Paso to Tijuana along the southern border to Blaine, Washington, and Windsor, Ontario, along the northern border, are not

simply what they seem to be. The barriers may reveal beauty as revealed by the southern border fence and the renditions of protest that adorn it. The 2022 anti-vaccination convoy protests in Ottawa, aimed at reducing border restrictions on truckers, ultimately protested the action that would facilitate their crossing of the border (Ling 2022).

Although all North American border places have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions on top of enhanced inspection protocols of identity verification and clearing of goods, community entanglements prevail due to well-established interactions and commemoration. On the southern border, Pancho Villa's raid still looms over Columbus, New Mexico, and Palomas, Mexico, where the historic moment is celebrated, because it confirms place identity and draws visitors to an isolated cross-border community. Similarly, a new interpretive center reveals the linkages and shared heritage between recently re-bordered communities of Stanstead, Quebec, and Derby Line, Vermont (Figure 2). This Border Theatre renews the imaginary of integration of community and adds to the well-worn images of the Haskell Library and other borderline features of entanglement. The Border Theatre marks and emphasizes renewal and may contribute to border renaissance, certainly in this border place.

Border renaissance is a celebration and recognition of connections over differences. Numerous examples abide along the Canada–U.S. border. One is the "celebration" of Canada–Minnesota connections which include common vacationlands and waters, historical linkages, integrated resource economies, and Indigenous legacies across the border. Along the southern border, *Border Renaissance*

Figure 2. New Interpretive Center Between Quebec–Vermont. Image: Peter Kerr, "The Redevelopment of the Border Theatre is a Key Part of Stanstead's Renaissance" *The Montrealer* (July 11, 2020), no copyright listed.

is a published rendition of the Texas Centennial in 1932, an event that marked both the differentiation and distinction of Mexican Americans in the U.S., and their struggle for identity and recognition. Border renaissance is found in re-kindled commonalities and rejuvenated symbols of cooperation and connection. Among the foremost examples of this re-kindling and rejuvenation are the Peace Arch Park celebrations and family meetings that occurred during the pandemic border closures at the Blaine, Washington, and White Rock, British Columbia, crossing. Peace Arch Park is a space in between the United States and Canadian inspection posts along the border. During the border shutdown, the Park, marked by the prominent Peace Arch monument, accommodated friends and relatives from the United States and Canada who met in the space without leaving one country or entering the other (Figure 3). The border

Figure 3. Meeting During the Covid-19 Border Closure in the Space In-between, Peace Arch Park, USA–Canada. Image: photo credit Laurie Trautman.

emerged to personify commonality, and in that moment, and in that place, the border revealed what it could be. Yet, the fact remains that the Canada–U.S. border is an increasingly dangerous, sometimes unpredictable, often stressful space, and like its counterpart—the Mexico–U.S. border—the northern boundary that separates the United States from Canada is a border fraught with renascent impulses amid semblances of border renaissance.

China's Border with Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam

China borders fourteen nation-states including Russia, Japan, North Korea, India, and Pakistan. Consequently, China's border relationships vary substantially, particularly in recent decades as China has opened its borders with many of its neighbouring countries. Initiatives like the "Belt and Road" strategy of China, to secure land and sea routes beyond its borders, have expanded and extended cross-border interaction with neighbouring countries (Huang 2016). In southeastern Asia, China shares land borders with Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam in a rugged, mountainous terrain characterized by James C. Scott (2008) as beyond governance. This cross-border region, referred to as Zomia by Scott, is home to numerous ethnic minorities who retain militias to this day, and remain at odds with central governments, particularly in Myanmar. Traditional territories of many of these ethnic minorities extend across the official border which winds through uplands for 3000 kilometers from coastal Vietnam to the Himalayan apex of India, China, and Myanmar.

The extension of China across its borders, and the migration of Chinese people into neighbouring countries confirm a long history (Stuart-Fox 2021). In Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar, Chinese engaged in a wide variety of businesses have long been a part of the social fabric of these countries. Kokang in Myanmar, for example, is essentially a Han Chinese exclave (Hu and Konrad 2018). With the proclamation of the "Belt and Road" initiative, China has enlarged its presence by building and extending roads, railways, ports, energy facilities, and other aspects of infrastructure. Part of the cross-border interaction is the traditional exchange activity of ethnic minorities. The Dai of the upper Mekong have expanded and integrated agriculture across the border (Grabowsky & Wichasin 2008). The Hmong in the Sino–Vietnamese borderlands have established unique frontier livelihoods from cardamom cultivation, textiles, and water buffalo trade (Turner et al. 2015). With the opening of the border by China, and then the activation of the "Belt and Road" initiative, both traditional and new exchanges grew although China has reacted strongly to contain illegal trade in drugs.

Does this growth of mobility and exchange constitute a border renaissance in southeastern Asia? It may well do so for China, because China appears to be the main beneficiary of the significant change in the border. Yet, a closer evaluation suggests that border innovation has been an extension of traditional linkages, and that the Chinese central government has depended significantly on the cross-border exchange template of ethnic minorities and the Yunnan Province (Konrad & Hu 2021). Also, China has moved quickly and decisively during the Covid-19 pandemic from border innovation to reactionary borders reinforced with a massive fencing project. This slight change may have substantial consequences to impact both Chinese imperial scripts and imaginaries of internationalism.

Meanwhile, the 3000-kilometer border between China and southeastern Asia reflects a shifting coalescence of decisive border, no border, and some border in a region that is remote from population centers and government control. Some border places are so isolated that they are selected by local inhabitants and international visitors for easy crossing. Recently, the ease of crossing was emphasized in a Chinese elephant's recorded two-hour nighttime tour across the border (South China Morning Post 2018). In other border crossing locations, Boten, Laos, for example, China is on the move and intent on following its initiative to build a trading hub inside Laos as well as enhance the infrastructure of the route to Thailand (Bosoni 2021). On the other hand, Hekou, China, and Lao Cai, Vietnam, until recently models of integration and exchange at the border, are now insulated from casual border crossing by a prominent border fence running along the Chinese bank of the Red River separating the countries. During the pandemic, Hekou and Lao Cai emerged as the antithetical border, although with the lifting of trade and travel restrictions in January 2023, by China, imports and exports in January jumped to almost 50 million USD (Vietnamplus 2023).

The surge of border walls now divides most of the boundary between China and Vietnam except for the most remote stretches. A similar pattern describes the much shorter boundary between China and Laos. The border between Myanmar and China, a boundary that is longer and extends through the most difficult terrain in the region, is being fenced rapidly, although only about one-quarter of the border is now fenced (Zhao 2021). This fencing is most prevalent in populated border areas. Overall, the expansion of fencing in a region that was largely free of walls and barriers, has exploded. Additionally, the fencing often follows natural borders such as watercourses, and invariably causes environmental impacts ranging from construction damage to impeding the movement of natural species.

Boundary claims in the region have extended significantly in the South China Sea, which China has essentially designated as internal waters (Mastro 2021). This geopolitical imaginary which essentially confines Vietnam with a thin coastal sea margin, is also apparent in the advance of Chinese presence in Laos and Myanmar,

where Chinese economic interests, cultural institutions, products, and media prevail in the borderlands. This borderland annexation begs the question, again, if this is border renaissance, whose renaissance, is it? Can a border renaissance benefit one side of the border over the other? Is this apparent renaissance of the border really an indication of border renascence?

Evidence of reaction to the new fencing regime at the China–southeastern Asia border suggests that the communities most affected by the barriers to mobility and trade are responding with measures to remove or diminish restrictions of the wall. The villages along the China–Myanmar border are fighting back by making breaks in the wall at traditional crossing points to sustain local mobility patterns in the borderlands (Figure 4). The exuberance of local cross-border economies, meanwhile, is apparent in the continued active promotion of cross-cultural and transnational business. Yet, the border also bites as Covid-19 restrictions halt trade and cross-border labour movement in communities all along the extensive boundary. Displaced people in the borderlands, the Kokang refugees, for example, remained in camps for years before being returned to Mynamar. China's border with Myanmar, Laos, and Vietnam, only recently a model of border region evolution and advance, has slipped into a reactionary mode and a vestige of positive border entanglement.

Europe's Multitude of Live and Raw Edges: Renaissance or Relapse?

Although live and raw edges may offer the basis to serve a renaissance in border engagement, these conditions of trauma and uncertainty may also work counter to the realization of a new order. Within Europe, the success of the Basques in sustaining a live border, between the Basque cultural domain and surrounding Spain and France, is expressed in coincident Basque nationalism and transnationalism within a nation-state context (Konrad 2020). Whereas the entangled linguistic, social, political, and cultural edges of Basque country remain somewhat opaque, the volatility of the edges has dissipated, and the Basques are secure in their identity in the European Union (Bray 2004). At the edge of the European Union, the Finnish–Russian border evolved from a raw and fortified boundary imposed through Karelia in the twentieth century,

Figure 4. Break in the China–Myanmar Border Fence made by Villagers to Sustain Informal Border Crossing. The sign warns villagers not to use the crossing. Image: the author.

to a working border that benefitted both Russians and Finns in the early 21st century, and now, during the Ukrainian proxy war between Russia and the West, to a potentially closed and walled boundary (Wolfgang 2022). The strains of the Russia–Europe power struggle are increasingly evident at the Schengen boundary of the European Union. Here, the live edge reinforces border renascence, and renders the sizeable Ukrainian borderland as a zone of conflict between ideologies and states of being. This live and raw edge of Europe, already serrated by the migration crisis, and torn by the disparate response to the Covid-19 pandemic, has further revealed the cracks in the European Union highlighted by Brexit. Yet, as European external, and to a degree, internal, borders show the strains and tensions of current events at the borders, the plight of Ukraine has solidified NATO and Europe.

The borders of Europe, both internal, and the Schengen external boundary, illustrate the ephemeral nature of borders and their proximity and proclivity to crisis as boundaries are redefined, re-crossed, and crossed off. The question prevails: is this renaissance or relapse? Does a boundary around Europe work? Is the pan-European border construct viable?

The Schengen border did not work to exclude millions of migrants from entering the EU. Instead, the Schengen border was revealed as a catalyst to create temporary places and in-between spaces in locales such as Calais, France, and Lampedusa, Italy. These places became at once spaces of refuge and containers of marginalized humanity in the volatile geographies of the migration crisis in Europe. Schengen's crisis became recurrent as it shifted from migration to pandemic. Border controls at internal European boundaries—Portugal/Spain, around Switzerland, France/Germany, between the Baltic States, and more—in many instances initiated during the migration crisis, were re-engaged or newly established with Covid-19. In Europe, stemming the flow of Covid-19 showed a variance and wispiness of response (Figure 5).

A European Union Response to COVID-19

Figure 5. Europe's Wispiness of Covid-19 Response. Image: European Movement International, no copyright listed, 2020. https://archive.europeanmovement.eu/emi-a-european-union-response-to-covid-19-eurmove/

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Konrad, "Border Renaissance in a Time of Border Perplexity? The Question of Renaissance/Renascence..."

As the war in Ukraine passes its second anniversary with no resolution in sight, border specialists and the public at large are increasingly convinced of the futility of bringing forth and imposing a border to erase a border. Russia appears to be losing not gaining ground. Not only could Russia fail to take over Ukraine, and advance its border to the edge of Europe, but Russia could lose the territories gained by the invasion of the eastern portions of Ukraine's Donbas and Luhansk regions and the Crimea, and most significantly, solidify the border between Ukraine (now confirmed as part of the West) and a further diminished and beleaguered Russia. Potentially, Putin's stand-off with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) at the Russian borders with Ukraine may only amount to theater: a desperate performance, an ugly and deadly spectacle, and a confirmed antithesis of border. Meanwhile, at Baltic borders with Russia, the call to arms and the imperative to prepare for a potential Russian threat are evident. This is confirmed by NATO expansion on the northern front. Sweden and Finland are in the process of gaining NATO membership. Drama and trauma have returned to the region at once reformed with sustainable borders and threatened by hegemonic forces.

Conclusion

Following Hegel, Ioannis Trisokkas (2014) argues that the border pervades every phenomenon, that the border is universal, *and* the border is a dominant concept in the logic of being. In nature and culture, (or spirit) the structure of border is a fundamental ingredient of every cultural phenomenon. Yet, the border manifests as entanglement (Verwicklung) and contradiction (Widerspruch). And, the truth of the border is everywhere before us, and permeates everything there is. The border is a primitive ontological structure that characterizes being itself, not simply our thought of being. Whether humans exist or not, there are borders in the universe, well beyond the borders that we construct or envision.

Consequently, and fundamentally, we may establish that the border is not altogether subjective and arbitrary, but the border has a logical core that is objective and timeless. Secondly, the logic of the border requires acknowledgement of the immense complexity of the phenomenon, and that all logical features of the border are necessary, universal, and systematically interconnected. Thirdly, whereas all forms of border studies enrich our knowledge of the phenomenon, they cannot eliminate the logical concept of the border and its metaphysical contribution, and the potential of a general *logical* theory of the border. Finally, current research places borders immediately and uncritically in space before assigning a rich conceptual and purely logical content.

Why is this philosophical context important to our consideration of the renaissance of borders? Allow me to conclude this article with several reasons why we need to be mindful of the philosophy of borders. Initially, in a recent article (Konrad 2021), I have called for an interrogation of border logics, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology in order to align border thinking within a rigorous framework. This philosophical approach will help to chart the field and identify significant milestones in border thought and substantiate if we have achieved a renaissance in border thinking. Next, renaissance entails elevation of thought as well as convergence and consensus. Although border studies are eminently interdisciplinary and broadly based, a renaissance in border thought should convey balanced, integrated, and effective advances in all fields. This remains a work in progress. Finally, a renaissance in border thinking offers the connective tissue, as well as the prominent thoughts, to extend insight and understanding among disciplines, and a broader public, about how borders work and why they are important universals in all worlds and eras. This challenge remains.

Notwithstanding the critical importance of exploring the theoretical and philosophical landscape of border renaissance, the idea of border renaissance remains entwined within the nation-state context. Clearly, the nation-state is not disappearing, and its ability to direct and control all manner of developments remains strong. This raises some important questions.[3] While the statist function of the state reinforces border renascence, what role does the state play in border renaissance? The nation-state could play a central role in creating a border renaissance, but it does not. So, what incentives exist for the institution of the nation-state to offer more support towards a renaissance view of the border? In this regard the answer is clear. The rapid transition to a post-humanistic and post-globalization era of border dynamics calls out for theoretical and philosophical advances in border studies in the same instance that a border renaissance demands the attention of the nation-state, as John Agnew (2008, 175) reminds us, to "reframing border thinking".

Notes

[1] This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158. The paper was originally presented as the keynote address at the UniGR-CBS Conference 2022 "Border Renaissance: Recent Developments in Territorial, Cultural and Linguistic Border Studies", February 4–5, 2022, Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany. I would like to acknowledge the questions and helpful suggestions of participants in the conference, the comments of Astrid Fellner and Randy Widdis on initial versions of the written paper, and the critiques offered by the editors and anonymous reviewers of the manuscript submitted for publication.

2 Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for this important point.

3 I am thankful to Randy Widdis for reminding me of these questions and the importance of linking my arguments made throughout the article to the theoretical conclusion.

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European Border Region Studies in Times of Borderization: Overview of the Problem and Perspectives

Christian Wille *

Since at least the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of borders could no longer be overlooked. This global development has also penetrated the European border regions along with the virus. There, European border region studies is now confronted with events that it has thus far hardly had to deal with. This article addresses such events and elaborates on the interplay of borderization and deborderization processes in the context of "covidfencing". For this purpose, social negotiation processes of border closures in the Greater Region SaarLorLux and in the German–Polish border area are discussed as "people's resilience". This article considers how European border region studies can deal with events and questions in times of borderization. Drawing on international border studies, the research agenda can be extended to everyday cultural issues. In addition, the common concept of borders can be adjusted in order to make the border more accessible as a subject of everyday cultural negotiations.[1]

Borderization and Border (Region) Studies

The COVID-19 border closures can be seen as the (preliminary) culmination of a whole series of territorial (self-)securitization measures that undoubtedly call into question the idea of a "borderless world" (Ohmae 1990) which emerged in the 1990s. For while territorial borders seemed to lose their significance under the influence of the expanding Internet, the fall of the Iron Curtain, and increased mobility, as well as global climate and environmental issues, a renaissance of borders has indeed been observed for around two decades. This is mainly due to recent events, such as the sudden rise in terrorist attacks after the turn of the millennium,

burgeoning nationalism, growing social inequalities, and the ongoing migration management crisis in Western countries. These events have not only brought about the accelerated digitization of border regimes, the temporary reintroduction of border controls in the Schengen area, and the sealing off of the European Union's external borders, but have also led to increased uncertainty, social fragmentation and, in the end, to a multiplication of border infrastructures (Vallet 2019). Benedicto et al. (2020) speak of a "walled world" when they take stock of the construction of border walls over the past 30 years: between 1989 and 2018 their number

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worldwide increased from six to 63, of which 14 were erected in 2015 alone at the peak of the 2010 refugee movements.

The outlined "border transition" (Andersen Jagetic & Prokkola 2022, 3) suggests that we have entered an age of borderization. This also challenges border (region) studies, which partly responds to this transition with concepts that locate borders in social processes and thus divert attention from the territorial edges to those numerous social "arenas" where borders are effective (Wille 2020; 2021). When dealing with such "arenas", various orientations can be identified: while international border studies, under the influence of refugee movements and migration research, focuses primarily on the mobility and territorial diffusion of borders as well as their stabilization and contestation, European border region studies—guided by the ideal of a "Europe without borders"—is particularly interested in what is happening on the territorial edges within the EU and their permeability. The latter orientation has been seen since at least the 1980s, when legal issues of cross-border cooperation became more important and the understanding of the EU's internal borders changed from so-called "dividing scars of history" to "connecting seams" (Courlet 1988). This understanding of borders as bridges or interfaces was solidified in the 1990s as the integration process progressed, in which border regions were now attributed the role of laboratories of Europeanization (Ruge 2003). The political importance of border regions gained in this way, which also persisted during the waves of enlargement, is still reflected in European border region studies to this day. It is closely intertwined with the political project of integration (Wassenberg 2021), which explains the focus on the permeability of borders and the normative orientation of numerous border area analyses on the deborderization narrative (Wille & Connor 2019, 260).

With this in mind, it seems as if European border region studies had been overtaken by the aforementioned developments, which portray a "world of borders" (Nail 2020, 203). This impression is reinforced, on the one hand, in light of the guiding principle of a "Europe without borders", which has lost a lot of its appeal with Brexit, growing Euroscepticism, and an increasingly expensive EU border regime (Bürkner 2020; Klatt 2020; Yndigegn 2020; Kasparek 2021). On the other hand, borderizations seem to have mutated into a political strategy for Europe (Bayramoğlu & Castro Varela 2021, 127). The guiding principle of open EU internal borders was put to the test for the first time in 2015, when some EU Member States reintroduced border controls as a result of the refugee movements and terrorist attacks. Five years later, the EU's internal borders were once again reactivated, although this time much more drastically, and guided by a new (in)security narrative. While security was established in 2015 with reference to the foreign as an "emotional home" (Schwell 2021), giving one's own population a sense of security was legitimized in 2020 with reference to the external coronavirus (Casaglia & Coletti 2021; Singh 2022; Nossem 2023). This was a call for what is known as "covidfencing", a term which Medeiros et al. (2021) use to describe the hitherto unprecedented border closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both 2015 and 2020, with their drastic events in Europe, can be regarded as "symbols of bordering" (Svensson & Balogh 2022, 83). They stand for an age of borderization that has now also encompassed the nucleus of European integration: the border regions. This development, which is promoted by the unilateralism of the EU member states and "vaccine nationalism" (Mylonas & Whalley 2022) during efforts to control the pandemic, confronts European border region studies with events and issues that it has hardly dealt with thus far.[2] This article presents such events on the basis of everyday observations in the years 2020 and 2021 and illustrates the interplay of borderization and deborderization processes in the context of covidfencing. For this purpose, social negotiation processes of border closures in the Greater Region SaarLorLux (Wille 2015) and in the German–Polish border area (Opiłowska & Sus 2021) are discussed as "people's resilience" (Jagetic Andersen & Prokkola 2022, 6). The cultural dimension of everyday life is still rarely considered in European border region studies. Inspired by international border studies, suggestions are made to extend the research agenda of European border region studies to everyday cultural questions for dealing with events and issues arising in times of borderization.

Covidfencing and "People's Resilience"

Territorial borders and social demarcations have suddenly and dramatically become more relevant in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been reflected in the categorizations implemented during the pandemic (vaccinated/unvaccinated, vulnerable/non-vulnerable, etc.), which sometimes have significant consequences for those who have been categorized (Volkmer & Werner 2020). In the same way, borders were (re)activated as supposed protective shields against the virus, so that our highly mobile global society was transformed overnight into an "inmate society of national state compartments" (Mau 2021, 17). In Europe, Slovenia was the first to close its borders on March 11th, 2020, followed by Denmark on March 14th, and by the end of the month, all of the other EU states—with the exception of Luxembourg, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Sweden—imposed drastic entry restrictions at their borders as well. While the timeline of the border closings is now well documented (e.g. Carrera & Luk 2020; Reitel et al. 2020; Wille & Weber 2020) and the closings are undisputedly seen as the "comeback of borders to Europe" (Böhm 2023, 491), the examination of covidfencing in the Schengen area

is only just now taking shape. This includes, for example, recording the socio-economic effects in border regions (MOT 2021), the proposals for jointly managing the socio-economic effects across borders (Medeiros et al. 2021), the analyses for improved cross-border crisis management (Coatleven et al. 2020; Theis 2021; Weber et al. 2021a; Kajta & Opiłowska 2022; Böhm 2023), and the critical considerations of hasty covidfencing with regard to its necessity and efficiency in containing the virus (Eckardt et al. 2020; Duvernet 2021).

One aspect that has hardly been examined concerns the restrictions on the daily lives of the residents of border regions. Apart from a few episodic insights into the experience and handling of border closures (BIG-Review 2020; Ulrich & Cyrus 2020; Wille & Kanesu 2020; Opiłowska 2021; Weber et al. 2021b), there are still only a few systematic studies of the realities of life in the border regions during the pandemic (e.g. Tarvet & Klatt 2023; Böhm 2022; Renner et al. 2022). However, a number of events that have rarely been observed in European border regions offer starting points for further examination: "When border communities and mobile people need to cope with man-made material border infrastructures, renewal and resistance may emerge as a response to such border transitions" (Jagetic Andersen & Prokkola 2022, 5). This quotation refers to the restricted freedom of the movement of people and the resulting reactions of border residents, which were expressed, for example, in actions of resistance and/or solidarity in the sense of European guiding principles. The tense interplay of borderization and deborderization processes is hereinafter understood as "people's resilience", which stands for a perspective that focuses on the self-organization and resources of civil society actors when it comes to overcoming difficulties or threats and securing community: "Different social groups' ability to self-organize and mobilize skills and resources to create opportunities when faced with adversity and to act in solidarity when their community is disturbed and even disrupted". (Jagetic Andersen & Prokkola 2022, 7) The following events from the Greater Region SaarLorLux and the German–Polish border region illustrate such "people's resilience" in the context of covidfencing.

The everyday cultural dimension of covidfencing became virulent in the border region between Germany, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg (Greater Region SaarLorLux), especially in April 2020 at the German–French border and in September 2020 at the German–Luxembourg border in connection with cross-border workers and leisure commuters. At that time, the regions reverted to a nationalist resentment that was long believed to have been overcome (Dylla 2021, 269–270; Freitag-Carteron 2021, 298), the articulation of which the press pointedly referred to as "corona racism" (Drobinski 2020). Weber and Dittel (2023, 219) state in this context:

Hostility from parts of the German population towards French cross-border workers was perceived as particularly shocking, for example in the form of verbal abuse or graffitied cars in front of supermarkets. French citizens were stigmatized as the people who were bringing the virus to Germany and therefore as a 'danger'.

There is little information available on the distribution of such mechanisms of (self-)securitization in European border regions (e.g., Novotný 2022). However, it can generally be observed that strategies of "othering" (Reuter 2002, 20; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002) have become effective as identity-creating mechanisms both in the everyday discourse of border residents and in the discourse of regional actors (Steinhoff 2023). Bayramoğlu and Castro Varela (2021, 105–109) as well as Mau (2021, 74–77) support this observation, since they show from a historical perspective that health risks are always located externally, among the "others". Opiłowska (2021, 9) states in this context at the German–Polish border that "these top-down decisions [border closures] 'are fueling the narrative that foreign people and foreign goods are a source of danger and vulnerability' (Alden 2020) and thus construct the social boundaries of the 'others' as a threat".

"People's resilience", though, can also take on inclusive forms. For example, border residents also initiated campaigns that aimed at deborderization as a result of covidfencing. In response to the top-down measures, solidarity and affinity with people on the other side of the border were articulated, which can be explained by the partly new experience of restricted freedom of movement in cross-border everyday life and work and/or an awareness of a "Europe without borders" gained through this experience (Duvernet et al. 2021, 5). For example, in the spring of 2020 in the Greater Region SaarLorLux and on the German–Polish border in Frankfurt (Oder)–Słubice, large banners with expressions of solidarity were hung, which were visible from central locations or hung directly on the affected borders:

- at a motorway entrance to the German city of Trier with the inscription "L'Europe, c'est la liberté, l'amitié et la solidarité. Metz + Trèves pour toujours" (Europe is freedom, friendship and solidarity. Metz + Trier forever)

- at the Friendship Bridge over the Saar River, which connects the German Kleinblittersdorf with the French Grosbliederstroff: "La Sarre ou la Lorraine. Aidez-vous les uns les autres et restez fort!" (Saarland or Lorraine. Help each other and stay strong!)

- on the city bridge between Frankfurt (Oder) in Germany and Słubice in Poland: "Im Herzen vereint und gemeinsam stark. Wir sehen uns bald wieder! | Razem łatwiej przetrwać najtrudniejsze chwile. Do

zobaczenia wkrótce!" (United in heart and strong together. We'll meet again soon!)

• on the banks of the border river Oder between the German Frankfurt (Oder) and the Polish Słubice: "Bleibt gesund, Freunde!" (Stay healthy, friends!), "Wir gehören zusammen" (We belong together).

Sharper in tone and seen as explicit challenges to covidfencing are the "people's resilience" actions reflected in protest rallies and symbolic campaigns on April 24–25 (Figure 1) and May 9–10 of 2020 on the German–Polish border. There, the border area residents and cross-border commuters protested against border closings and quarantine requirements with the slogans "Don't separate families", "We want to work and live with dignity", "Let us go to work", and "Let us go home" (Opiłowska 2021, 7). Similar initiatives that reflect the controversy of the border closings took place in the border tripoint of Germany, France, and Luxembourg: in April the "Schengen is alive" campaign was initiated here, in which the border area residents in the Luxembourg wine-growing village of Schengen and the surrounding communities raised awareness for weeks on freedom of movement as a European achievement worth protecting. On the German–French border between Saarland and Grand Est, activists from the transnational youth association "Young European Federalists" dismantled the barriers on May 3, 2020 in a symbolic action at two closed border crossings and sprayed "#DontTouchMySchengen" onto the asphalt (JEF 2020) (Figure 2).

Protests in border regions as a result of covidfencing were observed again in 2021. Although the Schengen internal borders have been largely reopened since June 2020, with a few (temporary) exceptions, many border area residents experienced the quarantine requirements in the event of a possible border crossing

and the testing regulations that started in 2021 (Weber et al. 2021a, 13–16) as de facto borderization. This mainly affected cross-border commuters, who usually cross a state border every day and are therefore particularly entangled in the quarantine and testing regulations. The rallies by cross-border commuters from the French department of Moselle, who were required to submit a negative PCR test every 48 hours after entering Germany starting March 2, 2021 (SR 2021), testify to this. At the protest rallies in the spring of 2021, the French border area residents protested this requirement, which, despite the German–French test center set up especially for this purpose at the border, turned out to be rather impractical in everyday life (Thiercy 2021). They demanded a reduced testing frequency or even the abolition of the testing requirement. However, the slogans used make it clear that the introduction of entry regulations into Germany were perceived as drastic borderization. Thus, slogans such as "Nous ne pouvons pas être séparés, même pas par un test PCR" (We cannot be separated, not even by a PCR test) challenged the experienced demarcation and at the same time emphasized affinity with the residents on the other side of the border. The "people's resilience", which manifests itself here in the issue of deborderization, is fed in part by the decades-long employment of French cross-border commuters in the neighboring German state of Saarland (OIE 2021), and above all by the categorization—or rather perceived stigmatization—of cross-border commuters as "dangerous others". In businesses and companies in Germany, cross-border commuters work side by side with non–cross-border commuters, who were not subject to a test in their country of residence in the spring of 2021. Thus, the protests of the French cross-border commuters (Figure 3 and 4) should be understood as "people's resilience" that resulted from the selective test regulations and turned out to be a bio-political othering (Foucault 1977, 67). This is especially evident in the protest slogans used: "Vous tracez une nouvelle

Figure 1. Protest rally, "Grenzen auf! Otwarcia granic!" (Open the borders!) on April 24, 2020 on the city bridge between Frankfurt (Oder) in Germany and Słubice in Poland. Image: Janek Coppenhagen © 2020.

Figure 2. Symbolic action, "Grenzsturm im Mai 2020" (Storm the border May 2020) on the German–French border on May 3, 2020. Image: Young European Federalists in Rhineland Palatinate (CC–BY–4.0) 2020.

Figure 3. Protest rally, "Tous ensemble—Alle zusammen" (All together) on the German–French border (Saarbrücken–Stiring-Wendel), March 6, 2021. Image: Pierre Hilpert © 2021.

Figure 4. Protest rally, "Comité de Défense des Travailleurs Frontaliers de la Moselle" on the German–French border (Rilchingen-Hanweiler–Sarreguemines) March 20, 2021. Image: Laurent Molinier © 2021.

frontière—Ihr zieht eine neue Grenze" (You're creating a new border), "Le test PCR n'est pas un passeport" (A PCR test is not a passport), and "Nous ne sommes pas des pestiférés! Assez de discrimination!" (We are not lepers! Enough with the discrimination!)".

This cursory overview of various forms of "people's resilience" illustrates recent and hitherto unknown events in European border regions. They can be located on an everyday cultural level between borderization and deborderization and are embedded in socio-cultural and geopolitical power relations. The empirically observable negotiation practices—more precisely, the experiences, narratives, strategies, and challenges of borders articulated in "people's resilience"—provide information about this meshwork of relationships and its dynamics:

> It is possible to gain understanding of the entanglement of the resilience processes with the long-lasting socio-cultural and geopolitical power relations and contestations by analyzing how these relations are manifested in border experiences and narratives providing guidance to adaptive pathways and resistance. (Jagetic Andersen & Prokkola 2022, 6)

In European border region studies, however, "people's resilience" has so far not been considered either as a complex meshwork or as a "simple" event. However, it can be assumed that borderization in cross-border regional everyday realities will remain relevant even after the pandemic and will become the subject of social negotiation processes. This is indicated, for example, by political unilateralism, persistent Euroscepticism, and increasingly widespread populism against the background of continuous refugee movements and increasing social inequality. European border region studies would therefore do well from now on to deal with the resurgence of borders and the associated (new) events—such as the civil society challenge of border(ing)s—both empirically and (more intensively) theoretically-conceptually.

Perspectives for European Border Region Studies in Times of Borderization

The starting point of this article was the finding that borders have (once again) become more important in recent decades. This development, which can be easily reconstructed on a global level, has now also reached the European border regions, at the latest with the COVID-19 pandemic: "The pandemic re-introduced borders back in the EU" (Böhm 2023, 487). Examples of this include the instances of "people's resilience" listed here, which refer to two problems of European border region studies: the inadequate consideration of the everyday cultural dimension, and the understanding of borders generally applied. Both problems, which are virulent in light of the recent and more foreseeable borderization, will be discussed in this final portion of the article.

The overview of the scientific reviews of covidfencing has shown that the first studies on the closures of the EU's internal borders mainly deal with socio-economic issues or with governance issues and/or cross-border crisis management. Everyday cultural issues, which include the bordered everyday lives of border residents, their border experiences, or "people's resilience" have so far hardly been systematically considered. Initially, this may have been due to the explosiveness and unprecedented nature of the pandemic situation. However, in European border region studies—in its application, orientation, and normativity—a pronounced interest in socio-economic issues and institutional structures can generally be observed (Wassenberg & Reitel 2020; Gerst & Krämer 2021, 135). This finding, which comes at the expense of the everyday cultural dimension, can be explained by the political project of Europeanization, the implicit "debordering mainstream" (Böhm 2023, 500), and the underlying understanding of borders. But, most recently, the events in the course of covidfencing, which the rebordering processes and their challenges as hitherto unknown events bring into focus, show that the previous position of European border region studies falls short.

It is important to pay more attention to the border residents and their everyday realities in order to see and understand the dynamic and tension-filled interplay of borderization and deborderization. For this purpose, inspiration can be taken from international border studies, which is increasingly turning to the everyday cultural dimension of borders: "[C]ontemporary and increasingly interdisciplinary border studies [...] observes bordering not simply in the distant geopolitical affairs of (and between) territorial states but in the messy here-and-now micro-politics of everyday life practices and experiences" (Cooper & Tinning 2020, 1). According to this orientation, the concept of "border experiences" can be made productive in European border region studies, which locate borderization or deborderization in everyday realities. This concept focuses on border efficacies, attributions of meaning, and the power to act in or from the perspective of those who are entangled with the border:

> The concept of border experiences ties in with the idea of the border as a social (re-)production [...]. Border experiences strengthen [...] the role and agency of those who 'inhabit' the border, meaning those who are entangled in them and who with their (bodily and sensory) experiences or generation of meaning in and through everyday practices, narratives, representations or objects continuously (re-)produce them. It is an approach that focuses on 'border(lands) residents' and their border experience in order to better understand the modes of action and function [...] in which borders are appropriated and thereby produced. (Wille & Nienaber 2020, 10)

This approach—practiced very early on by anthropological border scholars (e.g. Martínez 1994; Alvarez 1995; Wilson & Donnan 1998)—highlights the everyday practices, narratives, and representations of border residents as observable modes of border experiences, border challenges, and/or border negotiations. "Border experiences" thus forms a connection to "people's resilience" and opens up a point of access that empowers border residents to take on the role of agents when it comes to borderization and deborderization, allows them to empirically capture their appropriations and resistance, and understands borders as resources—in the sense of spaces of possibility (Brambilla 2021, 15; Jagetic Andersen & Prokkola 2022, 7). The concept thus enables European border region studies to gain differentiated insights into social negotiation processes, into issues of social cohesion and finally into the progress of European integration at the EU's internal borders. It also makes it possible to consider the permeabilities and durabilities of borders in equal measure and to convincingly integrate the everyday cultural dimension.

As an access point to border regional everyday realities, "border experiences" ensure an increased gain in knowledge of (new) events and questions in times of deborderization. However, the concept also implies a concept of border, which in many places has not yet prevailed in European border region studies and calls for a specific methodological perspective. This addresses the trend established in international border studies to open up borders towards the spatially and socially diffused "arenas" of their effectiveness (Wille 2021; 2024), a trend that easily conflicts with European border region studies. For while a border for the latter merely exists as an unquestioned and static line that marks the edge of a precisely encircled unity of territory, state, and nation, international border studies has largely emancipated itself from this idea: "[I]t is not the lines on the map [...] that we need to focus on only when studying power geometries, but also how, when and where spatial power differentials are given meaning and being translated in daily practices by people". (van Houtum 2021, 35–36) The border understandings only hinted at here can be characterized as positivist and constructivist (Scott & van der Velde 2020, 143). They imply a research perspective that assumes the border to be a territorial, political and social reality compared to a research perspective that overcomes the border as an ontological fact and sees it as a product and producer of social (negotiation) processes. In this latter perspective, the focus is less on fixed line-like borders and more on social processes that create borders: "This more process-based understanding of bordering shifts the focus from existential research questions (i.e., borders are this or that; borders are things that function like this or that) to studies of border's processes of emergence or becoming" (Kaiser 2012, 522). International border studies therefore no longer focus on the border as an ontological object at the territorial edge, but on the processes of its establishment and/or (de)stabilization: on border practices (Parker & Vaughan-Williams 2009). Early work by Henk van Houtum and colleagues, who have worked out the relationship between border practices (bordering), boundary demarcations (othering), order productions (ordering) and space productions (space), paved the way for this change of perspective (van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; van Houtum et al. 2005). This so-called "bordering turn" (Cooper 2020, 17) realized in international border studies assumes a socially-made nature of the border and consequently allows us to conceptualize the residents of border regions as agents in the interplay of borderization and deborderization. Against this background, a European border region studies that wants to deal with current local issues in a future-oriented manner by integrating a border experience approach needs to question its concept of border. This should not involve hastily replacing the border concept that has developed based on socio-economic and institutional issues or pitting different epistemologies against each other. Rather, ways to establish theoretical-conceptual connections to the "bordering turn" (Cooper 2020, 17) in times of borderization should be sought and found in order to open up European border region studies to border regional everyday realities as "arenas of the border".

The outlined perspectives for European border region studies in times of deborderization are by no means intended to call into question the established references to the political project of European integration and the normative guiding principles associated with it. Nor are any theoretical-conceptual bottlenecks suggested. Rather, what is proposed is an expansion of the research agenda to include everyday cultural questions, which, embedded in socio-economic and institutional contexts, promise to provide insights into the European idea in times of borderization. In this context, an adjustment of the border concept used was also proposed in order to make the border accessible as a subject of everyday cultural negotiations in European border regions. To what extent European border region studies will actually take inspiration from international border studies remains to be seen.

Notes

1 This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158. Parts of this article were published in German in: Dominik Brodowski, Jonas Nesselhauf, Florian Weber (eds.): *Pandemisches Virus—nationales Handeln: Covid-19 und die europäische Idee*. Wiesbaden, Springer VS, S. 25–43.

2 Beurskens et al. (2016) can be mentioned as one of the rare examples. In the face of an emerging discourse on border crime at the German–Polish border in the early 2010s, they investigate processes of borderization by civil society actors (vigilante groups, security partnerships, information management specialists).

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The Resurrection of Borders Inside of the Schengen Area and its Media Representations

Ondřej Elbel *

The bordering processes inside of the Schengen Area are traditionally under the scrutiny of border studies scholars. The European Union has been repeatedly displayed as a laboratory for a free cross-border movement, often with synonyms like an ostensibly borderless area _(Scott 2012). This so-called_ Schengen culture _(Zaiotti 2011) developed due to intensifying cross-border contact and integration between EU member states. However, in the decade between 2010 and 2020 this Schengen culture has been repeatedly challenged by the geopolitical crises and nationalistic political narratives and decisions. This study concentrates on this debate about borders in the selected European news. The analysis of news articles from six newspapers (_Mladá fronta, Hospodářské noviny, Le Figaro, Le Monde, Der Standard, _and_ Die Presse_) shows how the context of the border debate evolved under the impact of migration crises and coronavirus crisis. Throughout the decade of the 2010s, this study witnesses the gradual securitization of borders inside of the EU and illustrates how the symbolic language and various narratives contributed to this development._[1]

Introduction

To close the border. By the beginning of the 21st century, such a step looked like an old-fashioned remnant of earlier geopolitical time periods. That held true, especially in the Schengen Area which has been proud of its ostensibly borderless regime. However, some years later, borders paved their way back to the news and made headlines once again, even inside the European Union. This study explores this development which accompanied a set of various political crises of the 2010s. The question of the resurrection of border checks was typically elicited in the context of immigration into the EU, raised primarily in 2011 and 2015.

This study argues that the context of the "border debate" in the 2010s inside of the EU was shaped by three important situations that were each labelled as a crisis. In the first case, the trigger was the migration from Tunisia at the outset of the Arab Uprising. At that time, France decided to renew border checks with Italy for a very limited amount of time (Colombeau 2019) while four years later, the main migratory route led from Syria and Afghanistan through Greece and the Balkans. In the summer of 2015, the states, mainly in Central Europe, were adopting re-bordering strategies in a domino effect (Kriesi et al. 2021) to reduce the flow of migration. The third scope of time under scrutiny is the

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spring of 2020 when many states adopted protective measures aimed at decelerating the spread of the COVID-19 illness (Böhm 2020; Brunet-Jailly 2022; Rufí et al. 2020). For the rapid closures of borders in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, Medeiros et al. (2021) introduced the term *covidfencing*. The uniqueness of this trend did not consist only in the rush of nation-states during the reintroduction of border checks but also in the extent of the control. Passage through some border checks was even forbidden.

Often, the loudspeakers of border control were politicians promoting nationalistic and xenophobic campaigns against foreigners. It is therefore important to study how the debate on borders looked when EU member states implemented such measures. The special focus will be given to rhetorical justifications for the sudden resurrection of borders inside of the Schengen Area. As the Schengen Acquis defines the conditions for the temporary reintroduction of border controls, politicians have to justify their solutions to the voters. This is also how narratives about border measures become present in the news. As Prokkola (2009) emphasizes, these narratives are codes or tools that shape citizen perceptions of reality. The act of sharing these narratives means an engagement in the process of re-bordering or de-bordering (van Houtum 2005).

This paper is structured in the following way. First, two theoretical sections explore the connections between crises and their spatiality in relation to borders, with a focus on nationalist discourse. Then, the methods section presents critical discourse analysis as a tool that helps inspect narratives together with their contexts, also explaining the case selection and introducing the news media chosen for analysis. The findings section analyses and compares the selected news articles, leading to a discussion that identifies three major patterns of border media representation during crisis.

Border as Catalyst of Crises

A crisis may easily become an unprecedented geopolitical factor (Casaglia et al. 2020). Defined as a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering (Cambridge Dictionary 2020), crises are unanticipated challenges that shock a polity. Such shocks typically reveal vulnerabilities, risks, or hidden cleavages in societies and may provoke new types of crises (Stavrakakis & Katsampekis 2020). Due to the wide impact of crises, such events are very often regarded as highly newsworthy (An & Gower 2009). Journalists, therefore, show a high interest in crises and thereby become involved in the construction of crises (Krzyżanowski 2019; Kepplinger & Roth 1979). The term crisis may serve as a catchphrase or self-standing news frame (Vincze 2014). The construction of crisis is also a prominent characteristic of populist narratives (Stavrakakis et al. 2018; Moffitt 2015; Pappas & Kriesi

2015). As can be seen, both news media and politicians use crisis narratives in public discourse and such choice of words may not be without consequences. As Altheide (2018) shows, one of the elicited outcomes of the construction of crisis may be fear.

Crises also have their spatial dimension. They can initiate a debate about the sovereignty of the nation-state over its territory (Brubaker 2020) or the delineation of *Us and Them* (Brambilla & Jones 2020). In the process of *othering* (Vollmer 2016), the delimitation of borders plays a crucial role (van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002). The experience of crises could spatialize fear (Brubaker 2020), undermine to some extent a belief in a free movement inside the EU (Newman 2003), provoke a defense of thick borders (Haselsberger 2014), and revive nationalist discourses (Bieber 2020).

When looking back to the second decade of the 21st century in the European Union, three major phenomena contextualized as crises can be detected: the *global financial crisis*, the *refugee crisis*, and the *COVID-19 crisis*. Each represents a complex set of fears, confusions, and disagreements. As such, they raised questions about policy implementation, identity, or further European integration. Also, they co-occurred with re-bordering tendencies inside of the Schengen Area whose members previously decided to abandon the mutual border controls. However, these crises led to the resurrection of borders that obtained new symbolic and spatial meanings as a result. Therefore, it is a timely question to inspect the possible connections between the crises and the re-bordering. Wassenberg (2020) labels it the "Schengen Crisis" and indicates the end of the myth of Europe without borders. This study aims to identify the representation of borders both in news media and in political discourse during these crises.

Borders and their discursive representations

The process of border construction is continuous, and Scott (2012) differentiates four categories of bordering: discursive (political and social framings), practical (material and substantive areas), perceptual (group/individual), and representational (cultural, media-generated images). The geopolitical discourse is set both by politicians and media (Kolossov 2005) who not only speak about borders but also create new layers of representations to them which can be emotionally tuned (Zhurzhenko 2010).

In border zones, a violent act of exclusion or mobilizing threat has often materialized (Brambilla & Jones 2020). Those *fields of security* (Bigo 2003) are typically elicited in the context of migration (Vaughan-Williams 2009), criminality (Havlíček & Klečková 2018), citizenship (Parker 2012), or geopolitical distancing (Lindberg & Borrelli 2019). Borders play an inherent role in the process of self-defining (Paasi 2001). Specifically, in the context of the European Union, a look into

discursive bordering practices performed by European news media shows us which interests are represented in the debate and who is speaking on behalf of EU citizens. Politicians form an important category of sources for discourse analysis. Other sources include local residents of borderlands, people in motion (e.g., refugees, cross-border commuters), and experts (social scientists, NGO staff, EU-institution representatives). The analysis focused on the diffusion of border frames on the EU level suggested by Casaglia et al. (2020) may shed new light on the meaning of European borders in the 21st century and the impact of bordering processes performed by the EU in the last decade.

Two major branches of argumentation about the border regime inside of the EU emerge: a narrative of integration and a narrative of security. These categories were initially defined by Zhurzhenko (2010) in the context of the Russian–Ukrainian border but seem to be working in the EU context as well, because they stem from the dual interpretation of borders; either understood as bridge or barrier (Zhurzhenko 2010).

In the narrative of integration inside of the EU, themes like cooperation, mutual contact, togetherness, and freedom of movement may be elicited. In this logic, the experience of common life is stronger than the temporary crisis. Despite the current challenges, the future of the EU lies in this model. The opposite camp uses the discourse of danger, mentioning possible threats that can result from cross-border mobility (e.g., criminality, diseases, illegal migrants). Those who preach the securitization of EU border regimes contribute to the 'us vs. them' dimension of borders and steadily bring attention to the negative phenomena that can hide behind the border. However, this initial categorization of border narratives needs to be broadened and diversified. The overall picture of borders in media may be much more colorful than just dualistic. Also, both main narratives acquire different characteristics according to the particular crisis.

Methodology and Research Question

This article aims to analyze the shifting meanings of borders, the metaphors, and the symbols employed in the discourse about borders. As the timeframe for this study is ten years, it is possible to investigate how the sense-making about borders evolved in time. Therefore, the study of context and basic unsaid presumptions are of key importance (Gee 2010). Applying the tools of critical discourse analysis (CDA), the institutional and sociocultural contexts can be taken into account (Carvalho 2008). Context matters because one word may acquire manifold meanings (Gee 2010). Each word stems from meaning resources and has meaning potential (Gee 2014). The news audience assigns the information to their previous experience and knowledge, and mass media contributes to the construction of reality (Couldry & Hepp 2018).

The data analysis of each article consisted of its categorization (news/opinion). Special emphasis was put on metaphorical language about borders or the decision to re-introduce border checks. Soon, a few important containers of meanings emerged according to their stance towards the border measures adopted by the state inside of the Schengen Area. The media representations of borders diverged according to positive, negative, or neutral evaluations of the reintroduction of border checks. The justifications for border closures were also important basins for discourse analysis of different argumentations. A critical approach requires reflecting and contrasting political narratives and putting them into context.

Research question: *How was the resurrection of borders in the 2010s inside of the Schengen Area represented in the news media and how did it develop over time?*

To answer this question, this study looks into European media discourses in times of crises related to the borders inside of the Schengen Area. This recognizes that news media play an important role in bordering processes (Scott 2012). During the pilot phase of this research, the news archive of the French newspaper *Le Monde* was consulted to identify the moments of border resurrection inside the Schengen Area between 2010 and 2020. Although the debate about borders was present continuously in news reporting (with special emphasis during some election campaigns), three moments of the specific resurrection of borders emerged from the data: in 2011 and 2015 the trigger was migration; in 2020 the re-bordering was related to COVID-19.

Regarding the content analysis of media, three countries were selected: France, Austria, and Czechia. Each represents another language and another context of relation to the EU. France belongs to the group of founding members of the EU; Austria entered the European integration path in the 1990s, while Czechia joined the EU together with other post-communist countries during the Eastern Enlargement in 2004. For each country, two newspapers were put under scrutiny. Six selected news titles can be divided into two categories: the more conservative profile (*Le Figaro* for France, *Die Presse* for Austria, and *Mladá Fronta DNES* for Czechia) and the more liberal profile (*Le Monde* for France, *Der Standard* for Austria, and *Hospodářské noviny* for Czechia). This sorting reflects Paasi's (1998) consideration of borders as important markers of identity that vary according to the ideological background. The news articles were accessible through media archives (Anopress database for Czechia, WISO-Net for Austria) and personal subscriptions (www.lemonde.fr, www.lefigaro.fr). In these databases, suitable articles were identified through the following filters. Firstly, publication dates were confined to three periods: March 1st through June 30th of 2011, September 1st through December 31st of 2015, and March 1st

through June 30th of 2020. Secondly, the search query had to contain keywords for this study ('borders', 'Schengen', 'controls', 'close') and their combinations. The list of results was then inspected manually to discard non-related articles and articles about borders in different territorial contexts (like external borders of Schengen Area, other continents). The focus was put on opinion articles, longer news reports, columns, and editorials about border closures inside of the Schengen Area. Therefore, articles shorter than 200 words were discarded to filter out short notices and briefings. In the end, dozens of articles passed this process, and their numbers indicated in Table 1 according to period of time. The selected quotes were later manually translated into English by author.

Table 1. Number of articles included by publication and year. Table prepared by author.

Publication	2011	2015	2020
Le Monde (FR)	59	46	49
Le Figaro (FR)	47	60	46
Der Standard (AT)	36	50	80
Die Presse (AT)	38	108	89
Mladá fronta DNES (CZ)	8	82	52
Hospodářské noviny (CZ)	6	66	69

Findings

Even though the borders inside of the Schengen Area remained fixed and unchanged in their territoriality during the selected time period, the meanings and the debate about borders became dynamic.

2011—Revival of Border Debate

Analysis of the first selected period of border debate shows that neither migration nor borders were the most prominent news media topic in 2011. At that time, news stories about crisis were more focused on the global financial crash and the Eurozone crisis. As this opinion article from *Le Monde* shows, migration from North Africa or the Middle East was debated as topic number two. Number one concerned issues of monetary union. For example; "The second motive of disturbance, the refugee wave from the Arab words, gives place to the questioning of the Schengen Agreement that guarantees a free circulation of people between signatory countries" (*Le Monde*, May 25, 2011).

Nevertheless, the quarrel about borders between French and Italian politicians became an important agenda-setter that pointed to the limits of Schengen border culture. The turning point consisted in the acknowledgment that some EU-member countries gave priority to the short-term political profit of their leaders at the expense of mutual solidarity. This was reflected

in one of the headlines in *Le Monde*: "In Europe, a sad reality of selfish practice" (*LM*, May 13, 2011). A lack of solidarity and common coordinated policies during the Ventimiglia incident was perceived in *Le Monde* as a test for a European integration project: "What is at stake really, behind the scenes of migration towards Europe is a decline of European idea and construction" (*LM*, May 17, 2011).

The readership of *Le Figaro* could see quite a different picture, mainly in the opinion articles. There, illegal immigration was portrayed as a threat, and efforts to control the borders were seen as a constructive way of dealing with the problem: "The minister of interior, learning a lesson from the failure of Schengen, deals as he can with the absurdity of European rules to reintroduce the temporary controls at our borders (...). Would you prefer to open our doors to all the Tunisians...?" (*Le Figaro*, April 14, 2011). In other words, *Le Figaro* in these moments reused the political argumentation of Nicolas Sarkozy that borders are possible to be controlled and patrolled.

In the Austrian news media, the issue of the French–Italian dispute was followed as well. One of the reasons may be that Austria neighbors Italy, and the migration of Tunisians could affect Austria. Therefore, temporary stricter controls were set on the border. In the few days after the disruption of railway traffic at the French–Italian border, *Die Presse* started to debate the advantages and inconveniences of the Schengen Agreement: "The refugee flow challenges Schengen" (*Die Presse*, April 13, 2011).

The situation showed that the rules of the Schengen Agreement can be easily derailed by one state that stops fulfilling its responsibility to guard the external Schengen border. At that moment, freedom of movement may become risky, the op-eds in *Die Presse* warned. One month later, the reflection went a step further. The context of the debate ranged from the sheer critique of borderless Europe and discussions about the possible deployment of the army on the borders to the voices that assigned the "border-control" rhetoric to the populist parties that aim to renationalize the EU: "Europe in reverse gear to 27 national fortresses: The populists in the EU countries are not concerned with overcoming a refugee crisis, but rather with renationalizing politics" (*DP*, May 21, 2011). Overall, the debate was set for the future as the bigger migration waves were suggested by some: "The French-Italian dispute over 25,000 Tunisian refugees is currently dominating the news. The real problem for the Schengen area is Greece's inability to organize a functioning border protection" (*DP*, May 5, 2011).

The context of *the border debate* co-created by *Der Standard* journalists was quite different from the approach of *Die Presse*. *Der Standard* did not accept the narrative that the reintroduction of border controls

could be an effective solution to the problems of the Schengen countries. The re-bordering tendencies were seen as a toolkit that belonged to history and could have unpleasant consequences: "Citizens and politicians shout all too quickly: doors and windows are shut, gates close, and borders tight. That is a comprehensible reflex, a seemingly simple solution. So, after the formation of its nation-states, Europe has worked for centuries. Unfortunately, all too often with the fatal endings. As a result, conflicts and border violations were resolved with violence" (*Der Standard*, May 5, 2011).

According to the analytical texts in *Der Standard*, the violation of Schengen rules would mean a severe threat to the whole system of mobility inside of the area: «It is clear that after the euro there will be a second, very specific and at the same time highly symbolic EU pillar is shaking: the Freedom of travel for 400 million Europeans" (*DS*, April 27, 2011).

The abolition of border checks was presented as a necessary condition for the common market, and these important achievements of European integration were threatened by the voluntarism of politicians: "just because of the fickleness and inability of a scandal-ridden Italian head of government. Are all of these (achievements) no longer worth anything?" (*DS*, May 13, 2011).

In contrast, the interest of Czech media in the issue of the future of Schengen was far weaker and no tribunes in favor of border controls emerged. At that time, Czechia was still a 'young' member of the Schengen Area and mainly enjoyed its benefits. A few articles evoked migration as a reason why some voters in France or Italy preferred far-right parties. "Nicolas Sarkozy is concerned if the real or alleged problems with immigration can influence his chances for re-election next year. In France, the support of the nationalist National Front and its leader Marine Le Pen increases" (*Hospodářské noviny*, April 27, 2011). In total, at that time, migration neither elicited emotions nor caused a debate about borders in the Czech newspapers.

2015—Schengen in Times of Migration

Four years later, throughout all selected newspapers, the interest in borders increased. The change was not so dramatic in countries that debated the rules of the Schengen Area in 2011 (France, partly Austria). However, migration and subsequent political reactions caused fever among the Czech public that entered this crisis as a blank sheet. Czechia had not been a typical destination for refugees or migrants from Middle East countries and, suddenly, the atmosphere was dominated by a spiral of instrumentalizing migration for political purposes. The newspaper *Mladá fronta* played a partial role in such development. For example, it brought a report from the Czech border town Břeclav with the headline "Guarders of the border: The concerns from

refugees are here more significant than in the rest of Czechia. When the inhabitants of Břeclav see someone suspicious, they immediately call the police" (*Mladá fronta*, September 4, 2015). The same journalist came with other reports from the borders that emphasized the role of patrols ("Czechia sends riot police to protect its borders"; *MF*, September 16, 2015) or ("Refugees just behind the line. Cínovec is guarded by the police"; *MF*, September 11, 2015).

In the opinion articles in *Mladá fronta*, some authors tried from time to time to calm down the situation, but the context was dominantly embedded in nationalist positions; typically targeted against Germany: "The Germans have implemented what they blamed Hungary for and put Schengen on ice. The reason: they did not manage the wave of refugees" (*MF*, September 14, 2015). This step—the introduction of controls on the German–Austrian border—was presented in an opinion article in *Mladá fronta* under the headline "How the Germans failed" as "the end of the summer fairy tale" (*MF*, September 15, 2015). In this perspective, the decision to control the borders was portrayed as the late and only right step.

The second chosen Czech news title, *Hospodářské noviny,* did not imitate the sharp transformation of *Mladá fronta* from indifference towards migration in 2011 to enthusiasm towards the protection of borders in 2015. Quite on the contrary, *Hospodářské noviny* in the opinion articles presented the reintroduction of border checks as an injury to the European vision and the integration process: "All of these transit countries claim that if Germans fence their borders, they will do the same. A barrier moving as a domino to the southeast would emerge. European integration built on an idea of permeability and openness would get a punch. Would it be lethal? Hard to say" (*Hospodářské noviny*, October 15, 2015).

The criticism of border management was accompanied in *HN* with the following reasoning: "The freedom of movement is one of the basic pillars of European unity and if the states started one after another closing borders, it would mean great victory for terrorists" (*HN*, November 16, 2015), read the audience read after the terror attack at the Bataclan Club in Paris.

The future of Schengen was regarded with high concern also in French news media. Here the debate of 2015 followed up on a thread from 2011. The connection was the person of Nicolas Sarkozy, who orchestrated the closure of the border near Ventimiglia in 2011, and the topic of Schengen reform served as a refrain for his campaign in primaries of the Republican Party (*Les Républicains*) in 2015 and 2016. The intensive migration wave from Syria and Afghanistan was portrayed by him as proof of the need for the radical change of the Schengen system: "Schengen as we wanted and organized it, it's over" (*Le Monde*, October 29, 2015).

Especially in *Le Monde* news reports, the introduction of border checks was seen as a tool of nation-states that contradicted the logic of European integration: (*HN*, November 16, 2015). "Europe is caught in a disastrous downward spiral, yet the only possible solutions to these immense challenges lie in union, not division. In solidarity, not in a deadly selfishness" (*LM*, November 15, 2015).

Such a viewpoint was evident twice during the analyzed period: firstly, in September after the EU experienced the renaissance of border checks and following domino effect when new countries adopted this measure. Secondly, the call against particular national solutions and disintegration was present after the terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015, in Paris: "Deadly cocktail for free movement in Europe: The Schengen area is doubly threatened. By the terrorism that struck France and by the wave of migrants coming from Syria which travels from Turkey to Northern Europe via the Balkans, and which forces, one after the other, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria, and even Germany to reintroduce controls at their borders, or to close them" (*LM*, November 20, 2015). In total, *Le Monde* in its content typically countered the politicians who wanted to tighten the restrictions at the borders and defended the principles of EU integration. The headline of an article issued on November 5, 2015, summarizes it: "Schengen is dead? Long live Schengen!" (*LM*, November 5, 2015).

Similar to the debate of 2011, *Le Figaro* saw border issues differently. Although this newspaper did not unilaterally call for the suspension of free movement inside of the Schengen ("I think that the Schengen area is still relevant, that we cannot live politically or economically in an area constrained by internal borders": *Le Figaro*, September 25, 2015), the opinion articles accepted the measures of the borders with sympathy. Such a step was regarded as a reaction to the chaos and defeat of German chancellor Angela Merkel and EU organs: "Today, the extraordinary bureaucratic lock established by Brussels on the re-establishment of internal border controls has shattered under the pressure of the migrant crisis" (*LF*, September 16, 2015) or: "Since Sunday, unfortunately only behind the scenes, a new praise for borders has appeared: these are naturally necessary for the maintenance of public order, for the consideration of national security" (*LF*, September 14, 2015).

The Austrian media also continued to follow their patterns from the border debate in 2011. Both *Der Standard* and *Die Presse* closely watched the Balkan route of migration into the EU with special attention to Germany and its action. As this migration went through Austria, the everyday experience with migrants was also part of news reports. *Der Standard* assessed critically the domino effect of border closures inaugurated to regulate migration and the ambition to construct a 'fortress' from the Schengen Area: "The 'Fortress Europe' suggests a completely different picture: we build a wall, pull up the drawbridge—and pour down a bucket of the pitch if necessary. No wonder it was the National Socialists who coined this term" (*Der Standard*, October 24, 2015).

The opinion that reintroducing border checks might mean a serious threat to the EU as a whole was prominent in the news. For example, «Anyone who now begins to pull up fences along the national states is betraying the idea of a European Union and burying a peace project for which the Nobel Prize was awarded a few years ago. 'United in diversity' was the EU's motto, but the current outlook is different: separated in envy, fear, and discord" (*DS*, October 29, 2015).

In *Die Presse*, the opinion climate was different. The refugee crisis inside of the Schengen area was portrayed as a "short summer of European anarchy" (*Die Presse*, September 6, 2015), when the refugees did not experience any limits. In the open apology of borders, the world without them was perceived as chaotic: "Everything and every living being are limited by its surface and are only defined in this way in space: every stone, every plant, every animal, and every person. Living beings are even aggregates of borders, in fact mostly billions of them, because each consists of cells, each of which is limited by cell walls and is only viable in this way. So, what happens when these boundaries dissolve?" (*DP*, September 14, 2015).

The role model for ideal border management was here Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (*DP*, September 24, 2015) and if a call for deeper EU integration appeared, it was a vision that all EU decided to tighten the border controls in a coordinated way (*DP*, September 15, 2015).

2020—Border as a Health Prevention?

Five years later, in early March 2020, the Austrian media and the public discussed a possible new migration crisis triggered by Turkey (*Der Standard*, March 4, 2020). However, after a few days, the hurried closure of nation-state borders due to the upsurge of new coronavirus cases moved the attention to another crisis of border management. In the case of *Der Standard*, the reports were from the very beginning focused not only on the government restrictions but also on the problems the people in the borderlands were facing. Early, the first concerns about the potential misuse of border closures were voiced: "One thinks first of the walls behind which the member states of the EU are now entrenched, of the border controls and entry bans, occasionally applied in a way that is inhumane and contradicts all common rules. Such restrictions may currently be necessary to protect the population, but there were and are political forces in Europe for whom the free movement of people has always been a thorn in their side and the admission of refugees has been

and is the devil's work on their people, especially those from certain countries" (*DS*, March 20, 2020). After the militarization of borders connected with the start of the pandemic, *Der Standard* warned against the side effects of such steps: "Fences were built, and border bars closed. If states do not quickly dismantle the barriers after the coronavirus crisis has subsided, there is a risk of dangerous alienation" (*DS*, May 3, 2020).

The position of *Die Presse* was not much distinct from *Der Standard* which contrasts with the situation in 2011 and 2015. Despite the initial acknowledgment of the nation-state as the institution that secured its citizens via border closures (the virus "demonstrates that boundlessness need not always be a value under all circumstances": *Die Presse*, March 21, 2020), the newspaper finally started to support the lifting of restrictions to enhance the economy, tourism and disrupted social networks: "To get the economy going, the first thing that is needed is an opening of borders, a revitalization of the European internal market, and a re-globalization. A country like Austria, whose prosperity depends on 50 percent on exports and foreign tourism, cannot revive its economy in national quarantine" (*DP*, May 12, 2020) or "Open borders mean more: many people have long had an international social network. They want to see their family, relatives, and friends again - or at least have a perspective when it is possible" (*DP*, May 23, 2020).

When looking into the French media, the intensity of the border debate was different in *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. When writing about borders, *Le Monde* highlighted the shock that the French passport could not suddenly guarantee the same freedoms that citizens of the EU used to enjoy. Such a situation was seen as a promised land for the far-right politicians: "It is the world upside down! Dozens of countries are banned from them, not only under the pretext of contagion but also because the COVID-19 feeds nationalist and xenophobic demagogy" (*LM*, March 18, 2020). Very soon, opinion articles started to question the efficacy of border closure: "Borders, a false remedy for the coronavirus" (*LM*, April 10, 2020).

Le Figaro offered to the audience many texts about the border closures but only a few opinion articles that would discuss specifically this issue. The exceptional cases presented contradicting opinions. On the one hand, it was a French alt-right activist and later presidential candidate from 2022 Éric Zemmour, who praised the institution of a nation-state which, according to him, is more realistic, strong, and efficient than abstract ideologies of a borderless world: "Those infected with the virus have a passport: the Chinese first infected or the Italians infected. But the borderless ideology is stronger than anything" (*Le Figaro*, March 20, 2020).

This way of argumentation was pushed forward one month later: "After the era of blissful globalization, which

was thought to be beneficial to everyone, the notion of borders is gradually being rehabilitated in Europe. Since the early 2000s, the 'opening' had already suffered several stab wounds (crisis of terrorism...)" (*LF*, April 15). The same day, however, the context of the debate was broadened by a claim that "borders are made to be crossed" (*LF*, April 14, 2020).

From the six news media outlets analyzed in this piece, no newspaper advocated the border restrictions so fiercely as the Czech *Mladá fronta*. This newspaper was owned by the close collaborators of the then Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš, whose border policy was met with acclamation. The first voice in this direction came on March 13: "The price for the excessive openness of the world, for the fact that we do not have to show our passport at the borders, is very clear. It is a price for Schengen, for a Europe without borders which some of us have tried to say out loud for many years" (*Mladá fronta*, March 13, 2020).

The news articles in *Mladá fronta* were permeated by critique of the EU ("Ursula von der Leyen even opposed the closing of borders. To many people, it seemed unbelievable that she was more interested in the alleged violation of European rules than in the rising numbers of those infected": *MF*, March 17, 2020). Headlines made clear that the threat is behind the borders, in the foreigners who can transmit the deadly virus into Czechia: "There is another world beyond the border, commuters are a risk" (*MF*, March 21, 2020) and "The green border is guarded against the Germans" (*MF*, March 25, 2020). The underlying message for the audience was the following: "Alarm clock for dreamy Europe" (*MF*, March 16, 2020). According to the nationalistic narrative shared by *Mladá fronta*, the institutions of the nation-state solved this crisis better than *naïve* Europe.

On the other side, *Hospodářské noviny* was holding the line of *Der Standard* and *Le Monde*. Although the initial border closure could make sense, the long-term effects could harm the whole EU, according to the opinion articles: "Therefore, when the epidemic is over, we should be careful that the state does not want to retain more control over the people. And that the newly erected borders would not be preserved in the form of a coronavirus curtain, which would appeal to all sorts of authoritarians and nationalists" (*Hospodářské noviny*, March 18, 2020).

Also, the authors of the comments were concerned about how easily many citizens surrender their freedoms: "The specificity of the Czechs is that what would harm them the most in the long run, many of them enthusiastically promote as the best possible way out of the current difficult situation caused by the pandemic of the new coronavirus: self-confinement. People would not mind if the borders remained closed for a very long time or if any controls on them worked

forever, as a survey for the SEZNAM ZPRÁVY showed" (*HN*, April 17, 2020).

Discussion—Re-bordering Processes in Language

As shown above, the context of the border debate changed significantly between 2011 and 2020. If the question of the Schengen reform was rather on the periphery of political and media interest with the small exception of election campaigns and the incident at Ventimiglia after the Euro crisis, the migration into Europe and the coronavirus pandemics represented a game-changer and the borders were once again raised as a topic for news media (Medeiros et al., 2021).

The analysis of the news articles witnesses how rather administrative issues of border controls became political due to the nationalist discourses (Bieber 2020). The border regime became a polarizing topic with the cleavage indicated in a different context by Zhurzhenko (2010) between the *narrative of integration* and the *narrative of security*. The opinion-makers quoted by news media often saw in borders an important symbol of either a bridge to others or a wall. During the 2010s the securitization of borders (Brubaker 2020) was associated with fears of losing security or of losing freedom of movement. The use of metaphorical and symbolic language transformed the conflict over the border regime into an ideological one: value of freedom vs. value of security.

Crises created a scene for re-bordering narratives and policies. The language is an essential part of them (Scott 2012). Those processes were constantly transforming the perceptions of borders and spatial identity (Bossong et al. 2017). If state boundaries had memory, all the talk about them and exceptional measures would mean a precedent for the future. As a result of such policies, the threat was normalized in the political discourse (Karamanidou & Kasperek 2020), which may represent an important precondition for the quick and radical resurrection of borders inside of the EU during the coronavirus pandemic. The states and their re-bordering steps were inspired by the precedents of 2011 and 2015.

The re-bordering or de-bordering tendencies were strengthened by the use of language. Borders, even those inside of the EU, are always in transition and are continuously re-narrated and re-shaped. The development analyzed in this study confirms that imagination, emotions, and symbols are central to the current border debate (Wassenber 2020; Kinnvall 2018). Those media representations helped to constitute the picture that the borders are the center of the political conflict over migration and freedom of movement inside of the EU. Three main categories of discourses were identified:

A Vision of Fortress Europe

The most fervent advocates of border controls in the news media portrayed borders as a site of protection. These opinion makers mentioned borders as the sites of sovereignty where the nation-state guarantees the security of its citizens. According to the logic of this discourse, such ability lay in sharp contrast to the international or supranational organizations that are associated with the vision of a borderless and fluid world. Borders here play the role of a filter installed by the state to decide who has a right to entry and who does not have this privilege. This argumentation prefers order and control to the liberties and the freedom of movement is seen as a luxury for times of 'good weather'. This goes together with the argumentation of Trucco (2023), who noted that the narrative of solidarity at the borders is sometimes criminalized by the proponents of securitization. It is particularly telling that such a conception of strict border controls points to the external threat from outside (Casaglia et al. 2020). In a conflict "Us vs. Them" the border is believed to be a decisive battlefield (van Houtum 1999). On a symbolic level, terms like 'fortress', 'citadel', or 'wall' are very often evoked.

A vision of borders as a necessary evil

Some of the opinion makers tried to justify the border measures by their temporality. The reintroduction of border controls was, therefore, portrayed as a rather neutral technical measure that did not contradict the rules of the Schengen Agreement. When reintroducing border controls with this rhetoric, the governments wanted to satisfy more extreme voices who were dreaming about 'fortress Europe' while at the same time calming down those with concerns about the future of freedom of movement. However, even this approach that tried to downplay the symbolic value of border controls contributed to the normalization of them in the discourse and was part of re-bordering tendencies (Colombeau 2020; Evrard et al. 2020).

A vision of borders as the site of solidarity

The third group of articles criticized the rush to close the internal borders of the Schengen Area as a lack of solidarity. According to them, the Schengen border regime stands upon the solidarity of the member states of the EU. If one cannot exercise its role on the external border of Schengen or if one reintroduces controls in the inner part of Schengen, the situation may escalate into a domino effect when the states just follow the steps of others and introduce border checks in an uncoordinated way. Their authors warned of the domino effect of mutual suspects and mistrust that could mean an end of freedom of movement. This study shows that the narrative of integration is present in some more conservative media (*Die Presse, Le Figaro, Mladá fronta*) in times of crisis. The opinion makers that

spread the fear of external threats did not usually have any opponents there and such media could turn into loudspeakers for the narrative of security.

Conclusion

Lamour (2019) in his study on the representations of the Schengen Treaty in museums found that the picture of Schengen may oscillate between tribute to the freedom of movement and the presentation of controls and the filter of legal/illegal entries on the external border (Infantino 2019). This paper looked for the media representations of borders inside of the Schengen Area in times of so-called crisis. Except for praise for freedom of movement, the decade of the 2010s witnessed also sharp criticism of the Schengen regime and calls for nation-state sovereignty represented on the borders. This paper shows how the border debate came to Czechia with a significant delay in comparison with France or Austria. This analysis also reflects how the topic of border control became polarising hand in hand with the issue of migration. Borders became one of the main symbols of the perceived migration and coronavirus crises as both focused on the mobility of citizens. In the 2020s, migration still presents a challenge for the European border debate. It is, therefore, a timely research question of how narratives of integration and security evolve and what forms they will take in the future.

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ARTICLE
SPECIAL SECTION

Bordering Inclusion and Exclusion in the Discourses of Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour

Alina Mozolevska *

This paper focuses on the discursive construction of borders and discourses of exclusion and inclusion in French right-wing populist discourse. It elaborates on the idea of the politicization of borders in contemporary political communication and their symbolic meaning as an expression of national sovereignty, security, and identity. Using the approach of discourse analysis, the author investigates how bordering discourses were employed by Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour during the 2022 presidential campaign. The empirical analysis focuses on the parties' programs, candidates' discourses, and their social media communication. This offers valuable insights into how political actors construct borders and shape 'us' and 'them' groups.[1]

Introduction

In one of Ruth Wodak's recent books, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-Wing Populist Discourses Mean*, she argues that "in spite of an ever more unified and globalized world, more borders and walls emerge, defining nation states and protecting them from dangers both alleged and real" (Wodak 2015, 94). Indeed, recent global changes, migration flows, and geopolitical transformations have brought the border back to the center of the political arena, and new or renewed bordering narratives and practices feed numerous populist discourses and movements all across the world (Osuna 2022). The politics of bordering and exclusion become the core of populist rhetoric deepening the antagonistic frontier between 'us' and 'them' and calling for the construction of new walls to protect the borders of nation-states. In the USA, Donald Trump came into power promising to make America great again and to preserve America for Americans by constructing the great wall to minimize migration. The Brexit campaign was focused on "taking back control" over politics and borders to restore the greatness of the state and protect the country from unwelcomed foreigners. The French political landscape is no exception; bordering narratives are at the heart of the campaigning of right-wing parties in today's presidential election, and the candidates are extensively using exclusionary rhetoric in order to minimize migration and preserve the nation. Seen not as a territorial divider, but as a recurring symbol of national homogeneity, sovereignty, and security of a nation-state, in political communication the border serves as a tool for the construction of national identity and of legitimization of exclusion of the 'other' (Osuna 2022).

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The containing and limiting nature of borders within the nation provides the criteria for the division of the population into those who have the right to belong to the group of 'us' and thus enjoy the advantages of nationhood and those who are considered outsiders, in this way instrumentalizing the dichotomy between inclusion and exclusion. Following Massimiliano Demata, "this dichotomy shapes the contours of the various identities associated with (and created by) borders and acts as a discriminatory principle on which one's belonging to the nation is founded" (Demata 2022, 11). Nations constantly draw their power from borders and exercise it over them "because they are conceptualized and narrated as key elements of the nation within its public sphere" (Demata 2022, 10). Thus, in the socio-political space, borders emphasize the categories of difference and sameness and define the criteria of belonging to a nation, which represents an effective mechanism for producing clear boundaries between 'the people' and the 'other', two key concepts of populism (Mudde 2004). Contributing to the processes of both ordering and othering, they are used to "to formulate certain parameters of inclusion and exclusion in discourse" (Demata 2022, 11) which help to mobilize voters. Simultaneously, these border narratives are constructed not as an affirmation of neutral lines between nation-states, but as spatial structures that are constantly re/affirmed or negotiated, involving a wide range of strong individual and collective emotions such as fear and hatred towards the 'other' or affective belonging to the group of 'us' and hope for a better collective future. In other words, borders can serve as highly significant mobilizers of shared feelings that help political actors consolidate a collective 'us' and build the nation. As Anssi Paasi argues "in geopolitical terms, borders are thus related to 'people', 'nation', and 'culture'" and represent "the complex, perpetually ongoing, hegemonic nation-building process" (Paasi 2012, 2305). To understand the meaning of borders in politics, we need to study "how borders can be exploited to both mobilize and fix territory, security, identities, emotions and memories, and various forms of national socialization" (Paasi 2012, 2307) and perceive them not as uncontested entities but as socially and politically constructed, emotionally powerful discourses of bordering that unfold history, belonging, and identity.

While the concept of the border has undergone extensive analysis in relation to globalization, politics, migration, and culture (Schmidtke 2021; Vezzoli 2021; Calabrò 2021; Gheorghiu 2020), there is a limited body of research specifically dedicated to populist discourse on borders. Some studies delve into the symbolism of the border wall in political populist communication (Demata 2022; Espejo 2019), while others examine the emotional dynamics of border discourses (Beurskens 2022). Additionally, some research also focuses on the European context of populist discourses of bordering (Lamour & Varga 2020; Osuna 2022). The goal of this research is to fill this gap, shed light on the empirical understanding of the relation between the border and populism, and analyze the discursive construction of border narratives in French right-wing populist discourse. Building on a content and discourse analysis of political communication from two French right-wing populist parties and their leaders during the 2022 electoral campaign, this paper aims to scrutinize the strategies of othering, inclusion, and exclusion in relation to borders. I will compare the main discursive strategies of the leaders of the two parties that represent the main populist actors in France: Marine Le Pen from the National Rally (Rassemblement National) and Eric Zemmour from the party Reconquest (La Reconquête). The National Rally, which was called Front National until 2018, is a well-known nationalist and right-wing party that has existed since 1972. La Reconquête (launched in December 2021) is a newly created party with nationalist and radical right-wing positions. They both advocate for the implementation of anti-immigration politics with the aim of protecting French identity and sovereignty, as well as for the stricter control of illegal immigration. Combining their exclusionary discourses with an anti-elitist position, they saw significant success in the 2022 election (Eric Zemmour was ranked fourth in the first round, and Marine le Pen second in the first and second rounds), which proves their increasing popularity and wide acceptance of their ideas among French voters.

Populism and Borders

Although populist movements and parties are not a new political phenomenon and have been studied by many researchers (Schwörer 2021, 11–12), the recent rise of populist parties in Western Europe and America has proliferated the interest in populism research, and the academic debate about what populism means has developed considerably. Nowadays, populism is studied from different angles, as an ideology, movement, or regime, but also as a party, as a code, a syndrome, a political cognitive schema, or as a dimension of political culture (Demertzis 2006, 32). In trying to define this global phenomenon, researchers have elaborated several approaches, seeing it as a political logic (Laclau 2005), political style (Moffit 2016), or ideology (Mudde 2004. For Laclau, populism is seen as a particular logic of political life, a discourse that pits 'the people' against dominant elites by constructing an antagonistic frontier between different parts of society and challenging the hegemonic socio-political order. In its ideational dimension, populism is defined as a 'thin-centred ideology' which "considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (Mudde 2004, 543). Populism as a political style refers to the performative aspect of political communication and consists in the study of phenomena through the interactions of 'the leaders' as

performers, 'the people' as the audience, and 'the media' as the stage of this performance (Moffit 2016). Despite the diversity of definitions of this contested concept and the variety of populist agendas and strategies around the globe, researchers agree on two core concepts of this phenomenon: the people versus the elite in a challenge to the hegemonic order. This paper adopts Laulau's perspective, defining populism as a specific political logic of articulation, which involves the construction of two antagonistic groups, the 'people' and the 'elite' within the society. These two types of collective identities are negotiable and discursively constructed by the articulation of equivalence and difference by various social actors (Laclau 2005, 83). Laclau sees the construction of an antagonistic frontier between 'us' and 'them' (the 'people' and the system, the 'people' and the elite, 'us' and 'them') as one of the preconditions of the development of populism, which, together with the equivalential articulation of popular demands, makes the emergence of the 'people' possible (Laclau 2005, 74).

The emotional dynamics of political communication function as a fundamental component of populist rhetoric (Nguyen et al. 2022; Wodak 2015), especially for right-wing populism. The antagonistic relationship within a society generated by populist movements produces 'a certain structure of feelings which convinces people that they are part of something greater' (Minogue 1969, 197), and at the same time, allows the construction of differences between the groups of 'us' and 'them'. Positive and negative emotions play a crucial role in the processes of alignment and separation within society and take part in the construction of populist discourses as affective markers of expression of social relations of power, hierarchy, and distinctions (Scheibelhofer 2020, 543). The emotions of hate and love are equally important for the delineation and re/imagining of collective identities, reproduction, and the proximity and distance between different social groups (Ahmed 2004, 25). From one side, the politics of love (to the nation, to the collective us) helps create an active identification with the nation, with the group of those "like me" and who are "with me" (Ahmed 2004, 36), and to draw the contours of a community of insiders, to which its participants are emotionally attached. As Paul Scheibelhofer noted, it helps to promote "the notion of a community of equals that "naturally" belongs to a particular territory, a territory its members are invited to feel to belong to and feel entitled to inhabit, undisturbed by strangers" (Scheibelhofer 2020, 543). From another side, populism generates the 'politics of fear', a set of discursive strategies aimed at generating fear and anger towards the 'other' in order to distinguish oneself from those outside and deepen the antagonism between 'us' and 'them' (Wodak 2015). The politics of fear and anger makes it possible to trigger collective anxieties, externalize enemies, and "blame others for the precarious, risky and threatening situations" the collective 'us' faces (Demertzis 2006, 39). In addition, the populist tendency to polarize society and split

it into two antagonistic camps provides a perfect setting for the generation of anger and hate toward the 'other' (Rico et al. 2017, 449). Thus, both positive and negative emotional dynamics mutually contribute to the construction of the populist rhetoric of exclusion and inclusion.

In the West–European context, populism is predominantly found on the radical left and radical right (Rooduijn & Akkerman 2017), which display its mechanisms of construction of core populist concepts. On the radical right, populism is combined with nativism and authoritarianism, and it is culturally exclusionist (Mudde 2007). The presence of the bad other and the nation as an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) is central to self-identification and the establishment of its collective identities. As Anton Pelinka argues, contemporary populism is aimed mostly at the mobilization against the enemy from abroad, which makes populism more and more ethno-nationalistic (Pelinka 2013, 9). The elites are seen as those who are responsible for the globalization and mass migration politics that threaten national homogeneity, and the other is externalized (Rydgren 2007, 242). Right-wing populism strengthens the feeling of national belonging and in-group connections by emphasizing homogeneous ethnicity, by a return to traditional values and shifting from enemies inside the country ('the elite') to the external other, the enemy outside of national boundaries. Within this approach, the definition of the nation is limited to ethno-national parameters of 'the people' and seen as a sovereign community that exists within a specific territory. Thus, access to the national identity of community members is defined via one's national heritage, the place of birth, and spatial belonging (Wodak 2015, 101). Borders become a part of the discursive constitution of 'the nation' because they help produce shared understandings of identity and a sense of inclusion or exclusion (Osuna 2022). In right-wing populist discourse, strong borders are linked to the notion of strong nation, national security, and homogeneity (Beurskens 2022). They divide people, discursively producing marginal groups of those who do not belong to 'the people'. In other words, exclusionary border narratives reinforce the sense of self and of belonging to a certain community and deepen antagonistic differences between 'us' and 'them'.

In their paper "Bordering, Ordering and Othering", Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen have noted that borders are not places that are "fixed in space and time" and "should rather be understood in terms of bordering, as an ongoing strategic effort to make a difference in space among the movements of people, money or products" (van Houtum & Naerssen 2002, 126). In this case, the borders are seen not as "physical and visible lines of separation" (Newman 2006, 144), but as continuous processes of reaffirmation and negotiation of socio-geopolitical space and identity through legitimation of "inclusion in, or exclusion from, the nation" (Demata 2022, 11–12). According to van Houtum and Naerssen,

the process of construction of a border is realized through bordering, ordering, and othering mechanisms (van Houtum & Naerssen 2002). The othering is understood as a discursive process of differentiation and hierarchization of people in which more powerful groups who "define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way which ascribe problematic and/ or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups", defining "legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate" (Jensen 2011, 65). The hierarchization can be built on varied criteria, including race, gender, class, age, etc. (Jensen 2011). Within political communication, the othering, i.e. "political practices of elimination, of the cleansing of the 'other' that lives inside an imagined community" (van Houtum & Naerssen 2002, 126), is extremely productive for populist discourse because it "takes place towards 'them' or outsiders" and in this way mobilizes 'us' by providing a necessary criterion of differentiation between 'they/them' and 'us'. Othering is represented as a "critical element in ordering, that is how geographical, cultural, governmental and legal dividing lines between 'inside' and 'outside', 'we' and the 'Other', are established and maintained at various scales, from local communities to global dividing lines" (Paasi 2021). This practice of exclusion and marginalization of those 'outside' the borders (Demata 2022, 13) is tightly connected to the moral interpretation of the actors (Demata 2022; Wodak 2015; Osuna 2022; Yerly 2022) and emotional connection to the homeland (Wodak 2015, 102). Borders, as symbols and manifestations of power relations, norms, values, and legal and moral codes, help to build an emotional connection to a homeland and its people on one hand and produce fear, anger, and hate towards the externalized other on the other hand (Newman & Paasi 1998).

Case and Method

This paper uses Critical Discourse Analysis and specifically the Discourse Historical Approach (Wodak 2001, 2015; Reisigl & Wodak 2009) to analyze the mechanisms of bordering, exclusion, and inclusion in French right-wing populist discourse. The Critical Discourse Analysis approach sees language as a form of social practice and is focused on the examination of its role in shaping social structures and norms, power relations, and ideologies (Wodak 2001; Fairclough 2000). The Discourse-Historical Approach as a part of CDA emphasizes the analysis of discursive practices within their historical context, going beyond the immediate analysis of language structures and use and emphasizing the role of discourse in shaping and being shaped by historical processes (Wodak 2001, 2015; Reisigl & Wodak 2009). Following Wodak (2001), the Discourse Historical Approach consists of three dimensions. The first dimension is the descriptive one, the specific contents or topics of a discourse are identified. Secondly, discursive

strategies are investigated, which are seen as planned actions that are being implemented to achieve a certain political, psychological, or other goal (Wodak et al. 2009, 31). Thirdly, specific linguistic means and context-dependent linguistic realizations are identified and examined to reveal the implicit content of the discourse. The empirical analysis in this paper is mainly focused on the analysis of the discursive strategies as they are especially productive for the construction of discourses of inclusion and exclusion. Nomination and predication strategies allow the construction of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Argumentation strategies which are realized through the application of topoi represent conclusion rules, which associate the argument with the claim or conclusion. Perspectivization strategies clarify the point of view from which the 'self', the 'other', and the arguments are described. Intensification/mitigation strategies modify the illocutionary force of utterances with respect to their epistemic status (Wodak 2001). The dataset comprises documents from heterogeneous sources (interviews, public addresses, Electoral programs, parties' official platforms, Twitter posts) published during the first and second round campaigns of the presidential election in France (November 2021–April 2022).

Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's Bordering Discourses

The 2022 French presidential elections were held on 10 and 24 April 2022 with two right-wing candidates in the top four ratings: Marine Le Pen (23% in the first and 41% in the second round) and Eric Zemmour (7%). Marine Le Pen, the daughter of notorious French politician Jean-Marie Le Pen and the leader of the far-right party National Rally since 2011 was familiar to French voters as she also ran for the French presidency in 2012 and 2017, and it was not surprising that she would represent the main opponent for Emmanuel Macron in 2022. After two defeats in presidential elections, she thoroughly reconceptualized the program of the party to "polish the rough edges of the National Rally" and soften her image and rhetoric (Mazoue 2022). The second far-right candidate, Eric Zemmour, only officially entered the political stage in November 2021, but this well-known polemicist and TV personality, author of more than ten books and numerous papers, was already considered as one of the potential candidates of right-wing French political power since 2019. In the first phase of the election, he even seemed to constitute a threat to Marine Le Pen and her party (Alduy 2022), when he obtained 16.5 % in the polls and came in second in the presidential race, just behind Emmanuel Macron (Fourquet & Kraus 2022). Later, Eric Zemmour lost the score and Marine le Pen succeeded in advancing into the second round and obtained 41%, the highest result for the National Rally since its creation. In the media, Le Pen and Zemmour are called, "the two faces of French far right' (Tournier & Elkaim 2022) or the

"two main far-right contenders in the French election" (Gaudot 2022), and their ideological principles are often compared. Some political analysts think that Zemmour's rhetoric helped Le Pen to normalize and de-demonize the political radical right position of her party (Alduy 2022; Mayer 2022). Despite the two candidates sharing much ideological common ground and being located on the extreme right of the French political spectrum, their rhetorical style is different. Le Pen and Zemmour rely a lot on anti-elitist rhetoric, perceiving national and EU political elites as the main enemies of the people. They both build their campaigns on anti-migration and ethnocentric discourses, seeing migration as the source of all social and economic problems, and advocate for strong national identity, traditional values, and for France for French citizens, but justify it differently. Zemmour, "populist 'French Trump'" (Cendrowicz 2021), is considered more radical and intellectual and extensively exploits his image as a 'new face' in politics, a person outside the system, while Le Pen relies on her rich political experience and seems to be the 'more popular' candidate (Mayer 2022). Let us analyze in more detail the main differences between Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's ways of constructing the symbolic meaning of the national border and the peculiarities in their use of the strategies of othering, inclusion, and exclusion.

Border politics was at the core of Le Pen's and Zemmour's 2022 electoral campaigns; security, migration, and border control issues represented key elements of their programs. Their bordering strategies were built around the renegotiation of France–EU borders, intertwining with specific populist discursive elements, such as the us-them antagonism, idealized construction of 'the people', nostalgic construction of the nation-state, and charismatic leadership. These components collectively facilitated the dissemination of narratives pertaining to exclusion and inclusion. While Marne Le Pen made the border a center of her campaign by combining it with the ideas of the rule of law and national priority in different socio-economical domains, Zemmour's rhetoric was largely inspired by the replacement theory of Renaud Camus and a revisionist vision of French history.

In Marine Le Pen's discourses, the border was always central to discussions about national security, identity, and sovereignty. In 2022, Le Pen refused the idea of a national referendum to leave the European Union which she largely promoted in 2017, and moved from the concept of "frexit" to the fusion of three core ideas in her program: "citoyenneté-identité-immigration" ("citizenship-identity-immigration"), advocating for strict border control as a matter of interior and exterior security, and protection of public order and preservation of French identity (Le Pen 2022a). Seeing migration as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, Le Pen claimed that France failed to "control" or to "muster" the migration flows which led to "communitarianism, separatism" when "more and more people living in France do not want to live according to French morals, do not recognize French law and sometimes want to impose their lifestyles on their neighbors, at school, at work, in the public services, in the public space" (Le Pen 2022b, 8).[2]

In her program, Le Pen contended that the present government not only neglected to implement border control but also supported a policy of open borders. This, according to her, has led to the surge in "uncontrolled" illegal migration, posing a significant threat to "French nationality, French identity, French heritage" (Le Pen 2022b, 16). Throughout her campaign, Le Pen remained committed to one of the main goals of the National Rally, namely to fight illegal migration by restoring border control: "Elected President, I will expel the illegals. To stop the illegal immigration that ruins us and threatens our way of life, I will control the borders and put an end to the call for social air" (Le Pen, @MLP_officiel 2022 February 7). In her interviews and tweets, she promised to expel all illegal migrants outside the national borders. Le Pen directly connects the border control regime and security within the state. In an interview for France 3 (2022, 0:40–1:00) she said that that her project, which is aimed at "returning the French their country", is based on two important issues: immigration and insecurity. By aligning these two issues, she explicitly asserted that migration poses a direct threat to the country. The emphasis on border security is particularly evident in her tweet dated August 24, 2021: "We cannot fight immigration without national borders. You cannot fight drugs without national borders. Fraud cannot be fought without national borders". By intertwining immigration, drug control, and fraud prevention with the concept of borders, Le Pen transformed the national border into a symbol of security of the state. The politician strategically employs the topos of threat, emphasizing the perceived danger posed by the 'other', and draws on the topoi of law and justice to argue that open borders contribute to increased criminal activities within the country. This rhetorical approach is integral to justifying the migration policy of her party, which she describes as the "backbone of the program" and underscores her advocacy for strict border control (France 3 2022, 7:00–7:50).

Another argument emphasized in Le Pen's official program to advocate for stringent border control is the claim that the impacts of migration are not limited to France alone, they also adversely affect the countries of origin: "The mass immigration suffered by France is also a scourge for the countries of origin" (Le Pen 2022b, 8). She affirmed that a considerable number of active and young individuals choose to emigrate to Europe, contributing to a shortage of workforce in their respective native countries. This, in turn, hampers the proper development of these nations. This 'vicious circle' slows down the development of the countries of origin and makes more people leave their homes. That is why, according to Le Pen, the limitation of

departures of their nationals is "also a service to return to these countries" (Le Pen 2022b, 8). This way of perspectivation and employing the topos of usefulness (strict border control will help develop the countries of origin) and responsibility (exclusion of the 'other' is for the good of the system) helps Marine Le Pen justify exclusion with implicit discriminatory context. The focus on exclusion as a means to ensure not only the stability and security of France but also to assist the nations from which migrants originate intertwines ideas of national interest and a sense of responsibility for the broader global system of well-being and serves as a 'noble' justification for stringent immigration policies.

While for Le Pen the key concept was the control of the border and migration, Zemmour's objective was to stop migration flows. Even before the official announcement of his candidacy, when addressing the topic of borders, Zemmour already expressed his opinion by saying that "borders mean peace" and French people "have the right to protect our way of life, our health, our civilization" (Fdesouche 2020), and since the very beginning of the presidential campaign, Zemmour had established himself as a messianic candidate (Mager 2022), the savior of the nation, putting security, immigration, and identity issues at the center of his program. The securitized national borders were positioned as an existential issue for the French people and symbolized the guarantee of national integrity and homogeneity. Strong borders meant peace and prosperity for the nation-state, a chance to turn back the lost glory of the nation. To save the nation, he was ready to "close the borders if necessary" because: "I want to stop migratory flows, I don't want more than 275,000 legal entries per year into the territory, and 400,000 in all with the right of asylum. Yes, I want to stop that, especially coming from a civilization very far from ours" (Punchline 2021, 20:00–22:00). As we see from the example, Zemmour was opposed to both legal and illegal migration. He connected the idea of the open border to a supposed threat to the French nation: uncontrolled "migration flows" from other counties endanger French civilization and the way of life. Zemmour relies more on the topos of threat and danger than Le Pen, presenting migration as an existential issue for the whole nation and promoting the idea of closed borders as the only means of national preservation.

In a broader sense, Zemmour connected the notion of borders with a sense of being at home and a shared collective feeling of belonging. He directly associated the borders of a nation-state with the notion of home by saying: "Our country has borders. Your home has boundaries. The law will be the same: no entry!" (Zemmour, @EricZemmour 2022 January 23). Throughout his campaigning, he instrumentalized the concept of "exilés de l'intérieur" ("exiled from inside"), which symbolically describes the French nation which is about to lose its territory and identity. According to Zemmour, it was exactly the absence of a strong border that caused this feeling of exile among the French

people. This concept combined a melancholic longing for the past, a feeling of lost home, and hopelessness. Zemmour defined it in the following way: "You haven't moved and yet you feel like you're no longer at home. You have not left your country, but it is as if your country has left you. You feel like foreigners in your own country, you are exiles from within" (Zemmour 2021a, 2:10–3.:00). By saying that the French people do not belong to their country anymore, that they feel like foreigners themselves, Zemmour tries to mobilize a sense of loss and individual emotional longing for the past and to rescale it to the dimension of the whole country. This "strange and penetrating feeling" of internal exile is tightly connected with a vision of borders as symbolic contours of a homogenous nation-state and with a longing for the collective past, where Zemmour entangles individual nostalgic memories with glorious historical events and famous personalities of the country: "You feel like you are no longer in the country you know. You remember the country you knew as a child, you remember the country your parents described to you. You remember the country ... of Joan of Arc, Bonaparte and General de Gaulle, the country of the knights ... the country of Victor Hugo" (Zemmour 2021a, 0:50–2:00). Using sentimental memories about the country of one's childhood and saying that "this country, which you cherish is disappearing", allowed Zemmour to romanticize the image of France and to construct an imagined state with strong borders that can be reconquered again. In his electoral program, Zemmour advocated for the necessity to reconquer and save for future generations "a France as prosperous, united and peaceful as the one we inherited" (Zemmour 2022). For Zemmour, the true France is a country of the past, a country that only exists in films or books (Zemmour 2021a), placed somewhere in the seventies, a prosperous state with strong borders and a homogenous population, an ideal that is almost lost. In a period dominated by patriarchal order, law, and social harmony, Zemmour's France is based on the feeling of affection to the local, to the past, to the "good old times", and the rejection of the present, of the global, of progress. The past, for him, is a period of "a great cultural coherence of the French people" (SpectatorTV 2021, 18:30–19:00), a time of national homogeneity and glory of French civilization and culture, while the present is associated with the "decline of France" provoked by the ruling elite, who does not protect their borders anymore and is ready to sacrifice France for "a chimera of European federalism" (Zemmour @EricZemmour 2022 January 2). The old France belongs to the collective "we" constructed by the politician, to the authentic Frenchmen, people who share the same religion, the same vision of the past and present and consider themselves a part of one glorious nation. Later in his campaigning, Zemmour repeatedly addressed the "glorious" past of the country and the necessity to protect "the French genius against the standardizing phenomenon of globalization". Thus, in his argumentation, he largely uses the topos of history

(life was better before the "other" arrived) to justify the politics of closed borders. Throughout the campaign, he offered different solutions for strengthening the borders of the nation-state, from the creation of a Re-migration ministry and the formation of new border-guard military units to the construction of a wall. The idea to build a wall seemed logical to Zemmour. As Trump wanted to separate the USA from the undesirable migration with a wall, Zemmour was ready to build a border wall on the external borders of the European Union to stop the threatening 'other': "Me, I will sway the European majority in favor of the wall which will be financed by European funds because it is essential. And I think that the countries that have built a wall like Hungary are the ones that defend European civilization" (BFMTV 2022a, 1:15:00–1:16:00). Zemmour's discourse on borders, which appears to be more radical than Le Pen's, is oriented towards shaping the border as a symbol of the nation. This involves a profound emphasis on the topos of threat, accentuating perceived dangers to the nation, and the topos of history, which integrates historical narratives into the discourse.

Thus, for both Le Pen and Zemmour, bordering discourses were central to their campaigns, but they differed in emphasis and rhetoric. While Le Pen focused more on control and the rule of law, seeing the border as a symbol of national security and well-being, Zemmour justified closed border policies through historicization of the discourse and propagation of nostalgic reconstruction of the nation's past. Table 1 provides a comparative overview of Le Pen's and Zemmour's visions of borders.

Othering as a Strategy of Construction of National Identity

Bordering discourses provide the necessary background for constructing narratives of exclusion and inclusion. Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's exclusionary discourses are concentrated on immigrants inside and outside the nation-state as the main 'other', which is supposed to reinforce cultural and political cohesion of the nation-state and French traditional identity while suppressing alien identity and culture. Negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation inherent to right-wing discourses represent the main strategy of construction of the threatening 'other'. Both Zemmour and Le Pen used the topos of threat, connecting the threatening 'other' with the criminalization of society, but the topos of culture was also very salient (the 'other' representing alien culture and civilization) in the construction of exclusionary discourse in their campaigns. Nationality and religion are used as the main criteria to define an ideal society in these othering discourses. The ethnicity-centered self-presentation helps Le Pen and Zemmour construct the opposition between different parts of French society, dividing it into two categories: authentic Frenchmen and 'others' ("foreigners, migrants, Muslims"). For both of them, the 'other' is represented by illegal migration flows that invade the country, and these two groups are in a state of constant confrontation.

Zemmour's 'other' is omnipresent, dangerous, and criminalized. If this group prevails, it would mean the end of French civilization. He argues that the country is already invaded by marginalized foreigners, who do not respect the French way of life and bring their own traditions and customs into the country: "You go out in the street, you go anywhere, you go to the suburbs of Paris and you see cities where we are no longer in France, that is to say, where burqas and veils have replaced dresses and skirts, where kebabs have replaced bistros, where halal butchers have replaced French butchers" (Brut 2022a, 7:30–8:30). According to Zemmour, French people are threatened by this hostile heterogeneous group of 'others' from outside and inside. Inside the country, the 'other' represents a source of disorder, violence, crime, and economic instability. During his campaign, he repeatedly says that foreigners, who are gradually replacing French people, are responsible for the degradation of the social and economic pillars of French society: "The French have

Table 1. Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's Discourse on Borders. Table prepared by the author.

Element	Marine Le Pen	Eric Zemmour
Anti-Migration Stance	Migration as a threat to security and identity	Migration as an existential threat to French civilization
Borders as Symbol	Controlled border, symbol of national security, identity, and sovereignty	Border wall, symbol of peace and prosperity, guarantee of national integrity and French civilization
Use of Emotional Appeal	Fear of 'other'	Fear of 'other', collective feelings of loss, nostalgia and exile
Use of Topoi	Topos of threat Topos of usefulness Topos of responsibility	Topos of threat Topos of history
Proposal for Border Reinforcement	Strict border control, expulsion of illegal migrants	Advocates for a wall on EU external borders, re-migration ministry, politics of closed borders

been driven out by foreigners and immigrants because in these suburbs of the metropolis. We no longer live in the French way, they have become foreign enclaves, enclaves most often Islamized where we walk around in hijab, in djellab, where there are only kebabs and where there are only halal butchers" (LCI 2022, 22:10–23:20). The 'other' is a direct threat to the way of life 'à la française', to everything that is dear to many French and is presented in Zemmour's discourse as the fight for the survival of the nation.

The 'other' is also associated with the threat from outside and depicted as a planned movement of mass migration, which is often associated with the metaphor of war in Zemmour's discourse: "There really exists a war between two civilisations in France. I will protect the French civilisdation" (Zemmour @EricZemmour, 2022 February 17) While strong borders are associated with peace, migration is depicted as an aggressive invasion: "Immigration is war. They want to invade our European countries, that's all, it's not another thing, it's a war" (SpectatorTV 2021, 8:00–9:00). According to Zemmour, migration brings this civilizational war directly to French territory and French people have to face the war "on our soil" (Face à l'Info 2021, 40:00–41:00). Migration represents a planned movement of people, which puts French civilization and its way of life in danger and is a direct source of people's problems and sorrows. Zemmour asserts that this "migrant invasion" is caused by EU policies of the actual French government and represents an existential danger for the French nation because it has the potential to dissolve France in Europe and Africa or even make it disappear: "Macron wants to dissolve France in Europe and in Africa. Me, I don't want to dissolve France either in Europe or in Africa" (Europe 1 2021, 3:00–4:00). Zemmour denounces the destructive role of the ruling elite in the migration crisis, saying that its "uniformizer politics" and "globalizing ideology" lead to the extermination of the nation. This militarist aggressive discourse constructs a border between different parts of French society: French nationals and 'others'. The very name of the party, *The Reconquest*, which evokes the historical period of the Reconquista, a campaign by Christian states to recapture territory from the Muslims, suggests the necessity to fight against an enemy from the other civilization. In his public address in Villepente on the 5th of December, he combined the name of the party with the main program points to give a strong message to his voters: "Yes, the Reconquest is launched! The reconquest of our economy, the reconquest of our security, the reconquest of our identity, the reconquest of our sovereignty, the reconquest of our country!" (Zemmour 2021c). By choosing such an aggressive and militarized manner to verbalize his main program messages, the politician deliberately drew parallels between war and the present state. He claimed that French people are endangered and need to fight for their existence: "My program is designed to reconquer our country, to put an end to the Great Replacement

and the Great Declassment, and to bring back peace and prosperity to the French people" (Zemmour @ EricZemmour, 2022 March 23). Inspired by Renaud Camus' replacement theory, Zemmour advocated the concept of "grand replacement", contending that France, once thriving in the past, is presently undergoing a period of decline. And only Zemmour dared to say what others secretly were thinking but were afraid of saying, that the nation is dying under the pressure of the threatening 'other' but politicians do nothing and bend the knee to the globalization politics of the EU. Zemmour claimed that only he was ready to do everything "for France to stay France" (Zemmour 2021b) and set the main objectives of the Reconquest as "reconquest of the identity, sovereignty, excellence, and prosperity" of the French nation (Zemmour 2022). Thus, the metaphor of war in Zemmour's discourse, presenting the 'other' as a threat through the lens of a planned mass migration, helps to articulate it as an aggressive invasion. This aggressive rhetoric positions the politician as a genuine defender of the nation against an existential challenge.

Together with the war metaphor concerning migration flows, Zemmour often uses another recurring comparison of migration with a crisis: "I think that the biggest crisis that is coming is the migration crisis and the demographic crisis in France which sees the French people being replaced by another people and by another civilization for me it is the most serious crisis that threatens us, the French" (Brut 2022a, 23:30–24:30). He sees migration as the main source of the state of "internal exile" of the French people and compares it with the "Trojan horse", which stealthily spreads alien culture and religion within the country, which provokes a sense of loss and disorientation among French people. This metaphorical approach serves to intensify the perceived dangers associated with migration, fostering the propagation of a sense of decline, loss, and disorientation among the French population. Through these vivid metaphors, Zemmour not only shapes public perception of the 'other" but also reinforces his argument for strict border control.

Interestingly enough, Marine Le Pen also used the war metaphor and referred to migration as the "migratory weapon" during her campaign: "We have to understand what we are up against. We are facing a Europe which is besieged by migrants who are used as a weapon, a new weapon which we will call the migratory weapon" (Francetvinfo 2021, 0:10–0:20). "Besieged" Europe and France are presented as victims of this "migratory weapon". Like Zemmour, Le Pen accused French representatives of power and the authorities of the EU of inactivity, since migration is "a project and not a problem" (Le Pen, @MLP_officiel 2021 November 15) for them. For Marine Le Pen, migration represents a major problem for French society and economy: "Immigration is a problem. Yes, immigration is a major problem, it's not people, it's immigration. It's a process

because when we welcome a lot of people as we did in the 30 last years. First of all we cannot assimilate them correctly. Secondly there is no job for everyone. Thirdly, the social protection system which is extremely generous in France, except that this social protection system has been abandoned under the weight of the number of people to manage and, well, it collapses" (Brut 2022b, 35:30–36:30). According to her, "a lot of people" that France welcomes are the root of many issues at once, including cultural, economic, and social. For her, foreigners who come to France represent a burden because they take away jobs or often do not work and enjoy the privileges of the French social system. She often uses the topos of burden when she talks about the economic consequences of migration: "I want to limit it [migration] because once again we no longer control anything in this area where the presence of illegal immigrants is multiplying on our territory that all of this has a considerable cost for French society, a financial cost but also a cost in terms of security" (BFMTV 2022b, 9:25–10:00). The 'other' is connected to considerable costs that rest on the shoulders of simple French people. Le Pen's 'other' is often presented as an economic migrant, taking away the advantages of French people, or an unemployed person who abuses the system. She claims that "migrants want to go to France, because it is in France that illegal immigrants have the most access to aid, to care, paid by the national community" (Le Pen, @MLP_officiel 2021 November 24). In this situation, French people are presented as victims who work hard but cannot use the benefits of the French social system; they feel mistreated and humiliated. Here, Le Pen introduces the principle of French priority, which she justifies in the following way: "The beautiful souls of the unconditional reception of migrants would like to open the doors to all those who want to enter, while 5 to 7 million people in France are dependent on food aid. Help the French first!" (Le Pen, @MLP_officiel 2021 November 18). Relying on the topos of numbers to victimize the group of 'us', Le Pen underlines her ethnocentric position by using the expression "Help the French first!". During her campaign, she often uses the topos of numbers to justify the politics of strictly controlled borders: "We can no longer accommodate it we no longer have the means we have five million eight hundred seven hundred thousand unemployed we have 10 million poor people and I think it would be a little unfair not to think of them too" (Brut 2022b, 27:30–28:00). Thus, Le Pen relies more on rational argumentation, unlike Zemmour, who instrumentalizes emotional arguments.

The 'other' also represents the main source of danger and threat in Le Pen discourses, but it is often mixed with rational arguments of burden or numbers. This group is associated with an "illegal, clandestine, anarchical and massive" incoming movement of people. The 'other' is a direct threat to the life and well-being of French people because not only criminals but also "terrorists infiltrate among migrants" (Le Pen,

@MLP_officiel 2021 November 10). Le Pen repeatedly uses the predicate "anarchical and massive" in her public addresses and interviews to describe migration as out of control. According to her, this uncontrolled and chaotic movement of people leads to the loss of control over the country, which causes not only security issues but also threatens French identity. Le Pen claims that the 'other' is also a source of crime and disorder in the country: "I will send the delinquents and criminals in their country because when they benefited from hospitality in a country, well we don't break the law I mean and we don't attack people and we don't steal nothing finally good that's his it seems a good common sense" (Face à Baba 2022, 35:00–37:00). Thus, the 'other' is blamed for many socio-economic problems, while the group of 'us' is idealized and depicted as victims who suffer from the presence of the 'other' in the territory of the nation-state.

Islam in France represents another leitmotiv of Le Pen's and Zemmour's campaigning. Le Pen sees a direct threat to the French way of life and the French nation in Islam: "Islamist ideology goes against all our values, all our principles, and it is reviving violent anti-Semitism. We must eradicate this Islamist ideology EVERYWHERE, from our neighborhoods, our cities, our public services" (Le Pen, @MLP_officiel 2022 January 28). Zemmour defines it as one of the greatest fears of the French nation: "Two fears haunt them: And that of the great replacement, with the Islamization of France, mass immigration and permanent insecurity" (Zemmour 2021c). Zemmour also thinks that "Islam is a civilization incompatible with the principles of France" (*Cnews* 2021, 17:00–17:30) and France is poised to disappear if this alien culture prevails. Le Pen compares Islamism with Nazism or Racism and thinks that "it's an ideology it must therefore be fought wherever it is expressed" (LCI 2021, 7:30–8:00). They both perceive the migration crisis as the leading factor in the alleged Islamization of the country and the radicalization of certain ethnic groups. For example, Zemmour directly connects migration and Islam, which is "dangerous for the French republic", in his interviews: "Ask the French if Islam is dangerous for the French republic and there are too many immigrants or if the great replacement threatens us, there are between 60 and 70% of the French who agree with me" (Brut 2022a, 43:35–44:00). Le Pen sees a direct threat to the French state in Islamism: "Islamism—which aims to replace our mores and our laws by others that are based on inequality between men and women, on the negation of history, which wants to put an end to secularism—and jihadist terrorism pursue the same goals" (Le Pen 2022a). Thus, both Le Pen and Zemmour employed the topos of culture (the 'other' does not belong to our culture and civilization) to create distance between French people and perceived outsiders, generating an atmosphere of fear and hate. They both consider migration and cultural differences as a primary source of terror and extremism and claim that only they are able to fight this

Table 2. Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's Discourse on Borders. Table prepared by the author.

Element	Marine Le Pen	Eric Zemmour
Image of 'Other'	Immigrants (inside and outside the nation-state)	Immigrants (inside and outside the nation-state)
Construction Strategy	Negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation Exclusion and marginalization of the 'other'	Negative other-presentation and positive self-presentation Exclusion and marginali-zation of the 'other'
Image of Threat	'Other' as a source of crime and disorder	'Other' as an existential threat to the nation
Use of Emotional Appeal	Fear of 'other'	Fear of 'other', collective feelings of loss, nostalgia and exile
Use of Topoi	Topos of threat Topos of culture Topos of burden Topos of numbers	Topos of threat Topos of culture Topos of history Topos of crisis
Main symbols	Migration as migratory weapon	Migration as war Migration as crisis

existential threat to the French nation. Table 2 presents a comparative summary of Le Pen's and Zemmour's othering.

Conclusion

Based on the analytical tools of Discourse Historical Analysis, this paper has examined how border, inclusion, and exclusion are discursively constructed and justified in Marine Le Pen's and Eric Zemmour's political communication during the 2022 electoral campaign. Both politicians assigned significant importance to the border, utilizing it as a symbolic representation of national security, French cultural homogeneity, European civilization's integrity, and, in Zemmour's perspective, a metaphorical representation of the French glorious historical past. The topos of threat was central in their discourse while constructing the image of 'other' inside and outside the state, and the strong border was positioned as crucial for controlling migration and protecting French identity and culture from perceived outsiders. However, Zemmour adopted a more radical stance, advocating for absolute border closure and framing migration as a civilizational war or crisis. In his discourse, the 'other' was verbalized as an invader who represented an existential threat to the French people. In contrast, Le Pen repeatedly employed the topos of usefulness to moderate her argumentation, emphasizing the benefits of a strong border not only for France but also for the countries of origin. Moreover, Zemmour and Le Pen relied on the topos of threat to capitalize popular support on negative emotions and generate fear towards the 'other'. While Zemmour was mostly focused on historical exceptionality, cultural, and civilizational differences, Le Pen also included economic threats and risks coming from the 'other'.

The strategy of positive self- and negative other-presentation was realized through the construction of two antagonistic groups of French society: the French people and the threatening 'other'. The negative other-presentation in Le Pen's and Zemmour's discourse involved the conceptualization of the immigrants and the Muslim population inside and outside the country as enemies of the French nation. The topos of culture played a vital role in the process of othering, targeting cultural differences between the 'authentic' French and the 'other'. This discursive means accentuated perceived cultural and religious distinctions, reinforcing an imagined dichotomy between the group of 'us' and the 'other'. Thus, the border in French right-wing populist discourse serves as a legitimating tool of exclusionary practices but also facilitates selective inclusion within the idealized, imagined national community. Symbolically, it embodies nationhood, security, and homogeneity, becoming a focal point for shaping and consolidating the group of 'us' and delineating the spatial and cultural boundaries of the nation.

Notes

1   This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158.

2   Translations from French are the author's.

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Un/Certain Borderlands: Multimodal Discourses of Border Renaissance in Polish and German Media

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Since geopolitical crises accelerate migration from warzones or places of forced cultural homogeneity, we can notice an increasing meaning of borders today in a changing society, not only in Western but also in Eastern Europe and in-between. At the same time, findings from interdisciplinary border research emphasize precarious phenomena of 'uncertainty' or 'in-between-ness' and hybridity, suggesting that borders have a 'liminal quality'. In the emblematic case study on re/bordering at the German–Polish borderland, traits of a renaissance of the border and territorial un/certainty, mean irritation in space, cultures, and forms of belonging. In developing discursive practices in time such as symbolic and socio-spatial phenomena of demarcation, exclusion, and transformation, this report refers to empirical phenomena like the "Rosary to the border" and "LGBT-free zones" in Poland or the "Willkommenskultur" in Germany. It juxtaposes interpretive reciprocal patterns of borders, like 'fear' and 'irony' that weave a tapestry of un/certainty. These examples show how the Polish–German borderland is affected by re/bordering practices without necessarily being geographically close to it and therefore show its liminal quality.[1]

Introduction

Territorial borders are said to be of crucial importance for the political-social order. However, borders are not given but emerge through socio-political and cultural bordering processes that take place within society (Scott 2020, 4). Therefore, we can ask ourselves if, in times of political and social disorder and transformation, borders also become more dynamic, relational or even more un/certain?[2] If we go back in time and look at Central Europe, we can observe ambitious plans for supposedly debordering (Balibar & Collins 2003) after a long period of stabilization and disbanding of borders in the second half of the 20th century. Later, it was the global flows (Appadurai 1996) of people, goods, and (political) symbols migrating across borders that made

the political and social order stagger. It also brought about tendencies of supposedly rebordering processes, as Chiara Brambilla states, analyzing the time of strong forced migration flows: "The processes of change due to globalization have, on the one hand, led to greater integration and global consciousness and, on the other, to a renewed demand for certainty, identity and security followed by the spread of protectionist policies on the economic level and feelings of anti-immigration" (Brambilla 2015, 15).

The path-depending demand for certainty in time is what can emblematically be observed in German and Polish media discourses in the border region. Especially

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this was the case since the peak of the debordering phase (which started with Poland joining the Schengen Agreement in 2007) when the law allowing for free movement of workers within the European Union in 2014 was enforced (cf. Kahanec et al. 2016). Later, the so-called refugee crisis in 2015 (cf. Grosse & Hettnarowicz 2016) and the coming to power of the national-conservative party PiS ("Law and Justice" (cf. Bill & Stanley 2020) triggered a right shift in the political agenda in Poland (Żuk & Żuk 2022, 2018). But the society responded by dividing itself into two camps of either nationalistic, anti-immigrational, and homophobic groups, on the one hand, and liberal, pro-European groups, open for a diverse society, on the other. Accordingly, in media discourse, symbols of the fronts emerged out of the influence of the Polish Catholic Church, and those associated with the liberal cross-border bridge builders confront each other in a quite unmediated way. The formation of the two groups, leading to opposed discourses, is what shows the multidimensionality of the bordering phenomena. Accordingly, I claim that there is not a phase in the discourses appearing in the two countries in which we can observe tendencies of only debordering or rebordering practices. While transformation and crises have certainly advanced the ways in which we approach and understand practices of bordering, it is equally evident that major discrepancies remain present in conceptualizations of the un/certainty of borders. Furthermore, little consensus seems to exist around its central notions. Building on the approach of Rosa and Reckwitz (2021) of an increasing significance of borders—in both senses of bordering and its multidimensionality—in a changing society, un/certainty of borders can be understood in (at least) two ways. According to the science on risk perspective, we can detect two common streams of uncertainty. First, un/certainty in society as a chance to develop new markets or political and social alliances (Bernstein 1998). Second, uncertainty as a risk, collectively imposed and thus individually unavoidable (Beck 2009, 1989).

Hence, the paper deals with the following questions: From the perspective of the un/certainty of borders, what kind of multimodal discursive bordering constructions can be depicted in German and Polish media in time? How can they be included as elements in the conceptualization of borders and un/certainty? What is the relation between the increase of the importance of borders and the socio-spatial un/certainty of borders? In developing discursive practices such as symbolic and socio-spatial phenomena of demarcation, exclusion, and transformation, I will refer to emblematic empirical evidence: the Schengen Agreement, the law allowing for a free movement of workers within the EU, and the right-wing turn of the Polish government since 2015, including various forms of seemingly rebordering actions. In this empirical case study, I will focus on these empirical evidences as socio-spatial constructions of borderlands in German and Polish media. Therefore, I analyze multimodal discursive practices from 2007 until 2019 in German (*Märkische*

Oderzeitung, Tagesspiegel) and Polish regional newspapers (*Gazeta Lubuska, Głos Wielkopolski*) with the highest circulation. Furthermore, I will discuss both complex trends in border studies (Wille 2021) and traits of territorial un/certainty, meaning irritation in space, cultures, and forms of belonging. By building the socio-spatial construction of borderlands, the aim is to weave a tapestry of the discursive and multimodal narrative of both the increasing significance of borders and the un/certainty of territorial borders at the same time and to show how these two border research trends are interrelated. Additionally, the consideration of multimodality of the discursive construction of borders allows for the perspective on also symbolic and semiotic implementations of un/certainty. The multimodal research design based on discourse analysis expands the perspective of border representations within the framework of interpretative patterns that co-determine the process of how borders come into being. This means that border knowledge is (re)formulated by means of these patterns, with the possibility of representing borders through interpretative schemes that co-determine the emergence of borders (Sommer & Bembnista 2021, 436). In concrete terms, the analysis focuses on reconstructing patterns of interpretation that, as discursive constructs, also co-determine the spatial reality of space (Felgenhauer 2009, 261). In order to determine empirical examples of border complexities that display both, the setting of boundaries in a site of struggle as well as the constructions of bordering practices, a multimodal perspective allows to combine the explicit knowledge of images with the 'reading-between-the-lines' approach of semiotic depictions.

In the following, I will first draw the readers' attention to the conceptual approach of un/certainty from a socio-spatial borderland perspective. Afterward, a closer look at the methodological tool of the multimodal discourse analysis serves to understand the constructions of symbolic and socio-spatial phenomena of demarcation in the empirical data in order to bring them back to the relation of border renaissance and un/certain borderlands.

Conceptualizing Un/Certainty from a Socio-Spatial Borderland Perspective

In this part, I will present the growing sense among scholars of border studies that the "territorial trap" is "now even more inadequate for conceptualising the spatial and temporal coordinates' of contemporary political and everyday life" (Brambilla 2015, 17; Agnew 1994) than before. The more complex perspective on borders is the foundation of linking complexity to the concepts of un/certainty. It allows us to draw the conclusion of un/certain borderlands by investigating and exploring alternative border imaginaries that go beyond the border as a line in multimodal discursive constructions.

But first, in order to avoid the territorial trap, I will delineate my idea of space. Assuming a relational and dynamic understanding of space (Paasi & Zimmerbauer 2016, 90; Löw & Weidenhaus 2018), it can be studied in terms of its symbolic and material order (Sommer & Bembnista 2021; Keller 2016). Spaces and places do not present themselves but are represented by power relations expressed in discourses (Richardson & Benson 2003, 18). Border discourses thus concern not only "classical" territorial-political borders, but diverse forms of social bordering (cf. Gerst et al. 2018). A theoretical foundation for these considerations is provided by approaches from human geography, starting with Henri Lefebvre, who provides a starting point for the social construction of space with his essay "Production of Space" (1974). The basic idea is based on the assumption that spaces are constructed through spatial practices (how we act in space), representations of space (architecture, plans, maps) and finally representational space (symbolic references that represent geographical space). To analyze the construction of social space, discourses in the spatial social sciences have increasingly come into focus in recent years. They also include changes in spatial paradigms on, for example, gender relations, explorations of diversity and difference (for example, Bauriedl et al. 2010), political (cf. Glasze 2021; Marquard & Schreiber 2021) and social relations (Belina & Dzudzek 2021), as well as their representations in language (cf. Mattissek 2021), image (cf. Miggelbrink & Schlottmann 2021), and practice (cf. Baumann et al. 2021) in relation to spatial constructions.

At the same time, the disruptive forces of change—whether real or imagined—elucidate the main argument of border studies: that borders are in a constant process of confirmation, contestation, transformation, and re-confirmation (Scott 2020, 4). They are constantly reconstructed and maintained as frames of social and political action, strategies of challenge, survival, and the related patterns of identification and identity politics, as well as symbolic social and cultural lines of inclusion, encounter, difference, and contestation (Andersen et al. 2012).

Hence, borders can be conceptualized as "relational assemblages" (cf. Gerst & Krämer 2017). Moreover, borders are not to be understood here in the sense of a fixed ordering system. A general understanding of exactly one border and its meaning and property is, as Kleinschmidt (cf. 2014) also holds, doomed to fail. Rather, we should be aware of the ambivalent semantics related to borders, which are based on historical and social structures and thus make each border phenomenon individually experienceable. From there, borders should be seen as the result of historical and political processes, but at the same time as producers of order (Eigmüller 2016, 49). In current border studies (cf. Wille 2021), concepts that primarily emphasize the multidimensional character of the border include borderscapes (Brambilla 2019), bordertextures (cf. Weier et. al. 2018; Fellner 2021), and borderlands (cf. Anzaldúa 2012). In their conceptionalisations of borders, they all aim at more than just the geographical dividing line or contact zone. Although border discourses do not only concern territorial-political borders, but diverse forms of social bordering that bring together complex phenomena, such as actors, practices, elements, discourses, and material conditions (cf. Gerst et al. 2018), it is worth explicitly mentioning at this point that the multidimensional character of the border refers precisely also, or primarily, to the spatial dimension. By means of the multimodal discourse analysis research program I will present focuses on patterns of meaning. In reconstructing multimodal pattern of interpretation in the Polish-and German-language discourse about the border, I focus on discursively negotiated knowledge about space. Neo-classical categories from border studies like transition zones (Iossifova 2019; Newman 2003, 18–20), spaces of transition (Nekula 2021, 411) hybrid zones (Iossifova 2019), entangled space (Crossey & Weber 2020; Schneider-Sliwa 2018), refer to the existence of the complex and polycontextual perspective of borders. With the border narratives, which will be detected here, I aim to not only determine what statements are being made and by whom but also to contextualize them in the complex meadow of the cultural, linguistic, historical, economic, social, and political sphere of the Polish–German borderland. The narratives show us how far un/certainty is deeply rooted in this borderland and that it perpetuates the emergence of border renaissance.

The complexity of borders helps us to conceptualize the un/certain dimension of borders and the borderland. It is even assumed that we can speak of an "age of uncertainty" (Gagnon 2014). Oliver Dimbath outlines the problem areas of fragile security orders and new threat structures, increasingly unstable patterns of cultural belonging, intensifying social divisions, and the shaking of established orders of knowledge, and institutions in the face of digitalization and technologization (Dimbath 2021). Until now, the un/certain character of borders has been examined rather from the perspective of security, especially by authors from Science and Technology Studies (STS—e.g. Amelung et al. 2022). Also, studies that deal with socio-cultural dynamics in different types of borders in un/certainty dimensions, e.g. airports, are associated with borders (cf. Schmidt 2016; Burrell 2008).[3] The aspect of the deterritorialization of the border is also part of the concept of precarious citizenship and the 'in-between-ness' of people (Lori 2017), referring to the structured uncertainty of being unable to secure permanent access to citizenship rights. This approach helps us to characterize the multidimensionality of certainty and uncertainty: "[A]lthough the drive to strengthen boundary enforcement can be motivated by a desire to eliminate undocumented or uncertain legal statuses, it often achieves the opposite, reifying uncertainty in

the legal status of migrant and minority populations" (Lori 2017, 744). In their work on smuggling in daily transit traffic at the Congolese-Rwandan borderland, Doevenspeck and Mwanabiningo (2012) however, highlight the ambiguous character of the border. Examining bordering by keeping in mind the concept of uncertainty, the authors provide precious insights into the relations between the state and the society and an understanding of the state's legitimacy. They argue that people in cross-border transit situations face un/certainty by escaping, at least temporarily, from their own country to another one and, therefore state boundaries are shaped by a range of illicit activities that create opportunities and constitute important (un/certain) livelihood strategies for the border population: "At the border, Congolese encounter their own state, otherwise often invisible, exerting a hybrid of real and symbolic control, as a rare expression of state territoriality. Rwandans use the border to escape, at least temporarily, from their state's "omnipresence". From a conceptual perspective of un/certainty, the authors link the border with risk research in the sense that risk and uncertainty are relative categories and social constructions (Luhmann 1993).

If we follow that idea and dig deeper into the work of science on risk, we can delineate two main streams of concepts on risk and uncertainty: the approach by Beck (1989) on un/certainty as a threatening assemblage and the one by Bernstein (1998) on un/certainty as a chance for a breakthrough. As Pat O'Malley summarizes, "Beck suggests that uncertainty governed by the 'incalculable'. […] Considered as an 'estimation of the possible', uncertainty is given a rather negative value,[4] for it is made to appear as the poor cousin of risk calculation" (O'Malley 2004, 3) and therefore to be perceived as a threat one has to cope with. In complete contrast to Beck, however, Bernstein highlights the aspect of catharsis of uncertainty (O'Malley 2004, 3): "We are not prisoners of an inevitable future. Uncertainty makes us free" (Bernstein 1998, 229). Accordingly, Bernstein argues that uncertainty appears not as the imprecise fallback technology for dealing with impending catastrophe, but as the "technique of entrepreneurial creativity" (Bernstein 1998, 221) and therefore can be perceived as a chance one can use for the creation of the new.

Prior to applying these approaches to empirical data, I will first discuss the concept of border as a method, which will tell us more about how in border studies we can approach the border in a methodological sense by explaining multimodal discourse methodology.

Borders as (Multimodal) Method

If we want to understand borders in relation to the concepts of un/certainty and want to know how to approach them, we should devote our attention to their

political dimension (Brambilla 2015, 28). As Mezzadra and Neilson suggest in their work on perceiving the "border as method", the crux is to, again, investigate borders from a processual perspective (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013, 17). Accordingly, the perspective on un/certain borderlands 'as method' involves the shift from a pure look at the border towards a perspective to investigate bordering practices from the border itself (Gerst & Krämer 2021). This would mean including the vision of a border as a product in the process of becoming, constructed on the political scale within "a space of negotiating actors, experiences, and representations articulated at the intersection of competing and even conflicting tensions revealing the border also as 'a site of struggle'" (Brambilla 2015, 29).

By highlighting the role of borders as 'sites of struggle' where the right to become can be expressed, un/certainty in relation to borderlands allows for an investigation of the multidimensionality of borders. For example, while a government decides to tighten abortion rights in a given country and to set boundaries to live in a democratic and self-determined society, it at the same time triggers women to seek cross-border practices to have legal abortions abroad. Crucial to the study of multidimensional borderlands is applied discourse theory, which focuses on "social structures and processes" in flux as well as on "power relations" (Glasze & Mattissek 2021, 153), but without assuming an immovable foundation. Similar to the concept of dynamic and relational border space, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory considers "questioning the notion of a closed wholeness" (Laclau 1993, 433) and processes of change as the "normal case", which in turn makes patterns of interpretation representing un/certainty easier to comprehend. Further, I will present the most emblematic border narratives to illustrate the constructions of un/certainty for which I used the multimodal discourse analysis. A detailed methodological explanation is presented in the appendix below.

Between Fear and Anticipation

In the following section, I will refer to examples that stem from around the time when, according to the Schengen Agreement from 2007, Poland joined the Schengen Area and border controls were abolished. This dominated the discursive landscape in Polish and German newspapers. In the preceding months, but also in the months following this enlargement of the Schengen Area on 21 December 2007, an ambivalence between anticipation of the border opening and, at the same time, signs of un/certainty can be observed.

The ambiguity was displayed in various multimodal forms, in order to convey the un/certain perspective of new possibilities of free mobility between the two countries. From a socio-semiotic point of view, martial constructions illustrated by wordplays and abstract

imaging could be observed. An iconic example of the pattern of interpretation of the abolition of border controls by means of the socio-semiotic martial wordplays related to the martial invasion into Poland in the 19th century stems from *Tagesspiegel* (Steyer 2007). A headline of an article that appeared there reads: "Now Poland is really open". This alludes to the saying "...dann ist Polen offen" [...then Poland will be open], which is an abstract form of saying that something huge is going to happen as a consequence of an anticipated practice and chaos will follow. Accordingly, the headline in *Tagesspiegel* refers to the saying which stems from the 19th century. Back then, military forces from the neighbouring Russian Empire and Prussia were getting ready to invade the military-weak and unprotected, hence "open" Polish state, in order to divide its territory between themselves in a rather chaotic way.

Ironically, in this example, it was the Poles who were expected to cause big changes by crossing the border and coming to the economically stronger Germany as economic migrants. This socio-semiotic play of words in the German media is not only used because of its reference to Poland, but also to express the level of chaos and therefore uncertainty regarding the expected massive border crossings of Polish citizens. This, accordingly, could have a negative outcome for the German population, which, for example, could face stronger competition in the labor market. The fact that this kind of a statement is underpinned by an ironic wordplay shows, on the other hand, that there were also certain changes to be expected caused by the migration flows, such as the social system, health care, or the question of housing. The following example will further clarify the ambiguity of fear and anticipation of the consequences of the border opening.

In the context of the enlargement of the Schengen Area of 2007, *Tagesspiegel* headlines talk about a "Friendly takeover. More and more Poles discover [the region of] Uckermark for themselves and refurnish empty houses and restaurants" (Steyer 2008). Here, the migration movement of Poles to Germany after the Schengen enlargement is linked to a revaluation of the socio-structurally decreasing Uckermark, a rural area in Brandenburg. It is presented as a success story despite the reference to the war rhetoric of 'hostile takeover'—an invasive practice of occupation of hostile forces used in a military context. Socio-semiotically, this formulation comes in combination with the imagery (see Figure 1), which shows vaults in the foreground [DOMINANCE], an old building facade in the background [IMAGE, DOMINANCE, OBJECT], suggesting an image of a real estate object in the crosshairs [ACTOR RELATION]. The un/certainty pattern illustrated by this example can be traced back to the lack of cross-border contact between the two countries during the communist regime. Some states of the so-called Eastern bloc maintained a cross-border relation during the Cold War

Figure 1. Borderland in crosshairs? "Friendly takeover". Source: Steyer (2008). Copyright: DPA.

but Central and Eastern countries remained separated until the 1990s and only slowly started to converge political, economic, and territorial systems. Although the Schengen Treaty marked a milestone in European integration processes, the abrupt border opening was often accompanied by mutual distrust and insecurities as new structures for cross-border coexistence had to be established (Mirwaldt 2010).

Strikingly, this discourse of Poles coming over to Germany to revitalize the structurally weak region does not appear in Polish regional dailies. This non-discursive practice can also be observed in the form, that German workers do not take advantage of the opportunity to go to Poland. The spatial image that dominates the German discourse at the time is thus a marching-in at the border crossing, *en masse* but peacefully, which is not to be taken too seriously, as we can depict from the linguistic codes and wordplays. However, the depiction that dominates in articles related to the enlargement of the Schengen Area shows peaceful crowds carrying European flags. This indicates a potential mass-border-crossing of Polish workers, while eyed with respect and a form of un/certainty, is also seen as associated with opportunities—such as gaining new working force. Therefore, Polish newspapers rather convey a chance to go abroad. On the other hand, the un/certainty on the other side of the border is displayed by the dominant pattern of a telephone guide, in the sense of 'how to find a job in Germany.' Here, the phone receiver symbolizes not only information flow but also connection to the world, which was left behind in the times when phone calls were the dominant way of telecommunication.

On the whole, this pattern of interpretation shows a polycontextualization of the un/certain bordering practices: on the one hand, we can see debordering intentions and also governmental practices, which try to turn them into practice as forms of European integration. On the other hand, we can see clear traits that borders and (re-)bordering practices are by-products of European integration (cf. Balibar & Collins 2003), which trigger un/certainty. The un/uncertainty that is expressed in constant negotiations of border construction shifts between feelings of respect and fear, but also anticipation and chances, is characteristic of the early times of the eastern enlargement of the Schengen Treaty (Renner et al. 2022, 830).

Ironic Approximation

In this part, I will present the subsequent discursive milestone in the German and Polish media landscape that could be depicted as a dominant pattern. It addresses the multidimensionality in bordering practices, namely patterns of rebordering in a debordering setting, such as the entry of the law on the free movement of workers within the European Union in 2014. Here, again, a dominant accent in the media is the un/certainty of debordering regulations on the EU level that the media connects with socio-semiotic images related to historical martial patterns between both countries.

As opposed to the previous part, there is now a change of paradigm to be observed: while in 2007 and 2008 dominantly the German media used wordplays, this stylistic device was now rather present in the Polish media. Also, in comparison to the previous milestone on debordering, we can determine two significant developments in the German and Polish media: first, although still illustrating signs of un/certainty regarding a potential mass influx of working migrants from Eastern European countries, the German media did not address the pattern of the martial invasion corresponding to historical incidents between Poland and Germany anymore. On the basis of this socio-semiotic discursive practice, we can once again deduce a playful way in which German dailies deal with the topic of migration from Poland or Eastern Europe. The futile efforts of German politics to compensate for the socio-economic disparity are now presented satirically and ironically. The development of an ironic self-portrayal from the German point of view indicates an economic approximation between the two countries and an increasing mutual perception at eye level. This narrative of an ironic approximation corresponds with the observation by political scientist Jarosław Jańczak. He claims that although in the last three decades, political, administrative, economic, and social interactions along the border intensified, "the German-Polish borderland is still marked by several differences in potential and structural asymmetries" (Jańczak 2018, 518).

The second development involved the fact that the Polish media seemed to respond to the comic elements and wordplays related to mutual historical martial patterns that could earlier be observed in the German media. Emblematically, *Gazeta Lubuska* refers to a collective trauma in Polish society that is connected to hearing commands in German. Hence, in an article, the author refers to the more liberal regulation concerning the cross-border investigations of both the German and the Polish police as a consequence of the law on the free movement of workers. The author claims in a provoking manner, that Polish residents on the Polish side of the borderland would now have to deal with the German police scream "Hände hoch" [hands up], which in Poland is widely related to Nazi officers

from World War II. While the administrative omission of labour regulations for foreigners to EU-member states—hence a therefore 'borderless' EU-labour market—sets the designated borderland in a clearly debordering condition, we can nevertheless observe a rebordering practice of insecurity and uncertainty for Polish citizens, who relate the term 'Hände hoch' with socio-cultural aversions deeply rooted in history. The linguistic use of irony again highlights the narrative of the structural parallel-but-apart-pattern, a narrative strand of bilateralism that has developed from the perceived historical burden of war and enmity that causes un/certainty in the border region.

A more moderate illustrative example from Polish media regarding a socio-economic approximation regarding Germany and Poland from *Głos Wielkopolski* (Kozlolek & Lurka 2014) comes with the headline "A patient is visiting a doctor... and the doctor is German!" In the framework of the law on the free movement of workers within the European Union, the article deals with the possibility of Polish patients using German medical infrastructure and therefore enlarging their private space by using services across the border. The picture in the article shows a board with a signpost in the forefront [OBJECT] and an entrance of the hospital in the rear [DISTANCE].

The arrows might suggest an atmosphere of certainty in the unknown environment with German lettering, so that the message becomes accessible to foreigners, too. The first part of the joke scheme usually consists of the beginning "The patient is visiting the doctor..." and the second part normally inherits a comical socio-linguistic semantical structure of irony or satire. The wordplay with the Polish joke structure addresses the economic imbalance between Germany and Poland, where the standard of medical infrastructure is still qualitatively higher in Germany. In a multimodal way, Polish media tries to provide an orientation to the transformative situation, where Polish society would be able to enlarge its radius of daily action by using ironical imagery of approximation. Yet, by clearly highlighting economic imbalances and relating them to (historical) patterns of fear and excessive demand, it is doubtful that German and Polish media are contributing to an atmosphere of certainty within bordering practices. What is certain is that they contribute to the fact that borders matter.

This pattern of interpretation again showed us the polymorphic character of the un/certain borderlands. Similar to the previous pattern, we can derive that borders are not only lines and walls (cf. Balibar & Collins 2003), but that borders have multiple socio-linguistic and socio-cultural narratives. They can be derived from cultural and historical contexts and discourses. Therefore, even in the context of again, debordering settings, rebordering traits do occur and generate un/certainty.

Rightward Bordering and the Liberal Way

With the coming into power of the Polish nationalist conservative party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS) [Law and Justice], a general rightward turn in Polish politics took over by setting new boundaries in human rights and a very critical foreign policy. Among others, this led to the emergence of rifts between the two countries, again, rooted in historical resentments, for example in the demand for reparation payments by the Germans to Poland due to destruction caused during World War II. Often, these articles were illustrated with photos showing hierarchically high-positioned Polish politicians, on the one hand, to underline the seriousness and on the other hand to show Poland's wannabe hegemonic position in relation to Germany to Europe in general, as in the example in Figure 2.

There, the PiS party leader, Jarosław Kaczyński [ACTOR], is shown at the lectern with the inscription "#PolandHeartofEurope" (own translation, Stańko 2019) [SOCIAL ROLE] with a European flag in the background, which suggests the DOMINANCE of Polish statesmen standing in front (or above)[5] [DISTANCE] of the European law or value system. The spatial construction of hegemonic integrity and demarcation of social movements, such as equal rights for LGBTQI+ communities or abortion advocates, is most evident in reports surrounding the phenomenon of a 'Rosary to the Border.' From the point of view of Polish government representatives, such as the then Prime Minister Beata Szydło, and a not insignificant part of the Polish population, the aforementioned social movements represent 'evil' and are to be attributed to the West in terms of their origin. Poland is then meant to be protected from this evil entering its territory by people physically standing at the border. The government itself supported this act with subsidized train tickets to the border, and the prime minister involved in it, hands-on, on the spot (Oworuszko 2017). Here, the border clearly becomes a site of negotiation of cultural and ideological resentments that need to be defended with physical presence and the use of strong symbols. The religious gesture of folded hands (Figure 3) [ACTOR; MOVES] with a rosary chain [OBJECT] wrapped around them seem to (physically) be in front of the border

post [CAMERA; DOMINANCE] and its code of arms covered in national colors [OBJECT_II], and therefore symbolically protect the territory [DISTRIBUTION].

Criticism is likewise directed at the government's attempts to restrict further the existing abortion regulations, with related demonstrators in Poland and Germany often portrayed and their exclamations and posters quoted, such as: "stop to fanatics in power"—addressed at the Polish governance. Predominantly common is the social-semiotic interpretation of a religious symbol in connection with a woman or a symbol of femininity. In the protest slogan "Take your rosaries off my ovaries", the socio-linguistic image suggests a religious symbol [OBJECT], like a rosary, being on the woman's body [ACTORS; DOMINANCE] in order to dictate, in a paternalized way, [ACTOR RELATION] regulations aimed at the medical service of an abortion. On the socio-semiotic level (see Figure 4), we can observe a very similar though ironic symbol to the religious object on the ovaries: a cross is used as a 'fuck-off' sign in form of a raised middle finger (Tagesspiegel 2016).

As a matter of fact, the multimodal pattern of a rosary symbolizes the polydimension of the bordering practice which can be observed in this pattern of interpretation: on the one hand, we can outline the act of manifesting the territory of Poland by clearing borders with bordering practices, as followers of the

Figure 3. Religious territorialization. Source: Oworuszko (2017). Copyright Andrzej Szkocki.

Figure 4. Territorializing with hate-stickers: "strefa wolna od LGBT" ("LGBT-free zones"). Source: Warnecke (2020). Copyright: Reuters.

Figure 2. PiS-leader Kaczyński sees himself in the "Heart of Europe". Source: Stańko (2019). Copyright: Polska Press.

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movement "rosary to the border" do. Additionally, it is a setting of cultural boundaries established by the symbolical act of strengthening the durability of the border with a human chain, protesting against migrants from Africa and the Middle East. On the other hand, we can depict the visual form of the rosary discourse as a symbol of a protest against the setting of cultural boundaries. Rather, it is a socio-semiotic manifestation of a liberal way against the paternalistic structures in Polish society and government.

Concerning this pattern of interpretation, we can summarize that the dismantling of border infrastructure and the liberal movement between the countries within the Schengen Area had influence on migration flows that has been successfully picked up on by right-wing parties (Jańczak 2018), especially the Polish PiS government (Żuk & Żuk 2022, 2018). The shifting narratives between European integration and "competing sovereignties" (Johnson 2017, 788) thus establish the construction of un/certainty in the Polish and German media.

LGBT-Schism

The patterns of un/certainty in the multimodal discourses that are focused on the so-called "strefy wolne od LGBT" [LGBT-free zones] are multilayered. In order to highlight the multidimensionality of the opposed movements, I titled to pattern interpretations of LGBT-schism. It was at the end of 2019 when the social movement, initiated by the radical Catholic organization Ordo Iuris, on the territorial exclusion of queer and same-sex couples from certain villages in Poland began (newspaper citation). The analyzed media discourse in Poland and Germany reported that the exclusion practices (like protests, official letters/statements, marching-ups, and the use of violence against members of the LGBTQI+ community to leave the designated territory) were manifested by local inhabitants and members of the Catholic Church, as well as mayors of Polish villages and local politicians (newspaper citation). The culmination of these acts of territorialization was reached when the weekly state-supported right-wing paper *Gazeta Polska* enclosed stickers with a crossed-canceled rainbow flag in the copies of its magazines and the heading "strefa wolna od LGBT" [LGBT-free zones].

The multimodal Polish and German discourse on the stickers suggests an interfering bordering practice. Taking the example of the *Tagesspiegel* (Warnecke 2020, fig. 4), we can depict the OBJECT of the sticker being held into the CAMERA, which, perceiving the cross-cancelling as the dominant layer [DOMINANCE], makes the message [DISTRIBUTION] in this context quite explicit. A bike rider, seemingly slowly passing in the background suggests an atmosphere of a peaceful suburban setting, where radical political acts of setting boundaries seem to be disturbing [ACTOR

RELATION]. The picture represents the dichotomy of the forms of belonging of the two opposing centers: the exclusive-orientated anti-LGBTQI+ supporters and the liberal citizens and pro-LGBTQI+ community. If we now want to direct our attention back to the notions of certainty and uncertainty, then we can acknowledge, that the latter group is the one who would have to face uncertainty. Firstly, a significant part of society is ready to set boundaries to out-territorialize its members. Secondly, they would never know (until they experienced a bordering practice) if they are inside or outside a designated LGBT-free zone. The perception of uncertainty therefore takes place through a spatial inside-outside mechanism. As a supposedly direct answer to the territorialization practices of anti-LGBTQI+ supporters, the project Atlas nienawiści (https://atlasnienawisci.pl/) [Atlas of Hate] was launched, which shows a digital map of municipalities, cities, and voivodships, where the act of an LGBT-free zone was either enforced, rejected through ongoing lobbyist practices or none of them. Additionally, as opposed to the weekly right-wing press, the analyzed media discourses highlight the pattern of cross-border inclusion practices of the pro-LGBTQI+ community: as we can see in the picture from the Märkische Oderzeitung (2022, Figure 5) the activist group marked street lamps at the German side of the border bridge between the Polish city Słubice and the German city of Frankfurt–Oder with pro-LGBTQI+ stickers [OBJECT]. The stickers carry the message "Tu jesteś u siebie" [Here you are at home] and a rainbow flag addressed to the LGBTQI+ community.

The welcoming message is highlighted by the socio-semiotic setting of the sticker at eye level [CAMERA] appearing in a spotlight of the street lamp [DOMINANCE] and Poland, which appears in the darkness of day on the other side of the illuminated bridge, seems to be far away [IMAGE, DISTANCE], which strengthens the impression of a safe space across the border [BRIDGING, ACTOR RELATION]. This designated counter-act of territorialization using stickers to welcome newcomers triggers the perception of certainty on a spatial inclusion mechanism.

Figure 5. LGBTQI+ Activist Poster: "Tu jesteś u siebie" ("Here you are at home"). Image: Märkische Oderzeitung (2022). Copyright Frankfurt Słubice PRIDE/MOZ, 2022..

These acts of territorial exclusion pick up on the debate that migratory events of the last decade have tended to spur on populist discourses containing fear of the other (e.g. Aldhawyan et al. 2020), triggering mentions of re-bordering as a means of self-protection (Beurskens 2022, 8). Additionally, we can observe, that the shift of some Polish media to the far right also triggers activist movements to protect actors, who are exposed to these mechanisms of exclusion and hate, which is also noticed by the German media as well.

Discussion: Un/Certain Borderlands

By daring a closer look at the multimodal patterns in the Polish and German media on topics which one would usually ascribe to systematic debordering practices, we could see how different approaches of un/certainty occurred at the same time. While EU decision-makers were ready to face the un/certain situation for greater market opportunities, references to antagonistic historical approaches reappeared, addressing un/certainty as a risk related to enhanced migration flows. Martial linguistic references in the form of word plays and other socio-semiotic constructions, therefore, highlighted the multidimensional perception of un/certainty related to migrants approaching the border from outside between social integration and place protection.

Furthermore, the multimodal discourse revealed the un/certain space represented by the rebordering practices of the Polish government. Here, e.g., the nationalist rosary movement "różaniec do granic" sought to protect Polish territory by re-confirming the border with a human chain. The collective act addressed the constructed un/certainty the activists seem to face when confronted with the possibility of migrants or queers crossing the border. At the same time, multimodal discursive practices showed us the other side of the coin, namely, the perspective of activist groups with liberal views and their understanding of un/certainty as a chance to show solidarity and unity.

A strong example of the multidimensionality of un/certainty is the answer provided by activists working against the LGBT-free zones phenomenon. They are offering the discriminated LGBTQI+ community shelter abroad or creating a map of safe spaces in Poland itself. These counter-mechanisms which were discussed in both German and Polish media show the intention to use the un/certain situation for LGBTQI+ community to take the chance to escape into designated safe spaces, either across the border of the national territory (cf. Doevenspeck & Mwanabiningo 2012) or the inner border of the designated area of hate. Here again, the empirical evidence provides a picture within the dialectic frame of un/certainty related to bordering practices.

It seems that the radical nature of bordering practices—inclusive or exclusive triggering mechanisms of de-bordering or rebordering—generates a multi-dimensionality of the perception of un/certainty. Accordingly, un/certain borderlands display the complexity of the interplay of discourses on rebordering and debordering practices that go together with a polymorphic perception of un/certainty (see Figure 6) and thus un/certain borderlands.
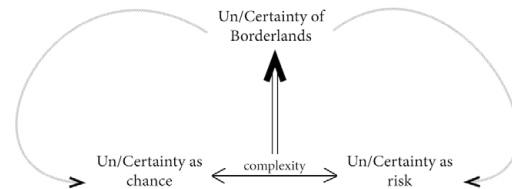

Figure 6. Un/Certainty of Borderlands. Prepared by the author.

Broad societal challenges and multiple overlapping crises in un/certain times have caused a regress towards state-centric thinking and nationalist agendas, and also towards ad hoc border closures (like during the COVID-19 pandemic, cf. Laine 2021). These developments can be viewed as testimonies of the suggested wider social relevance of borders—even in scenarios of debordering, as discussed earlier. Since borders are complex and multidisciplinary assemblages (Gerst et al. 2018), a multidimensional investigation of borders has the potential to make a difference and to help us to better understand and interpret the complex transformations that our societies are facing. By explicitly addressing the leading topos of this issue—i.e. the renaissance of borders—I directly link it to un/certainty of borderlands. Hence, when talking about border renaissance, it is not just about depicting different forms of rebordering, which would be a rather descriptive way of coming to the conclusion that we are witnessing a renaissance of borders. It is more about the way we understand the renaissance of borders from a complexity-driven perspective that tells us about the relationship between un/certainty and renaissance of borders and the interplay of bordering practices. Furthermore, the renaissance of borders can be either understood as a return to borders by perceiving the uncertainty of societal transformations as a risk or as the rebirth of borders by understanding the uncertainty of societal transformation as a chance. Using examples from the German and Polish media, we were able to comprehend the disruption and dynamics of border narratives. Examples such as the Schengen Agreement have shown that ascribed paradigms, as in the case of integration (e.g. Eker & van Houtum 2013), often also cause counter-movements and counter-narratives (e.g. Kramsch 2010) across the media-scape in the borderland (Renner et al. 2022, 826). Beurskens is therefore highlighting that the borderland after the Schengen Treaty was stressed for its integration and cross-border cooperation, but representations of this border have increasingly shifted to portray borders as places of crime and insecurity in the past decade, often using very polarizing and dramatic language

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(Beurskens 2022, 2). But what we can also notice is that the narratives draw socio-semiotic signs of hope and solidarity to those who are exposed to mechanisms of fear and hate. The overall picture of the renaissance of borders, therefore, is a very multidimensional and polymorphic one, that includes un/certainty patterns of rebordering and debordering.

In line with the border-as-method argumentation (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013; Gerst & Krämer 2021), I am suggesting not to presuppose a certain idea of the border, as borders are not the end of a territory (Balibar & Collins 2003), but to look from the border at a given phenomenon. Rather, keeping in mind the interference and construction of the borderland under the un/certain conditions is what will help to investigate borders, border narratives, and border materialities with impartiality.

Notes

1 This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158

2 My thoughts are based on the application for a scientific network on "Un/gewisse Grenzen" [Un/Certain Borders], funded by the German Research Foundation, which I am a member of (together with Dominik Gerst, Christian Banse, Maria Klessmann, Peter Ulrich, Sabine Lehner, Concha Maria Höfler, and Hannes Krämer). Here, I also aim to combine multiple border-phenomena, characterized by attributes such as 'undecided', 'unfocused' and 'uncertain' under the term of 'Un/Certainty'. Certainty and uncertainty appear in an open and dynamic process, which is indicated by a slash.

3 Addressed here are both the spatial un/knowledge of such an in-between space (e.g., the question of state affiliation on airport grounds) as well as the un/knowledge associated with the material assemblage of, e.g., visas, passports, laptops, etc., and the related (or unrealizable) border crossings or onward journeys.

4 The attribution of uncertainty as categorically good or bad is ambivalent, which is expressed not least in the devel-opment of this assessment: While in classical modernity uncertainty was still a dimension of non-knowledge, quite positively charged, in which a frontier to the unknown was discovered and crossed, the understanding of what is 'uncertain' in late modernity has been framed by the loss of orientation and the absence of principles of order (Dimbath 2021).

5 For a detailed overview and analysis regarding numerous cases the Polish PiS government has been involved in since it came to power in 2021, including disputes between Poland, the EU, and its neighboring countries, like Germany and the Czech Republic, see Żuk & Żuk (2022, 2018).

6 The abbeviation LGBT is the most common term used by German and Polish media, which shall represent the community who considers itself as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersexual, etc. or supports these communities politically. It is the simplified version for LGBTQI+, whereby 'Q' and 'I' were only added around the 1990s to represent further facets of gender identities—the plus-sign or asterisk are often added as placeholders for other forms. In the following, I will use the term LGBT to represent the discourse in media and the term LGBTQI+ when I express my own analytical conclusions in the article.

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Appendix — The Multimodal Research Design

The extended focus of an analysis of communication that is not purely linguistic but multimodal makes it possible to (re)construct discursive interpretive struggles (cf. Bosančić and Keller 2019; Schünemann 2016) in relation to the socio-spatial construction of borders on the basis of (German and Polish print) media, as will be shown in the following. If we want to interpret discourse in a multimodal way, the analytical perspective expands not only from language to image or other sign modes, but especially to the interplay and interaction of these. In order to achieve this, a multimodal analysis (of images and texts) is utilized, which adopts the methodological tools from Systemic Functional Multimodal approaches (Kress & van Leeuwen 1996), but enriches the approach by a triangular research design. It combines the research programs of the Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD) with Grounded Theory (GT) and additionally adds image analysis based on the Socio-Semiotic Multimodal Perspective (SSM) (cf. in detail Sommer 2018a; Al-Ghamdi and Albawardi 2020; Sommer & Bembnista 2021) (see Table 1).

The sense of triangulating these three research processes is revealed by the fact that the SKAD approach here, similar to the GT, is subject to a circular process of analysis. The resulting focus of analysis from the pure 'what' to the 'how' is told and allows in the last step to assign data to patterns of interpretation. In this way, spatial conclusions can finally be drawn in relation to the constitution of the border, showing to what extent discursive practices in relation to borders are materialized spatially. The basis for the analysis of compiled newspaper articles was the review and, in the first coding step, the assignment of open codes, from which four discursive milestones could be determined:

the Schengen Agreement from 2007, the law on the free movement of workers, the right-wing turn of politics of the Polish government since 2015, as well the practices of exclusion concerning the LGBT[6]-free zones.

In particular, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 2010) have developed an approach with the purpose of connecting it to the theory grounded coding process (Sommer & Bembnista 2021, 435) (see Figure 7). They form the basic functions that language as action serves, whereby the aim is to order the course of discourse in the form of patterns of interpretation, along which the discourse on bordering practices is told (cf. Egbert 2019; Sommer 2018b, 80). Additionally, the SSM acts as an important complement to the coding process, offering concepts and categories to analytically capture multimodal, discursive communication about borderlands. In particular, Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, 2010) pointed out that it is connectable to the GT coding process. It is based on Halliday's (1993) Systemic Functional Grammar which understands semiotic signs as realizations of three types of meaning functions. They constitute the basic functions of language as action (Halliday 1993, 112). The first one is the ideational (experience-based) function. It gives an answer to the question of who/what we can see in a given picture. The second, interpersonal one, describes the function of language by pointing out and negotiating the relation between the speakers involved, and stylistically referring to a portrait (camera position chosen accordingly, etc.). The textual function includes the structure and internal order of language. It refers to the relations of power and dynamics on the picture, by including interpretations of distances, distributions, and dominances among actors and objects. In order to conduct a multimodal analysis (Phase 3: selective multimodal coding, Figure 7), the semiotic signs always correspond to textual codes. Figure 8 shows the conclusions drawn from the selective multimodal
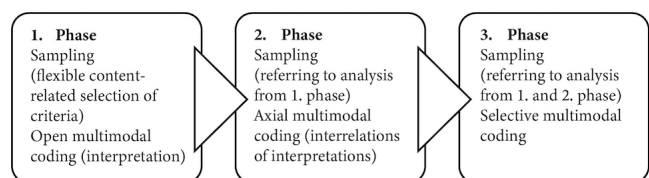
Method	Elements
Grounded Theory (GT)	circular research process theoretical sampling coding scheme
Sociology of Knowledge Approach to Discourse (SKAD)	interpretive repertoire interpretive patterns discursive materiality actors and practices
Socio-Semiotic Multimodal Perspective (SSM)	meta functions

Table 1. Multimodal discourse analysis: triangulation. Table prepared by the author.

Figure 7. Multimodal coding process. Prepared by the author.

coding process by categorizing them according to the framework of the three functions. This leads to the construction of a pattern of interpretation, here the 'LGBT-schism'. An illustrative example of LGBT-schism (Figure 5), present in the German discourse, shows that not every semiotic code applies to a visual code. From the set of semiotic codes deriving from the ideational function, the OBJECT and BRIDGING codes are crucial, as they categorize the pro-LGBT sticker on a street lamp, the bridge and the bridging situation, meaning the caption that tells us that LGBTQI+ people who will cross the bridge from Poland to Germany will be safe. Also, the arrangement of the image stresses the importance of the sticker being in the forefront [IMAGE, DISTANCE] and at eye level [CAMERA], which can be interpreted as drawing attention to the fact that the space on the German side is a safe space, unlike the one on the Polish side of the border. While this little sample gives us an idea about the methodological approach, I will go more into detail about the analytical outcomes of the patterns of interpretation in the following parts.

In order to differentiate between discourses on un/certainty in the German–Polish borderland, pictures (N=380) and articles (N=1102) from daily newspapers with the highest circulation from Brandenburg (*Märkische Oderzeitung—MOZ*) and the Lebus voivodeship (*Gazeta Lubuska—GL*) are examined, as well as the dailies of the extended borderland from urban centers, Berlin (*Tagesspiegel—TS*) and Poznan (*Głos Wielkopolski—GW*). The starting point is the year 2007, i.e. the year when the Schengen Agreement came into force. The analysis stretches out to the year 2020. Due to a large number of articles, the selection and analysis is reduced to the odd-numbered years, so the period remains long enough to highlight any temporal developments and at the same time to be able to include the impact of the Schengen Agreement.

Acknowledgment
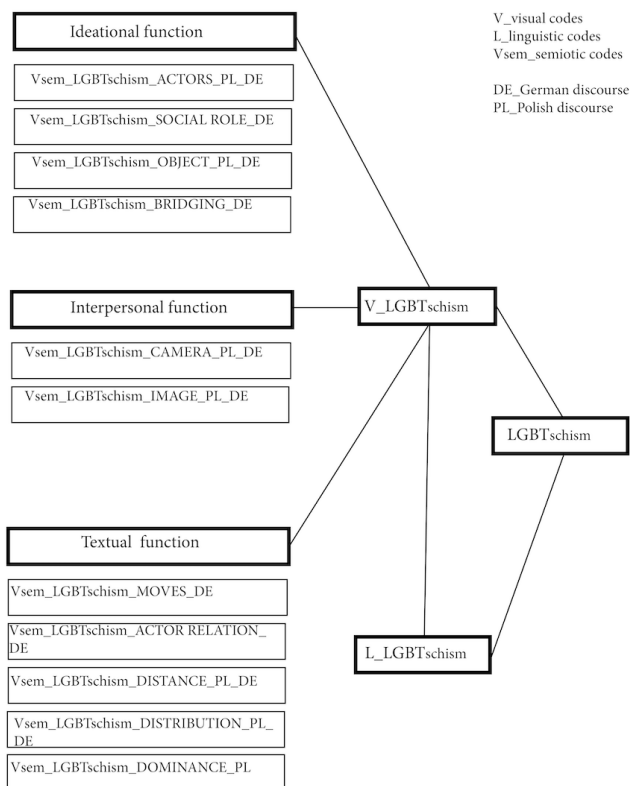
Figure 8. Multimodal tree: functions of language as action. Prepared by the author.
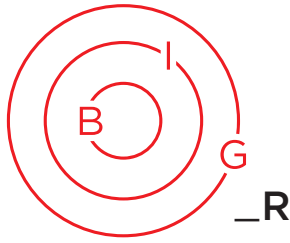
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ARTICLE
SPECIAL SECTION

Bordering Democracies, Democratising Borders

Marco Mogiani *

Over the past 30 years, border scholars have written extensively on what borders are, where they are located, and how they operate, not just to critically understand their changing role, but also to criticise and denounce their violence and discrimination. Yet borders continue to proliferate, in particular as a response to alleged crises affecting Europe. If borders have always constituted markers of social and cultural identity, the more recent process of European re-bordering, I argue, constitutes a challenge for the democratic system as a whole. Implemented by left-wing and right-wing parties alike, this process seems indeed to have been taken away from public discourse and treated as a technical necessity to solve the crises. Far from being neutral or non-political, however, it has disclosed new forms of racial discrimination, political and economic power, and colonial violence. In order to substantiate my argument, I will 1) provide a brief examination of the recent changes in the concept and practice of democracy, as well as their interrelations with the process of European re-bordering, 2) investigate the socio-political and economic conditions under which the current process of European re-bordering has come about, with particular attention to the increasing role of media and political discourses in shaping public opinion, and 3) discuss the repercussions of the process of European re-bordering on the democratic system. The article will conclude by inviting scholars, civil society members, and any interested party to open up a more open and democratic debate around the unequal and discriminatory practices of bordering.[1]

Introduction

Over the past 30 years, border scholars from multiple background and disciplines have written extensively on what borders are, where they are located, and how they operate (see, among others, Anzaldúa 1987; Balibar 1998; Paasi 1998; O'Dowd 2002; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). Whether they conceive borders as social processes that simultaneously unite and divide territories while creating and shaping identities (Paasi 1996, 1998; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; Cooper & Rumford 2011), as pivotal membranes that regulate the different mobilities within the capitalist regime of accumulation (Cross 2013; Mezzadra & Neilson 2013), or as mobile

devices that respond to the unpredictability and turbulence of migrant movements (Papadopoulos et al. 2008; Casas-Cortes et al. 2015), the vast and variegated amount of knowledge on borders has been certainly helpful not only to critically understand their changing role and meaning over time, but also to criticise and denounce their aftermath of discrimination, violence, and deaths.

Despite this academic criticism, borders do continue to proliferate and operate, as the recent social and economic crises show. The 2008 financial crisis put at stake the constitutional principle of solidarity in the

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European Union (EU), widening the socio-economic gap between central and peripheral countries. In 2015, the arrival of more than one million migrants on the European shores revealed the inefficacies of the Common European Asylum System, forcing the EU and its member states to temporary suspend the Dublin regulation as well as the principle of freedom of movement within the European territory. The pandemic crisis has further restricted cross-border movements even among European citizens and created further divisions between people, disclosing new and old forms of discrimination and power relations. With the more recent conflict in Ukraine, millions of displaced people have found refuge in other countries, even those that have been traditionally more reluctant to accept refugees, but some of these countries have employed violent forms of discrimination and filtering to select certain categories of refugees and reject others according to specific ethnic, racial, gender, or age criteria.

Despite the rhetoric of the crisis as a turning point for the (re)construction of a better and more inclusive society, we have been witnessing a staggering proliferation of borders in territorial and spatial settings as well as in political and media discourses. This process of border renaissance, I argue, has been taken away from public democratic debate and implemented with little opposition or resistance. When this did happen—as is the case for the numerous demonstrations across Europe against COVID-19 restrictions—the critiques have often disclosed a reactionary and conservative stance, simultaneously claiming unlimited freedom for "us" and further restrictions for "them", i.e., the other, the marginal, the migrant. In other words, not only have borders concretely multiplied in our society, but they also still seem to provide for many people a sense of protection and security, and many people have turned their votes to those parties that could provide that.

The idea that borders constitute a marker of social and cultural identity is, of course, not new in border studies (see, among others, Paasi 1996; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; van Houtum et al. 2005). Some issues that have been less investigated, especially in relation to the current process of European re-bordering, are the socio-political and economic conditions under which this process has come about, its interrelations and similarities with other crises, and its relationships with and repercussions for the democratic system. Just as social and economic crises are often the laboratory for the implementation of harsh (and often disastrous) social and economic recipes (Klein 2007; Harvey 2011), the so-called "migration and refugee crises" seem to have paved the way for the further proliferation of territorial, geopolitical, and socio-cultural borders, increasing social, political, and economic gaps between and within countries (Rajaram 2015; Helles et al. 2016; Kasparek 2016).

Drawing from ongoing work at the intersection between political science and political geography, this paper aims at exploring the current process of European re-bordering within the neoliberal transformation of the democratic system, in the attempt to provide a critical angle for a better understanding of the underlying socio-political and economic conditions. The paper will argue that the process of re-bordering shows many similarities with the process of neoliberalism, in that there has been an increasing stripping of the role of parliaments in the implementation of social and economic policies and a parallel delegation of crucial decisions to external and non-elected institutions. Finally, the paper will conclude by inviting scholars, civil society members, and any interested party to open up a more open and democratic debate around the unequal and discriminatory practices of bordering and imagine potential alternatives.

Democracy Under Neoliberalism

Over the past years, the EU has faced many intertwining crises. From the financial crash to the so-called "migrant and refugee crisis", the rise of far-right parties and movements throughout Europe, the burst of the pandemics, and the conflict in Ukraine, these crises have led to the reconfiguration of the social, political, and economic landscapes within and across Europe. As critical scholars have argued, these crises did not emerge from the scratch, but they are the outcome of, or have been exacerbated by the implementation of neoliberal policies in Europe over the past thirty years (Harvey 2011; Fouskas & Dimoulas 2013). Besides, far from having simply deepened the process of socio-economic integration between European member states (see Schimmelfennig 2018a), these crises have paved the way for the further acceleration of neoliberal rationality and the implementation of austerity policies that have increased socio-economic inequalities and broken social and democratic bonds (Peck et al. 2012).

Theoretically developed after the second post-war period and practically implemented with the violent rise to power of General Pinochet in Chile and the elections of conservative politicians Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA (Peck 2012), neoliberalism is an economic doctrine that promotes free and unbridled markets through the privatisation and liberalisation of public services, the deregulation of state bureaucracy, the weakening of social protections, and the reduction of government spending (Harvey 2005). Emerged in response to the perceived failures of Keynesianism and social democracy, neoliberal recipes should have stimulated economic growth and created greater prosperity for all, but they have instead increased inequalities within and between countries (Piketty 2017). While a restricted elite of people gained increasing wealth and power, the majority of citizens

have experienced declining living standards, reduced job security, and decreased access to essential services (Stiglitz 2012). Besides, neoliberalism has also weakened the role of the state in regulating the economy and protecting citizens from market excesses, leaving them vulnerable to financial crises and corporate abuses (Harvey 2005).

The advent of neoliberalism has had profound effects not only on the economic sector but also on the political one. The increasing socio-economic inequalities and the promotion of the interests of a wealthy and powerful circle of people at the expense of the general public led to the gradual but tangible erosion not only of public services but of the democratic system itself, prompting some scholars to investigate whether, among the numerous crises affecting Europe, also democracy itself is in crisis (Streeck 2014; Urbinati 2016; Merkel & Kneip 2018). The erosion of democracy has significant implications for social justice, equality, and the ability of citizens to participate in political decision-making processes. Drawing from radical democratic theory, I conceive democracy as an ever-changing battlefield in which different subjects—whether they are citizens or not—emerge every time to claim their rights and raise their specific interests (Rancière 2004, 2010; Balibar 2008).

The relationship between neoliberalism and democracy as well as its repercussion on European politics are complex and variegated (see Hickel 2016; Brown 2017; Holloway 2018), and a thorough analysis of these processes goes beyond the scope of this paper. Here, however, I focus my attention on two interrelated aspects of such relationship: on the one hand, the increasing spoliation of national parliaments and governments and the parallel transfer of decisional powers to non-elective technocratic institutions and, on the other, the gradual homogenisation of the political spectrum, with the convergence of left and right parties to the centre and the attempts—far from being successful—to remove more extremist wings. As neoliberal advocates claimed to solve inflation and stagnation problems through a series of different but pre-defined policies, they came to be seen as expert chefs that could skilfully combine the ingredients of a magical recipe to obtain economic growth. It is in this period that Europe saw the rise of technocratic decision-making: national governments and elected politicians began to rely more heavily on experts and technocrats to make economic policy decisions, arguing that the latter were better equipped to make rational and objective decisions (Crouch 2004; Scicluna & Auer 2019).

The resort to technocratic decision-making, which experienced further heights during times of crisis, led not only to the further erosion of public trust in democratic institutions and to the growing sense that elected officials were unable to manage the economy, but also to the de-politicisation of economic issues themselves (Hopkin 2012; Garzia & Karremans 2021). With de-politicisation, I do not refer merely to the decreasing interest in or discussion of political issues—in this case, we should talk about a concrete re-politicisation of economic themes at the advantage of certain political parties (see Schimmelfennig 2018b)—but rather to the processing of economic issues outside of democratically-legitimised political institutions (Wissel & Wolff 2016; Scicluna & Auer 2019). Often insulated from public scrutiny and accountability, experts and technocrats have been increasingly behind the scenes of, or even appointed to implement key economic decisions, making it difficult for citizens to hold them responsible for their repercussions (Crouch 2004). Furthermore, such experts and technocrats are often selected among the same elite circles as those who hold economic power, leading to a situation in which economic decision-making is further concentrated in the hands of a small, self-perpetuating elite.

The framing of economic policies as technical issues that can be carefully combined and implemented by experts and technocrats has also led to their de-politicisation (Jessop 2014; Madra & Adaman 2014). When key economic decisions, such as those related to austerity policies or public spending, are framed as technical issues, they are often taken away from public debate or political negotiations and presented and implemented as objective and apolitical solutions (Streeck 2016). Not only has the de-politicisation of economic issues prevented citizens from engaging with and participating in the democratic process, but it has also served to hide dissenting voices and maintain the status quo. Those who challenge the dominant economic paradigm or who advocate for alternative economic policies are often dismissed as "anti-expert" or "anti-science", with significant repercussions on the nature of democratic debate (Crouch 2004).

The limitation of acceptable policy options has often gone hand in hand with the restriction of political ideas in the public scenario, further undermining democratic debate and citizen participation (Chomsky & Barsamian 2003). Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the advent of neoliberalism, several left-wing parties in Europe, traditionally attentive to labour rights and promoting a conception of society based on class struggle, gradually embraced neoliberal ideas and policies (Berman & Kundnani 2021; Undiemi 2021). The shift of left-wing parties towards the centre of the political spectrum has led to the acceptance and implementation of neoliberal economic policies, either through the establishment of coalition governments with centre-right parties or with the appointment of, or support to technocratic cabinets.

The homogeneity of ideas among left and right parties, especially when it comes to economic policies, has significantly reduced the range of political ideas available within the political spectrum as well as that

of policy options available to citizens in response to emergencies, limiting the scope of democratic debate and the extent of political interventions (Streeck 2014). While the political convergence between left and right parties reduced the differences between the two, making it more difficult for voters to differentiate between them, it has been particularly damaging for left-wing political parties, which lost their traditional identity and political base (Undiemi 2021). The growing sense of political disillusionment and disengagement generated by the lack of clear political choices has often translated either into increasing abstentionism or in the parallel rise of far right and populist parties, which capitalised on the opposition to neoliberal austerity policies.

Over the past years, certain trends seem to have reverted. The rise to power of Syriza in Greece in the middle of a devastating social and economic situation, the emergence of growing social movements such as Occupy Wall Street in the USA and Podemos in Spain as a response to the financial crisis, the appointment of Jeremy Corbin as leader of the Labour Party in the UK and the success of Bernie Sanders in the primary elections for the Democratic Party in the USA, the establishment of socialist minority governments with the support of more radical parties in Spain and Portugal, and the growing electoral consensus of left-wing parties such as La France Insoumise in France testify to the need to address the desires and concerns of the citizens and ensure a more open and engaging public debate.

Whether successful or not, these social movements, political parties, and popular leaders have contributed to open up alternative ideas in the political scene, enlarging the scope of the democratic debate and disclosing a social and political alternative to the neoliberal paradigm. Some scholars have also talked about a parallel process of (re)politicisation of the social that goes hand in hand with that of de-politicisation (Fawcett & Marsh 2014). However, some of these movements', parties' and leaders' position on migration issues, while differing in theory from the ones of the right, reproduce in practice the same violent forms of exclusion, inequality, and discrimination. In other words, when it comes to migration, left parties seem to implement the same traditional recipes that have been employed over the past thirty years, without critically interrogating themselves over their efficacy.

Borders Under Neoliberalism

Thirty years ago, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the advent of neoliberalism, some liberal scholars provocatively asserted the premature demise of the nation state, celebrating the withering away of nation states and the rise of regional economies within an increasingly borderless world (Ohmae 1990). These events constituted a watershed in recent history, with profound effects within and across countries. Whether we take the state as unit of analysis or we look at the political and economic changes at both local and global levels, the role and meaning of borders have indeed changed significantly. A great example in this respect is the relocation, multiplication, and transformation of European borders during the process of deepening and widening of the European market. The initial process of de-bordering, which saw the abolition of internal borders and the enlargement of the European market, was initially celebrated as a victory for neoliberalism and globalisation. However, this process has been accompanied by a violent process of re-bordering for certain mobilities, with particular consequences for migrants (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013).

Among the numerous conventions, treaties, policies, and directives issued to develop the common market and regulate its crisscrossing mobilities, the Schengen System is probably the most famous. On the one hand, the 1985 Schengen Agreement and the following 1990 Convention, initially developed among France, Germany, and the Benelux countries outside the realm of the European Community and later incorporated in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam, established an internal borderless area where capital, goods, services, and workers could circulate freely. On the other hand, the Convention envisaged the relocation of border controls outside the member states' territory and the parallel strengthening of external borders to protect the common market and regulate the circulation of goods and people across them.

As the role and meaning of borders was changing, an intense debate among political geographers, political scientists and critical economists ensued, dampening the initial borderless euphoria. Rejecting the idea of a "borderless world" and putting into question the deterministic vision of borders as natural and immutable institutions, some scholars started to investigate the proliferation of borders in contemporary societies, examining the role of multiple agents, networks and forces in shaping or challenging them (Newman & Paasi 1998; Paasi 1998; van Houtum 2005). In their view, the idea of a "borderless world" appeared both reductive, falling into the "territorial trap" (Agnew 1994) that takes the state as the only unit of analysis, and uncritical, as it fails to assess the constant relocation, proliferation and multiplication of borders across societies.

These scholars dedicated increasing attention to the exploration of the symbolic and practical role of borders in shaping territories, people, and id/entities, while being simultaneously shaped by them (Albert et al. 2001; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; van Houtum 2005). In this respect, the same concept of border was deemed incapable to grasp the socio-spatial changes occurring within societies and was reframed in terms of b/ordering (van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002; van Houtum et al.

2005). This concept highlights the ongoing process of creation and proliferation of borders across different scales, with its uneven repercussions on territories, policies, and people. By creating multiple orders of id/entity and mobility across space, the practice of b/ordering continuously reproduces artificial divisions between "us" and "them", simultaneously constructing and rejecting the "other" through the imposition of controls on their mobility (van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002). In this way, b/ordering fulfils "our" intimate desire of protection from (physical or mental) external threats, shaping (our and other) id/entities and reproducing the materiality of territorial borders onto our everyday lives through constraining and often violent practices (van Houtum et al. 2005).

Similarly discarding the idea of a "borderless world" as profoundly uncritical and practically unrealistic (Wai-Chung Yeung 1998; Anderson & Shuttleworth 2004), other scholars acknowledged the structural developments at the basis of the production and proliferation of borders, affirming the importance of borders in perpetuating the structural inequalities among nation states in the context of a supposedly unified global market (Anderson 2012), as well as their paramount role in funnelling the flows of capital, goods, and people at the advantage of capitalist development (Cross 2013; Ferguson & McNally 2014). Through the reproduction of the territorial divisions and socio-economic inequalities between nation states, borders allow the unrestricted competition among both transnational corporations and different nation states, the cost-effective circulation of capitals, and the controlled regulation of labour mobility (Smith 2008; Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). Borders, in this respect, are conceived as important benchmarks of sovereign power, emphasising the role of the states both at global scale, as no international institution could properly function without them, and at the local level, where they can exert their economic, political, legal, cultural, and military powers (O'Dowd 2010; Anderson 2012).

There are multiple ways to look at and analyse the development of the European border regime throughout the last thirty years (see for example Tsianos & Karakayali 2010; van Houtum 2010; De Genova 2017); however, this tension between openness and closure at territorial, geopolitical, and socio-cultural levels, I would argue, has represented the most important characteristic of this process. The more recent crises seem to have only exacerbated this tension and exposed its inherent contradictions. The "long summer of migration" (Kasparek & Speer 2015), the pandemic crisis, and the more recent conflict in Ukraine have shown how the movement of certain categories of people has been subject to increasing criminalisation and securitisation on the basis of class, racial, and ethnic differences, while their social inclusion has often occurred in a position of social, economic, and cultural subordination. If borders have always produced

inequalities and multiple forms of discrimination, the current crises are having a tremendous, fast, and ever-changing effect on the European re-bordering process as well as on the multifarious experiences on the ground.

While a thorough analysis of the complexity and diversity of the European border regime and the evolution of its security mechanisms through time would go beyond the scope of this paper, two interrelated aspects of this process are nevertheless worth exploring to understand the consequences of bordering not only on the bodies of people but, more broadly, on the democratic system as a whole. First, the process of securitisation of migration movements has increasingly involved employment of agencies and institutions that operate outside the boundaries of the democratic system, often immune from accountability and transparency for their actions. This process does not merely refer to the externalisation, privatisation, and technologization of security controls through which relevant bordering practices have been appointed to private agencies, third countries, carriers, IT companies, and security corporations, which have come to manage large amount of data and information (but see on this Bigo & Guild 2010; Molnar 2019; Amoore 2021). Rather, it refers to the creation of specific actors that, despite being appointed and funded by European institutions, often operate in a blurred legal area, with increasing roles and funds but without clear legal responsibilities. These actors, which present themselves as security experts, generally conceive security as a scientific target that should be reached through specific management processes and technical operations.

Second, and consequently, the "technocratisation" of security issues and its appointment to specific experts—a process that saw the light with the rise of logistics within neoliberal globalisation (Cowen 2014)—has led to the de-politicisation of securitisation and to the convergence of right and left parties in the management of migration issues. In other words, just as technocratic experts have been increasingly appointed with the ideation and implementation of specific economic policies to solve the alleged social and economic problems of certain countries, removing the discussion of such policies from the public debate, so security experts have gained increasing power in the management of migration movements, presenting security as a technical objective that can be reached through the implementation of specific policies and practices.

The border agency FRONTEX constitutes a perfect example in this respect. First established in 2004 and relaunched as European Border and Coast Guard after the "long summer of migration", FRONTEX has operated within a securitarian framework that governs the mobilities of people entering and circulating across the European territory (Campesi 2015). The creation

and evolution of FRONTEX do not respond merely to the need of fortifying European external borders or to the necessity of protecting its internal territory. Rather, I argue, its underlying roles and functions are better grasped when subsumed within the same mechanisms that regulate the securitisation of mobilities within capitalism, controlling cross-border flows and preventing undesirable or illicit agents from infiltrating the European space.

The protection of EU external borders, the founding regulation of FRONTEX reminds us, is "a necessary corollary to the free movement of persons within the European Union and a fundamental component of an area of freedom, security and justice" (European Council 2004), especially on the eve of the crucial European enlargement to ten more countries, most of which from the former Soviet Union (Monar 2006; Léonard 2009, 2010). In assisting member states with, inter alia, the monitoring of migratory flows, the management of their external borders, the fight against organised cross-border crime and terrorism, and the coordination and organisation of joint operations and rapid border interventions, FRONTEX exerts its technical know-how and scientific expertise to decipher inherently political questions, striking a balance between freedom of movement and securitisation of borders (Neal 2009).

However, I argue the operations of FRONTEX go beyond the mere dichotomy of openness and closure. In the "time-space compression" of border management (Andersson 2014), the agency employs a supposedly neutral securitarian discourse as a governmental technique of border policing, disclosing an intertwining connection between practices of care and control (Walters 2012; Pallister-Wilkins 2015). Just as the revolution in logistics involves the evaluation and management of potential risks rather than their interception and elimination (see Cowen 2014), so FRONTEX is appointed with the identification and interdiction of undesirable agents *before* they can actually penetrate and endanger the whole society, with frequent violations of the right of asylum (Bigo 2005; Neal 2009).

Operating in a blurred legal space where European and national geopolitical interests intersect and superimpose on migration and asylum regulations, FRONTEX has employed its technical and allegedly neutral expertise to prevent, identify, and manage migration movements. Over the years, as security has become increasingly important in the political agenda of the EU and the driving factor of border management, the agency has seen a continuous multiplication of financial resources and personnel as well as increasing autonomy from nation states (Ferraro & De Capitani 2016; Campesi 2018). Especially since the 2016 reform, the new FRONTEX has been appointed with new tasks in border and migration management, such as the "right to intervene" in case of state failure to address migratory

pressures, the possibility to conduct search and rescue operations during border surveillance operations at sea, the enhancement of return and readmission procedures, and the strengthening of diplomatic coordination with third countries (Carrera et al. 2018). These tasks have extended the agency's operations beyond its traditional joint operations or rapid border interventions, complementing, monitoring, or in some cases substituting the functions of member states (Campesi 2018). Despite their reluctance to concede so many powers to a supra-national agency, member states are compelled to do so due to the lack of financial resources in autonomously managing their own borders, scarce coordination at the intergovernmental level, and increasing migratory (and social) pressures.

Besides, FRONTEX operations have been often immune from public scrutiny and accountability, allowing for a culture of abuse of power and impunity to develop (until they became too big to hide, as the recent scandals involving the agency have shown; for an overview see Marin 2014; Aas & Gundhus 2015). In this respect, Campesi (2018, 21; see also Trauner 2012) notes that, despite the obligation to appoint an internal Fundamental Rights Officer and the increasing answerability of the agency to European institutions, the increasing role of the European Parliament to reform the agency has not been "paralleled by effective democratic control over the definition of the policy guidelines" nor by an "effective strengthening of the EU Parliament powers to control the EBCG's operational strategy".

Beside the lack of democratic accountability behind the increasing power of the agency, what I am also interested in here is also how the framing of migration as a security issue and the parallel understanding of security as a neutral and technical matter have reflected on the political spectrum. Its technical expertise in security issues has contributed to present FRONTEX as an agency that, by protecting and strengthening the external borders of Europe, would also safeguard and reinforce the internal market. If the promotion and development of the common market has been the aim of neoliberal policies implemented by left-wing and right-wing parties alike, then their cooperation in justice and home affairs seems the consequent step to protect this market from external threats (see Huysmans 2000; Monar 2001). However, while the right has always emphasised the need for greater border controls and a more efficient management of migration movements, for the left this step has often involved the abandonment or dilution of their solidarity principles towards migrants and the defence of their rights.

With the advent of neoliberalism, therefore, the right and the left have arguably found increasing spaces of convergence not only about fiscal and economic policies (see Mudge 2018) but also, I argue, around migration and asylum issues. Certainly, the rhetoric that the left

and right have employed on migration and integration to appease their electorate may differ (Rovny 2012; Carvalho & Ruedin 2020), as does the position of their voters on such issues (Vestergaard 2020). However, the policies that they implement often share a common emphasis on the management of migration through re-bordering and securitisation measures. In fact, while centre-right parties have tended to cooperate with far-right parties, thus shifting their position on migration towards more conservative stances (Massetti 2015), centre-left parties have adopted more liberal opinions on integration but have embraced stronger positions on (especially irregular) migration, either on their own will (Alonso & da Fonseca 2011) or pushed by competition from the right (van Spanje 2010). This policy convergence between centre-left and centre-right parties has hindered the emergence of different perspectives on migration in the public debate, contributing to reinforce the dominant neoliberal ideology and its predilection for the free movement of capital and goods over that of (undesired) people (Berman & Snegovaya 2019; Berman & Kundnani 2021).

In this respect, the rise of far-right and populist parties all over Europe is not merely an accident, but the outcome of the continuous shift of the political spectrum towards the right and the result of the increasing perception among citizens of the inability of the political establishment to solve the current social and economic crises with the same neoliberal recipes that have fuelled those crises in the first place (Han 2015; Tooze 2018). As left-wing parties abandoned class struggle and the defence of workers' rights to embrace neoliberalism and economic consensus, masses of people have found themselves without political support and guidance, falling back on those parties that could provide security and protection against the social and economic dangers of neoliberal globalisation (Alonso & da Fonseca 2011; Berman & Snegovaya 2019). Although even centre-left parties have often adopted—both theoretically and practically—a narrative of security and protection in the attempt to appease their electorate or conquer a new one, they are often perceived as tied with the bourgeoisie and incapable of defending workers' rights (Undiemi 2021; Hutter & Kriesi 2022).

Bordering Democracies, Democratising Borders?

The current process of re-bordering is not only territorial, with the physical increase in security measures to control and manage migration movements but also political, with the delimitation of the democratic debate over social, political, and economic issues (Chomsky & Barsamian 2003). In other word, the re-bordering process has been territorially externalised to other countries or appointed to private security companies, and politically hidden from public sight, overlooked, or normalised in our everyday life. The removal of

important political issues from the public discourse or their internalisation among citizens, I argue, can have far-reaching consequences on the democratic system as a whole. Papadopoulos (2013) has called this process the "hollowing-out of democracies": while there has been a proliferation of democracies over the past decades, making some scholars talk about a golden age of democracy, the quality and substance of the democratic process have been eroded, due to the decreasing number of voters and the parallel decrease in democratic legitimacy, the growing disconnectedness between citizens and their representatives, and the increasing lack of democratic accountability of political institutions.

The role of media and political discourses has been paramount in shaping the public opinion on bordering processes and migration movements, as well as in influencing political results (Eberl et al. 2018; Matthes & Schmuck 2017). This is particularly evident in the analysis of political concerns regarding immigration: as Mondon and Winter notice (2020), while migration does not seem to represent a big issue among people at the local level, it becomes one of the top priorities at the national level, due precisely to the combined role of media and political discourses in framing it as a security concern. This process of framing, which dates back to the first (irregularised) migration movements towards southern Europe, has further exacerbated with the emergence of more recent crises, bringing with them an even more violent narrative pushing towards the criminalisation of migration movements as well as of search and rescue operations (see Cusumano & Bell 2021; Valente et al. 2021). As a matter of fact, as Zachariadi writes (Zachariadi & Lymes 2020, 269), "There can't be neutrality when the existing relations are unequal": even when the media report on specific facts about immigration adopting a relatively neutral or objective tone, the lack of background information and political analysis on those facts risks presenting them as singular events disconnected from the social, political, and economic structures within which they occur.

The de-politicisation and de-democratisation of political issues have also led to the normalisation and interiorisation of thoughts and actions that have instead enormous hidden social or political costs. With de-democratisation I do not refer to a supposedly authoritarian turn of contemporary democratic systems, but rather to the above-mentioned hollowing-out of democratic practices and rules, as well as to the parallel impoverishment of the public debate. On the political level, for example, Brand and Wissen (2021) note how simple everyday actions like buying a t-shirt or driving a car have been normalised and deprived of any political meaning, overlooking the social and economic processes behind the production and circulation of stuff, and unwillingly reproducing global inequalities and environmental problems. When translating this process of normalisation and interiorisation into issues

of re-bordering, it becomes clear that most citizens know neither how borders operate, nor the social, political, and economic costs of bordering processes. In fact, they sometimes reproduce them in their everyday life, internalising their dividing mechanisms without critically processing them (see Rumford 2013; Yuval-Davis et al. 2019).

Whether implemented from the above or unwillingly reproduced in everyday life, borders seem to still provide a sense of security and protection. As earlier border scholars have argued with the advancement of neoliberal ideas and the multiplication of borders across society, borders constitute important territorial and cultural markers (Newman & Paasi 1998; Paasi 1998; van Houtum & van Naerssen 2002). Over the past twenty years, and even more so after the recent crises, there has been a resurgence of borders along the territorial edges of nation states and the EU as a whole. The fortifications along the Greek-Turkish border, the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, the Polish-Belarusian and the Finnish-Russian borders, the FRONTEX operations in the Mediterranean Sea, or the wall between the USA and Mexico, just to name a few, represent states' "last bastion of sovereignty" (Dauvergne 2008). In an increasingly globalised world, the control over territory remains a state prerogative that allows them to defend themselves from the global forces and movements that allegedly threaten their sovereignty (Brown 2010).

The resurgence of border controls, however, is not simply an attempt to reinstate a geopolitical authority over a certain territory, but a way to filter mobilities along the lines of class, power, and race, increasing the social, economic, and cultural gaps between "us" and "them". When migration to Europe was functional to the social and economic reconstruction of the countries after the Second World War, it was promoted and incentivised through guest worker programmes (Geddes & Scholten 2016). However, when migration movements would continue after the termination of these programmes, in a period marked by wars and conflicts, violent processes of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2004), increasing internationalisation of the division of labour, and growing inequalities between the countries of the Global North and those of the Global South, they were met with border restrictions, security measures, and criminalisation.

These measures have not functioned as deterrents but rather as attempts to regulate and filter migrant mobilities, allowing their differential inclusion within the European territory in a position of domination and subordination (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013). The 2015 "long summer of migration" and the displacement of Ukrainian refugees following the Russian invasion constitute pertinent examples in this respect. In the first case, the initial opening of borders along the Balkan route and across Europe facilitated the entrance of hundreds of thousands of relatively wealthy and well-educated Syrian refugees, functional to the economic development of countries such as Germany (Maroufi 2017) as well as to their (self-)promotion as caring and compassionate nations (Mavelli 2017). As the spotlights on the "long summer of migration" turned off, a renovated rhetoric on migration as a cultural threat against "our" way of life spread again, fuelled by the terrorist attack in Paris in November 2015 and the Cologne sexual assaults on New Year's Eve, leading to the reinstatement of border controls within and outside Europe and to the externalisation of border and migration management to Turkey.

More recently, the flight of millions of Ukrainian people after the Russian invasion of the country in February 2022 was initially received favourably by European countries, even those like Poland and Hungary that had not been particularly keen on accepting (certain categories of) refugees in the past through the implementation of distribution mechanisms across the EU. The geopolitical intents of these countries were visible: as Russia was their common enemy, especially after having been under its sphere of influence over great part of the twentieth century, they show solidarity by, among other things, hosting hundreds of thousands of refugees from Ukraine. However, as the conflict and the relative displacement of people continued, it became clear that these countries would only accept white refugees, leaving behind ethnically and racially different refugees. Just like the Polish-Belarussian border crisis of the year before, which saw Poland build a militarised barrier along its eastern border to prevent the entrance of black and brown refugees crossing through Belarus, so with the Ukrainian-Russian conflict the border became a filter to select and separate deserving refugees from undeserving ones according to racial criteria (Fajfer 2021; Klaus & Szulecka 2022).

Through the de-politicisation and technocratisation of migration issues, the growing resort to practices of externalisation and privatisation of borders, and the role of political and media discourses in shaping the public debate around migration, the current process of European re-bordering has become increasingly internalised and normalised among European citizens (Rumford 2013; Yuval-Davis et al. 2019). Securitisation and multiplication of bordering practices are often advanced as (the only) solution to regulate and manage migration movements from both left and right parties, and private technocratic institutions have been increasingly entrusted with the control of territorial borders, with scarce social, legal, and democratic accountability (Fink 2020; ECRE 2021).

The social and political opposition to processes of territorial and socio-cultural re-bordering is therefore not an easy task. An enormous work on the cultural level is fundamental to disassemble the hegemonic ideology of bordering among political and media

discourses, as well as to deconstruct and dismantle the role of the latter in shaping and reproducing such a dominant ideology. It is also necessary, I would argue, to understand and analyse the current process of European re-bordering within the longstanding transformations of global capitalism, with their tendency toward the de-politicisation, technocratisation, and de-democratisation of social, political, and economic issues, thus reconnecting multiple struggles across local, regional, and global levels. Cultural and ideological activities should be accompanied by practical and grounded actions at, across, and against bordering practices, aimed not only at raising awareness on their violent character, but also at dismantling or disturbing their operations.

Bringing democracy back in, however, does not simply mean giving the power that has been delegated to technocratic or private institutions back to the states and their parliaments, nor advocating for the humanisation of bordering practices per se. If borders are instruments of social exclusion, economic inequalities, and ethno-cultural differences, then it would be more coherent to argue for their abolition rather than their democratisation (Walia 2020). However, in a society where political and economic issues have been taken away from public debate, we should bring these issues back on the political scene, enlarge the spectrum of the social and political debate, and involve citizens and interest parties in the public discussion. This is what I mean by democratising borders.

Like other social and cultural processes, borders can be contested, subverted, and dismantled, opening up new spaces for inclusion, solidarity, and democracy. While it is important to look in a systematic and comprehensive way at how geopolitical and socio-cultural boundaries have reproduced through space and time, it is also necessary to explore whether and how citizens and non-citizens have negotiated, challenged, or resisted them. In this sense, the border can represent not only a starting point for the analysis of multiple and intertwining processes at the global, national, and local levels as well as their effects on the everyday life of people, but also a crucial intersection of alternative ideas, mutual practices, and forms of solidarity. Only in this way is it possible to imagine and implement an alternative future, capable of tearing down social and cultural boundaries and connecting people with different stories and from different backgrounds.

Note

1 This essay is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158

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ARTICLE
SPECIAL SECTION

Britain's Imperial Past and Contemporary Borders in Adichie's Americanah and Zadie Smith's 'Fences'

Kirsten Sandrock *

Recent literary works draw attention to the multifaceted legacy of Britain's imperial past, not only but including its impact on current UK border practices. The works of postcolonial and Black British authors illustrate especially strongly that the spatial epistemologies of empire are still prevalent in twenty-first century border debates. This article engages with Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's Americanah *(2013) and Zadie Smith's essay "Fences" (2016) as literary works that negotiate UK border practices both before and after Brexit. They draw attention to the intersections of empire, race, gender, and class in the recent resurgence of British bordering practices and emphasize the necessity to make visible both contemporary and historical borders in the UK in order to come to terms with the underlying colonial epistemologies of many border practices.[1]*

Introduction

The Brexit referendum has led to widespread discussions about Britain's borders, including its present and historical bordering practices (Delanty 2017; Staudt 2018). Although the relationship between geographical boundaries and state boundaries is complex and frequently fraught (Wilson & Donnan 2012, 1–22), the triumph of the Leave campaign has been commonly linked to the renaissance of what has been called Britain's island mentality. The reference to the geographical boundaries of the island is used to refer critically to the rise of a new kind of national isolationism in parts of the UK—and especially in England—that stands in stark contrast to ideas of supra- or postnationalism. While debates about Britain's borders after the referendum frequently focused on the borders between Northern Ireland and Ireland, critics have since made clear that these and other border issues are closely connected to the "legacies of empire" that was one of the underlying discourses in the Brexit campaign (Saunders 2020, 1140; see also Koegler et al. 2020). In line with such approaches, literary and cultural works radically question the future possibilities and dangers of bordering practices not only in Ireland and Northern Ireland (Lehner 2020) but also in relation to other colonial and postcolonial border epistemologies that are connected to the current renaissance of borders in the UK.

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Postcolonial and Black British authors have long played a key role in negotiating British border aesthetics, past and present. This article discusses Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013) and Zadie Smith's essay "Fences" (2016) as two texts that deal with racial, cultural, and material border epistemologies in the UK, focusing especially on the links between empire, race, gender, and class. Written in different genres—a novel and an autobiographical essay—*Americanah* and "Fences" illustrate how closely the resurgence of Britain's island mentality in the twenty-first century is connected to the legacies of the British Empire. The article opens with a discussion of how theorists and critics have entered the discussion about empire and borders in the UK and how historical Western bordering practices are relevant for a discussion of British border debates today. The subsequent reading of *Americanah* (2013) and "Fences" (2016) explores the literary strategies authors use to make visible those historical practices of empire, race, and class that influence contemporary border regimes. They insist on the necessity to overcome what Paul Gilroy has called *Postcolonial Melancholia*, i.e., the wilful ignoring or repression of Britain's colonial history (Gilroy 2004), by refusing to be silent about the residues of colonial border epistemologies.

Borders, Brexit, and Empire

Britain's borders have been significantly shaped by the country's highly diverse literary traditions (Fellner & Frenk 2020). The renewed attention given to UK borders in the context of the Brexit referendum has not only led to a renaissance of border tropes in literary and cultural works but also in scholarly discussions and theories of British literature and culture (e.g., Habermann 2020; Rostek & Zwierlein 2019; Sandrock 2019; Zwierlein & Rostek 2019). One particularly prominent strand of critical reflections on British border practices emerges from Black British and transnational authors, including authors from formerly colonized countries. Authors such as Zadie Smith and Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie, Bernadine Evaristo, Olumide Popoola or Mohsin Hamid illustrate how the globe is still influenced by the borders created by the former British Empire and how issues of integration, migration, inclusion and diversity are inherently linked to the naturalization of the UK as an island nation, however geographically fraught such an interpretation may be because it excludes not only Northern Ireland but also formerly colonized parts of the British Empire (McCall 2012). Their works illustrate that the renaissance of Britain's island mentality in the years before and after the Brexit referendum must be contextualized in the larger historical processes of British expansion around the world and that it is necessary to confront not only spatial border practices but the entire epistemologies underlying the lines of division in the UK today.

From a sociological perspective, Gurminder K. Bhambra has argued that empire and race have been underestimated categories in relation to the Brexit referendum. Writing with regard to discussions of class, Bhambra writes that "the category of 'class' is not being used as a neutral or objective one, but rather as a euphemism for a racialized identity politics that is given legitimacy through this evasion" (Bhambra 2017, 227). For Bhambra, it is clear that the history of the British Empire needs to be in the foreground of Brexit discussions and, with it, discussions of inclusion and exclusion in the UK today:

> Such arguments [about class], however, profoundly misunderstand the history of Britain, which has never been a nation but an empire, and thus misidentify the extent of the populations who belong historically to the polity and would, as a consequence, be more appropriately understood as '*insiders*'. (Bhambra 2017, 220, emphasis in original)

When looking at the renaissance of border tropes in the context of Brexit, a central question is therefore how ethnicity, migration, and class intersect in the creation of internal divisions. Black British and global authors offer intersectional perspectives on this debate, and they illustrate that the renewed rise of British borders precedes the Brexit referendum by several decades. These discussions are not isolated from other theoretical approaches in the fields of British, Irish, and Anglophone literature and culture, but postcolonial scholars have long been critical of the epistemologies underlying Western conceptions of nationalism and citizenship, arguing that the ideological basis of empire-building is closely linked to the ideologies of nationalism and capitalism.

There is a long scholarly tradition that investigates Anglophone literature in global and transnational contexts. Borders are particularly relevant to such analyses. In the wake of the work of Congolese philosopher Valentin-Yves Mudimbe in the 1980s, for instance, postcolonial critics and thinkers have challenged the ideologies of European nationalism that once led to the division of Africa and other colonized parts of the world in the colonial era. In *The Invention of Africa* (1988), Mudimbe argues that Europeans and Africans alike have produced images of Africa that are framed by paradigms rooted in the West. For Mudimbe, European empire-building was not only based on a "philosophy of conquest", but contemporary processes of bordering and rebordering continue this "philosophy of conquest", even if these processes are often made invisible (Mudimbe 1988, 69). What is at stake is not merely a change of national borders. Rather, Mudimbe challenges the epistemological basis of national and spatial thinking in the West, which has led to the rise of colonialism in the first place.

Mudimbe takes recourse to the concept of "gnosis", which has been taken up by Walter Mignolo in *Local Histories/Global Designs* (2000). Developing earlier concepts of knowledge and space in the Americas, Mignolo argues that local, non-Western conceptions of space can provide alternatives to the colonial legacies of Western bordering practices (Mignolo 2000; see also Sandrock 2019). Mignolo introduces the concept of "border thinking" to spell out how interpretation without authority over the interpretation could work:

> The goal is to erase the distinction between the knower and the known, between a "hybrid" object (the borderland as the known) and a "pure" disciplinary or interdisciplinary subject (the knower), uncontaminated by the border matters he or she describes. (Mignolo 2000, 18)

Mignolo questions not only what borders mean; he questions the entire epistemology of the border, how we get to know what borders are, how we approach them, how we interpret them and what role researchers and critics play in the formation of borders. Knowledge itself can be used to create borders, which is why literature that relates alternative experiences about borders is so central to change our understanding of them. Mignolo argues for the de-colonization of spatial structures by means of "pluritopic hermeneutics" (Mignolo 2000, 16–18). By approaching spaces and knowledge from a multiplicity of spaces, it is possible to de-colonize our understanding of spatial structures because Western concepts of space no longer dominate border hermeneutics. The literary works below by Adichie and Smith demonstrate a similar tendency to question not only the spatialization of borders but the very traditions and practices of thinking along the lines of dividing practices, be it citizenship, empire, race, gender or class.

In line with such critical approaches, the works by Adichie and Smith challenge the epistemology of borders: our knowledge about them, our ways of seeing them, our ways of interpreting them and the tendency to ignore those borders that determine the spaces of those living around us. Smith and Adichie do so by making visible borders that are otherwise made invisible to large parts of the population and by turning to borders of administration and infrastructures, borders of racism, gender, and class—many of which have been naturalized in contemporary society. Following Caroline Koegler, Pavan Kumar Malreddy and Marlena Tronicke's argument that Brexit was not an "unforeseeable 'event'" because "Britain's departure from the EU [is] the result of a long-standing process, rooted in persisting imperial attitudes and, arguably, narcissistic yearnings" (Koegler et al. 2020, 585), the present article is particularly interested in how Black British and global authors question the nostalgia that is often linked to the naturalization of Britain's borders:

> Populist campaigns built around the commingled tropes of Brexit, empire, and World War II have proven highly effective across various sections of British society, and have exerted a particular force amongst those who witnessed the gradual crumbling of empire after the war. (Koegler et al. 2020, 586)

Literary works have the power to make visible these and other "commingled tropes" in British society today. They illustrate that the rise of a renewed island mentality in the UK has nothing to do with the geographical or natural site of the island of Great Britain. Instead, British border tropes are frequently linked to the material, political, and cultural epistemologies of colonial times, which have an ongoing effect in the present. To change this in the future, it is necessary to make visible the intersections of empire, race, gender and class, which are among the pressing issues of British borders today.

Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie's *Americanah* (2013)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) is an award-winning novel that has reached a global audience.[2] It was shortlisted for the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction in the UK, it has won the US American National Book Critics Circle Award and was picked for the "One Book, One New York" reading program that is meant to foster community among New Yorkers while also promoting literacy. As such, *Americanah* has been widely received as a novel that has the potential to transgress boundaries. It discusses both the promises and the problems of globalization with regard to border movements and critically engages with the interdependencies of globalization, capitalism, and the longevity of imperial power dynamics in the present (Sandrock 2018). While large parts of the plot focus on the US and on Nigeria in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, one plot strand is concerned with the UK and the relationship between contemporary migration practices and the complex history of the British Empire. The following discussion suggests that *Americanah*, which was published three years before the referendum in 2016, indicates several years before Brexit why migration and the question of Britain's borders became such a vital matter in the Leave campaign. A brief introduction to the plot will help to contextualize my reading of the novel as an early voice in the debate about British bordering practices that brings a postcolonial perspective into Brexit discussions long before the referendum was announced.

Americanah is told from a third-person perspective. It frequently uses focalizers to yield insights into the thoughts and feelings of the characters, especially the two protagonists, Ifemelu and Obinze. Both grow up in late twentieth-century Lagos, and both seek to go abroad after finishing school in order to study elsewhere. Their families are not poor, but like many people in post-independence Nigeria, some members of their families struggle with the ideological and practical conditions

of life after the country's emergence from Civil War.[3] Ifemelu, the female protagonist, eventually goes to the United States on a student visa. Her experiences in the US bring to the fore the intersections of gender and race, especially when she is exploited by a male tennis coach who takes advantage of her material situation not long after her arrival. Later, she becomes a famous blogger in the US who engages critically with the intersections of race, class, and gender before eventually returning to Nigeria in her early thirties. Ifemelu becomes one of Nigeria's growing population of 'Americanahs', i.e., Nigerians who return to Nigeria after having lived in the US for some time. Obinze, the male protagonist, also applies for a student visa to the US, but it is repeatedly denied to him without any reasons that would explain the rejections. Obinze then goes to the UK on a tourist visa, which he outstays in the hope of finding a job in the UK. He is eventually deported from Great Britain back to Nigeria in a process that makes obvious the power dynamics between the UK and its former colonies.

By focusing on the lives of two Nigerians who are dependent on foreign visa permits to travel and live abroad, *Americanah* makes visible that borders of race, citizenship, and class continue to shape contemporary border regimes. Globalization processes have not made international boundaries liquid or flat. They have merely opened up certain borders for privileged parts of the world population whereas others, especially those from formerly colonized parts of the world, remain unable to participate in free global travel (Sandrock 2018). This contrasts directly with practices in the former British Empire, where British people went to Nigeria and other places without asking the permission of locals. Following the idea that borders are an epistemological phenomenon, some of the most prominent borders in *Americanah* are not geographical but legal and administrative boundaries as well as cultural and discursive ones. Borders dwell in the spaces of visa application forms, in work permit requests, in the exploitation of women and materially disadvantaged people, in attempts to gain citizenship and in racist encounters with people abroad. These processes shift an understanding of borders from geophysical sites to institutional and discursive processes. As Ifemelu reflects in the novel: "I just can't get up and go to Paris. I have a Nigerian passport. I need to apply for a visa, with bank statements and health insurance and all sorts of proof that I won't stay and become a burden to Europe" (Adichie 2013, 242). *Americanah* illustrates how legal and administrative processes are impenetrable for those without Western or Northern passports. The border concept underlying such impenetrable borders is deeply embedded in ideologies of national as well as economic privileges, as postcolonial critics have shown. Following Caroline Levine's argument that racism functions as an infrastructure in *Americanah* (Levine 2015), a similar argument can be made for bordering practices in the novel: they are an infrastructure that works smoothly for some while constantly reminding

others of the global hierarchies once created by Western colonialism. As one character in the novel remarks: "Many of the internationals understand the trauma of trying to get an American visa" (Adichie 2013, 173). One key accomplishment of the novel is to make the border infrastructures for non-Western parts of the world population visible for all readers, and to critically engage with the bordering practices that are built on Western and Northern epistemologies and ideologies.

As Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe suggest in their book *Border Aesthetics*, aesthetic configurations of borders help us to recognize and understand which borders are made visible and which ones are made invisible in society (Schimanski & Wolfe 2017). Drawing on Jacques Rancière's concept of political aesthetic, visibility and invisibility are posited as key categories in the study of border aesthetics. Visibility is a central concept for Rancière because it determines whether and how people participate in the social order:

> Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time. (Rancière 2004, 13)

For Rancière, the modes of participation are determined by implicit rules and conventions. Literary texts and the arts have a crucial function in society because they help us to reflect on what is visible and what is invisible, what is heard, what is seen, what is perceived. This is also how processes of inclusion and exclusion work. Aesthetic regimes of the "sensible" (Rancière 2004) determine what is made visible in society and what is made invisible, and the works by Adichie and Smith illustrate that these modes of visibility and invisibility also strongly determine British border aesthetics when viewed from a Black British and postcolonial perspective.

Obinze's story as an unregistered migrant in the UK engages with such practices of visibility and invisibility.[4] Obinze outstays his tourist visa in the UK and, despite his hopes, never receives a work permit. For three years, he works on someone else's identity card and lives in a constant state of invisibility. When he sees other people in London, he envies them their visibility: "His eyes would follow them, with a lost longing, and he would think: *You can work, you are legal, you are visible, and you don't even know how fortunate you are*" (Adichie 2013, 281). The passage reflects on Britain's borders from Obinze's perspective, from someone who wishes to enter the UK and live there but who is repeatedly denied a working permit or a visa. *Americanah* makes the border regimes in the UK visible, by emphasizing how unregistered migrants are usually made invisible. Obinze "lived in London [...] invisibly, his existence like an erased pencil sketch; each time he saw a policeman, or anyone in a uniform, anyone with the faintest scent of authority, he would fight the urge to run" (Adichie

2013, 318). The "erased pencil sketch" marks the active process of invisibilization: what used to be there is now erased (Sandrock 2018). Obinze is dwelling on the borders of the UK, even though physically, he is inside the country. His borders are not geographical; they are the borders of the modern nation-state, where being somewhere does not mean being part of it. The politics of invisibility shape this border regime for those living in the global North and West. For everyone else, borders remain strikingly visible and insurmountable in an allegedly globalized world.

Through the eyes of Obinze, *Americanah* reflects upon the historical reasons for this state of invisibility of unregistered migrants in the UK. The novel draws a connection between the history of the British Empire and the lingering of racial bordering regimes in the UK:

> The wind blowing across the British Isles was odorous with fear of asylum seekers, infecting everybody with the panic of impending doom, and so articles were written and read, simply and stridently, as though the writers lived in a world in which the present was unconnected to the past, and they had never considered this to be the normal course of history: the influx into Britain of black and brown people from countries created by Britain. Yet he understood. It had to be comforting, this denial of history. (Adichie 2013, 320–321)

Paul Gilroy has coined the term *Postcolonial Melancholia* for the rise of racism and xenophobia in the UK that is only possible because of a wilful act of ignoring or repressing Britain's colonial history (Gilroy 2004; see also Sandrock 2018). According to Gilroy, "[w]e need to be able to see how the presence of strangers, aliens, and blacks and the distinctive dynamics of Europe's imperial history have combined to shape its cultural and political habits and institutions" (Gilroy 2004, 142). This also means to acknowledge "[t]he immigrant is now here because Britain, Europe, was once out there; that basic fact of global history is not usually deniable" (Gilroy 2004, 100). *Americanah* helps to make this "basic fact of global history" visible to readers. Obinze turns into a figure of identification whose story brings out the paradoxes of European and Western border practices.

Obinze's story ends with his deportation. He is caught in the attempt to enter an arranged marriage and brought to a detention centre at Manchester Airport. Manchester Airport represents an ambiguous site in *Americanah*. An airport usually signals mobility and border-crossing. For Obinze, it marks immobility. The detention centre is not located at a geographical border, but it is a border site for Obinze: "There he was, in handcuffs, being led through the hall of Manchester Airport […]. In detention, he felt raw, skinned, the outer layers of himself stripped off" (Adichie 2013, 345; 347). The image of being stripped off his skin illustrates the attempted process of making him invisible. The skin is a permeable border and, with the "outer layers of himself stripped off", Obinze is made vulnerable to society. In Michel Foucault's terms, one could think of the detention centre as a non-space, a heterotopia—a space that contains people or things that are other or disturbing or unwanted (Foucault 1986). Yet, a border approach emphasizes the lack of agency associated with the detention centre in Obinze's case. He is not only made vulnerable; he is stripped of parts of his identity, made invisible in a system that would rather not deal with its border practices openly and silently deport unregistered migrants even though their countries might have a historical relationship to the UK that connects contemporary bordering processes to earlier practices of empire-building.

Zadie Smith, "Fences"

In her essay "Fences: A Brexit Diary", Zadie Smith offers a comment on Brexit immediately after the referendum in 2016.[5] The essay was first published two months after the Brexit referendum, in *New York Review* of Books, which attests to the global readership Smith is likely to have reached with her essay. The author is internationally known not only for her essays but also and especially for her novels, including *White Teeth* (2000), *On Beauty* (2005), and *NW* (2012). "Fences" is a non-fictional essay, but one that works with aesthetic means to negotiate border practices. The author uses the symbol of fences as a springboard from which to comment on these and other ruptures in the current UK (Sandrock 2019). Smith argues that Brexit was a symptom, not a cause of what she considers to be an intersectional phenomenon of building more wide-ranging boundaries:

> One useful consequence of Brexit is to finally and openly reveal a deep fracture in British society that has been thirty years in the making. The gaps between north and south, between the social classes, between Londoners and everyone else, between rich Londoners and poor Londoners, and between white and brown and black are real and need to be confronted by all of us, not only those who voted Leave. (Smith 2016)

Smith's argument prefigures what has become a truism of Brexit discussion: that the referendum made visible the divisions that had created ruptures in the UK for some time. As Kristian Shaw puts it: "Brexit did not divide the nation, it merely revealed the inherent divisions within society" (Shaw 2018, 16). Focusing mostly on the urban environment of London, "Fences" uses the divisions in the capital as a magnifying glass of both diversity and division within the UK. In the passage above, the divisions of "social class", "rich Londoners and poor Londoners" as well as "white and brown and black" almost outshine the division between "Remain" and "Leave" voters. For Smith, the real bordering practices lie elsewhere in British society, as her example of fences around schools illustrate.

One fence specifically becomes a border symbol: a fence that has been built around the local primary school in a North London district, which symbolizes for the narrator the epistemologies of bordering practices in the UK. Smith's autobiographical narrator opens the essay by describing how she moved back to London after some time abroad. One of the first things she noticed in London was the upsurge of fences around various buildings in her London neighbourhood, including the school:

> I noticed the fence. For this Victorian school, which, for a hundred years, has found cast-iron railings sufficient to mark its periphery, had now added what looked like tall bamboo slats between the bars, as well as six feet of plant life climbing these slats, blocking the view of the playground from the street and therefore of the children as they played. (Smith 2016)

The essay links this practice of building fences to a wider social and cultural process of rebordering in the UK (Sandrock 2019). Demarcating spaces, creating boundaries in order to regulate society and using safety and security as keywords to whitewash the normative practices behind border processes has become part of the twenty-first-century London cityscape.

Whereas Smith's earlier novel *White Teeth* was still hailing a politics of "cultural diversity", albeit not always an unproblematic one (Acquarone 2013, 133), Smith's reflections on London have become more sober over the decades. With regard to her 2012 novel *NW*, Shaw notes that "*NW* reflects a rise in transnational relations and the construction of a cultural model of cosmopolitan communication haunted by national identity and the difficulties of negotiating cultural diversity" (Shaw 2017, n.p.). In "Fences", this sense of being haunted by a British national past and a European history of imperialism and fascism is equally strongly noticeable and seems to dominate the local atmosphere. The London that is emerging behind the fences and material boundaries around schools, religious institutions and other places is presented as inward-looking, spatially limiting and insular:

> These days the Jewish school looks like Fort Knox. The Muslim school is not far behind it. Was our little local school also to become a place behind a fence, separated, private, paranoid, preoccupied with security, its face turned from the wider community? (Smith 2016)

Rebordering processes make manifest the larger tendencies of isolationism in the UK, which Smith's essay links to the Brexit vote: "Two days later the British voted for Brexit" (Smith 2016). Here as well as elsewhere, "Fences" links the drawing of close boundaries around material spaces to the political tendency towards isolation from the EU (Sandrock 2019). The tone of the essay is deliberately polemical, critical, and sometimes self-ironic. It is clear to Smith that the middle-classes, to

which she counts herself, are a key part of the problem when it comes to border-building, especially those borders that are meant to mark the divisions between races, class, and cultural heritage.

Smith connects the fence-building in London both to class and to the legacy of the British Empire. Similar to Adichie's novel, where Ifemelu experiences unacknowledged racism in the treatment of middle-class friends and employers, "Fences" criticizes the complacency of the middle-classes and their unwillingness to acknowledge the lack of diversity in their lives. Despite the city's highly diverse population, class and economic boundaries fulfil a gate-keeping function in the perpetuation of racial boundaries:

> For many people in London right now the supposedly multicultural and cross-class aspects of their lives are actually represented by their staff—nannies, cleaners—by the people who pour their coffees and drive their cabs, or else the handful of ubiquitous Nigerian princes you meet in the private schools. The painful truth is that fences are being raised everywhere in London. Around school districts, around neighborhoods, around lives. (Smith 2016)

The passage highlights the ambivalent practices of debordering and rebordering in the UK. The reference to "Nigerian princes" partly brings up the imperial legacy of the UK, but it also points to the intersections of economics and class, where money can partly transcend other markers of cultural division, such as race, but only for the top privileged parts of the world population.

Smith's essay underlines what Gurminder K. Bhambra has written about the Brexit referendum, namely that discussions of the vote are frequently informed by "methodological nationalism" and "methodological whiteness, that distorts the populations they see as constituting contemporary polities" (Bhambra 2017, 227). For Bhambra, "[i]t is only through an appropriate acknowledgement of the imperial and colonial histories that shape most current Western national polities that we will be able adequately to reckon with the long-standing injustices that increasingly bear down upon us" (Bhambra 2017, 227). "Fences" pursues a similar line of thought in its insistence that the racial, economic, cultural, and national borders that shape the UK and its former empire must be acknowledged and made visible. For Smith, the first step towards changing the culture of "Londoncentric solipsism" she criticizes is to uncover the structures and epistemologies that underly the fence-building practices in the UK (Smith 2016). For the author, those who "have been living behind a kind of veil, unable to see our own country for what it has become" need to face reality and see British society for what it is (Smith 2016): filled with gaps, boundaries, and ruptures that materialize, amongst other things, in physical and non-physical fences.

The narrator's own movements across borders narrated in her essay—transatlantic, between Northern Ireland and England, and inner-European—seeks to transgress these limits of a mono-hermeneutic border epistemology. In the end, the narrator finds herself in a space of not-knowing. "When everyone's building a fence", she asks, "isn't it a true fool who lives out in the open?" (Smith 2016). "Fences" here offers a question, a position of not-knowing as an alternative to a hermeneutics of 'knowing', which is what Mignolo aims for in his conceptualization of border thinking as an alternative to Western border epistemologies. There might be a reference to *King Lear* in Smith's question whether "a true fool" might be someone "who lives out in the open" (Smith 2016), where Lear's catharsis comes in a moment of 'living out in the open' and leaving behind one's secure boundaries and spaces. By asking questions, rather than giving answers, the essay embodies what Mignolo posits as an alternative to colonial epistemologies. Border thinking is not always about crossing material or geographical borders. It is also, and perhaps primarily, about the borders of thinking and knowing that we need to acknowledge before being able to change them.

Conclusion

Both "Fences" and *Americanah* critically engage with bordering practices in contemporary society. Reading the two texts together illustrates how important outsider or insider-outsider perspectives are for a critical negotiation of borders. Through the perspectives of travellers and migrants, the texts make visible both inner-European and global bordering practices that may be invisible to those who have long been familiar with a place and its regimes of inclusion and exclusion. In *Americanah*, Obinze comes to the UK for the first time and, after outstaying his tourist visa, experiences British bordering practices as an outsider. Similarly, Smith states in the beginning of her essay how she "noticed a change" in the border regimes of her "North West London" neighbourhood "after a long absence" (Smith 2016). Both texts use the outsider or insider-outsider perspective to raise diversity concerns and make visible the manifold borders that shape the lives of migrants and culturally diverse people in the UK today.

Comparing these two texts further illustrates that many of the border issues addressed in the works are not new to Brexit but that they have a long history in the imperial practices of the Western world and the former British Empire. The racism and exclusion Obinze and Ifemelu experience in *Americanah* is different from the situation Smith as a well-known author finds herself in. Yet, there are echoes of similar xenophobic encounters in "Fences" when the essays recounts how a lady on the street tells Smith's mother "and the half-dozen other people originally from other places" after the Brexit referendum: "Well, you'll all have to go home now!" (Smith 2016). By offering different perspectives and by enabling readers to see the world through someone else's eyes, literary works have the ability to challenge the dominant spatial epistemologies. Both texts open up an alternative hermeneutics of space, where multiple spatial epistemologies coexist in the critical engagement with different kinds of border regimes. This is the case, for instance, when Smith contemplates her own role as a writer, a mother, and a politically interested person who is perceived by others in a space demarcated by class, culture, ideology, and gender, or when Obinze and Ifemelu both return to Nigeria and are confronted with their own conflicted positions as members of the affluent Nigerpolitan Club. None of these positions turns out to be easy or ideal. Instead, what *Americanah* and "Fences" illustrate is that border practices are a constant process of negotiation and re-negotiation, both on an individual and a collective level. If we need an alternative hermeneutics of space, one that radically challenges the rise of new border regimes across Europe and the world, then it is up to every individual to engage with bordering practices in our daily lives. This is one thing Americanah and "Fences" illustrate.

Notes

1 This article is part of the Special Section: Border Renaissance, edited by Astrid M. Fellner, Eva Nossem, and Christian Wille, in *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 67–158.

2 For another discussion of Adichie's *Americanah*, on which this one is partly based, see Sandrock 2018.

3 The Biafran War (1967-1970) is treated extensively by Adichie in her book *Half A Yellow Sun* (2007), which tells the story of Biafra wanting to secede from Nigeria in the late 1960s.

4 For another discussion of Obinze's story, on which this one is based, see Sandrock 2018.

5 For another discussion of "Fences" on which this one is partly based, see Sandrock 2019.

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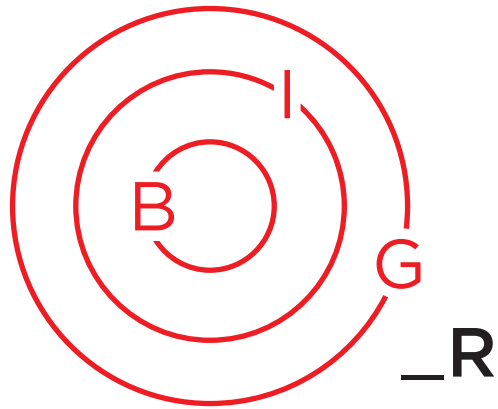
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About the Journal

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Borders in Globalization Review (*BIG_Review*) provides a forum for academic and creative explorations of borders in the 21st century. Our interest is advancing high-quality and original works in policy, social sciences, the humanities, and fine arts that explore various aspects of borders in an increasingly globalized world. *BIG_Review* publishes scholarship (academic articles, essays, research notes, book reviews, and film reviews) as well as artwork (photography, painting, poetry, short stories, and more). The journal is committed to peer review, public access, policy relevance, and cultural significance.

Our starting point is that borders offer metaphoric-conceptual tools for the study of differentiation and integration. This perspective mandates a wide range of artistic, theoretical, and empirical explorations of borders. The journal is especially interested in advancing the study of the borders of globalization. New research is documenting a shift in the logic of borders from spatial and territorial to functional and aterritorial. This means that borders are increasingly detached from territory, operating as mobile and relational nodes in increasingly complex regulatory frameworks. For example, border screening often happens far from the border, and goods and people are increasingly bordered 'on the go' with microtechnology and biometrics. Simultaneously, global processes challenge the territorial foundations of borders, including subnational and transnational pressures, the virtual flows of global finance and big data, the spread of infectious disease, and the effects of climate change.

The borders of globalization are being established in a variety of spaces—not just in borderlands. Like a shifting puzzle, their infrastructures and institutions interlock in kaleidoscopic geographies and modalities across world, though not always visibly. *BIG_Review* offers a platform to visibilize, problematize, and discuss how these borders are changing and how they affect all other borders, physically, of the mind, of social groups, and across cyberspace.

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Scholarly submissions should present original research relevent to borders in the 21st century. Submissions should engage with the interdisciplinary research literature on borders, including, for example, borderlands, borderscapes, and bordering processes. We are especially interested in studies that go beyond the 'land image' by exploring borders as non-contiguous, aterritorial, globalized, mobile, electronic, biometric, functional, etc. We are equally interested in border studies from Indigenous perspectives, along with questions of sustainability, climate change, global health, colonialism, and subnational and transnational identities. Research questions might include: What are contemporary challenges to borders, internally and externally? How are borders adapting? What challenges do borders pose for communities and for people in transit or seeking asylum? How are cultures shaped by borders, and vice-versa? How are technologies shaping borders? We encourage innovative theoretical work and explorations of borders widely construed, as well as empirical and quantitative research. We welcome scholarly submissions from all disciplines and backgrounds.

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