



ARTICLE
SPECIAL SECTION

Borders in Globalization Review
Volume 5, Issue 1 (Fall & Winter 2023/2024): 68–77
<https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421521>

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.

* **Astrid M. Fellner**, PhD, Chair of North American Literary and Cultural Studies, Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany. Email: fellner@mx.uni-saarland.de Website: amerikanistik.uni-saarland.de Twitter: [AstridFellner](https://twitter.com/AstridFellner)

** **Eva Nossem**, Dipl.-Üb, Scientific Coordinator of the UniGR-Center for Border Studies at Saarland University, Saarbrücken, Germany. Email: e.nossem@mx.uni-saarland.de Website: nossem.de Twitter: [EvaNossem](https://twitter.com/EvaNossem)

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 policies 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 renaissance* 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 Chicana 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 renaissance 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 renaissance 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 Dignolo 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", Dignolo 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 D. 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 issue want to express their thanks to Laurie Ross for her help with translating and Arwen McCaffrey for proofreading.

Works Cited

- Arnold, Matthew. 1868. "Anarchy & Authority [Culture & Anarchy]" *Cornhill Magazine* (June).
- Bembnista, Kamil. 2024. Un/Certain Borderlands: Multimodal Discourses of Border Renaissance in Polish and German Media" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 125-138. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421523>
- Brambilla, Chiara. 2015. "Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept" *Geopolitics* 20(1): 14-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2014.884561>
- Brambilla, Chiara, Jussi Laine, James W. Scott, and Gianluca Bocchi. 2015. *Borderscapes: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- Dell'Agnese, Elena, and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary. 2015. "Borderscapes: From Border Landscapes to Border Aesthetics" *Geopolitics* 20(1): 4-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2015.1014284>
- Elbel, Ondřej. 2024. "The Resurrection of Borders Inside of the Schengen Area and its Media Representations" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 101-112. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421522>
- Fellner, Astrid M. 2024 forthcoming. "Crisis Art: Activism and Gender in Pandemic Times" in Dorte Jagetic Andersen and Lola Aubry (eds.) *Silencing Crises / Making Crises Speak—The Production of Resilient Bodies in Times of Crisis*. Oxford: Berghan Books.
- Fellner, Astrid M. 2023. "The Border Turn in Literary Studies: Border Poetics and Figurations of Border Crossings" *Border Narratives Special Issue of Anglistik* 34(3): 19-34. <https://doi.org/10.33675/ANGL/2023/3/5>
- Fellner, Astrid M. (ed.). 2021. *Narratives of Border Crossings: Literary Approaches and Negotiations*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Fellner, Astrid M. 2018. "Another Map, Another Modernity: Living Borders and Peripheral Modernity in Guillermo Verdecchia's Fronteras Americanas" in Ilka Brasch and Ruth Mayer (eds.) *Modernities and Modernization in North America*. Heidelberg: Winter. 207-224.
- Fellner, Astrid M., and Hugo Burgos (eds.). 2021. "Desbordes / Undoing Borders: Hacia Nuevas Epistemologías Fronterizas" *Post(s) Special Issue 7*. [https://doi.org/10.18272/post\(s\).v7i7](https://doi.org/10.18272/post(s).v7i7)
- Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. 2001. "On Alternative Modernities" in Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (ed.) *Alternative Modernities*. Duke University Press. 1-23.
- González, John Morán. 2010. *Border Renaissance: The Texas Centennial and the Emergence of Mexican American Literature*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Johnson, David E., and Scott Michaelsen. 1997. "Border Secrets: An Introduction" in David E. Johnson and Scott Michaelsen (eds.) *Border Theory: The Limits of Cultural Politics*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. 1-39.
- Konrad, Victor. 2024. "Border Renaissance in a Time of Border Perplexity? The Question of Renaissance/Renascence in a Post-Globalization World" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 78-91. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421508>
- Konrad, Victor, and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary. 2023. *Border Culture: Theory, Imagination, Geopolitics*. New York: Routledge.
- Konrad, Victor. 2021. "New Directions at the Post-Globalization Border" *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 36(5): 713-726. <https://www.doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2021.1980733>
- Laine, Jussi. 2016. "The Multiscalar Production of Borders" *Geopolitics* 21(3): 465-482. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2016.1195132>
- Laine, Jussi. 2021. "Beyond Borders: Towards the Ethics of Unbounded Inclusiveness" *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 36(5): 745-764. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2021.1924073>
- Medeiros, Eduardo, Guillermo Ramírez, Martín, Ocskay, Gyula, and Jean Peyrony. 2021. "Covidfencing Effects on Cross-Border Deterritorialism: The Case of Europe" *European Planning Studies* 29(5): 962-982. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2020.1818185>
- Mignolo, Walter D. 2000. *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton University Press.
- Mogiani, Marco. 2024. "Bordering Democracies, Democratizing Borders" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 139-150. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421520>
- Mozolevska, Alina. 2024. "Bordering Inclusion and Exclusion in the Discourses of Marine Le Pen and Eric Zemmour" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 113-124. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421532>
- Ohmae, Kenichi. 1999 [1990]. *The Borderless World. Power and Strategy in the Interlinked Economy*. New York: Harper Business.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. 2023. "renaissance, n., sense 3.a" Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1195326275>
- Parker, Noel, and Nick Vaughan-Williams. 2012. "Critical Border Studies: Broadening and Deepening the 'Lines in the Sand' Agenda" *Geopolitics* 17(4): 727-733. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2012.706111>
- Pratt, Mary Louise. 2002. "Modernity and Periphery: Toward a Global and Relational Analysis" in Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi (ed.) *Beyond Dichotomies: Histories, Identities and the Challenges of Globalization*. State University of New York Press. 21-47.
- Ramamurthy, Priti. 2003. "Material Consumers, Fabricating Subjects: Perplexity, Global Connectivity Discourses, and Transnational Feminist Research" *Cultural Anthropology* 18(4): 524-550. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/can.2003.18.4.524>
- Redfield, Peter. 2005. "Doctors, Borders and Life in Crisis" *Cultural Anthropology* 20(3): 328-361. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.2005.20.3.328>

- Said, Edward W. 1993. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Sandrock, Kirsten. 2024. "Britain's Imperial Past and Contemporary Borders in Adichie's *Americanah* and Zadie Smith's 'Fences'" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 151-158. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421527>
- Sarlo, Beatriz. 1988. *Una modernidad periférica: Buenos Aires 1920 y 1930*. Nueva Visión.
- Schimanski, Johan, and Jopi Nyman (eds.). 2021. *Border Images, Border Narratives: The Political Aesthetics of Boundaries and Crossings*. Manchester: Manchester UP.
- Schimanski, Johan, and Stephen Wolfe (eds.). 2007. *Border Poetics De-limited*. Hannover: Werhahn.
- Schimanski, Johan, and Stephen Wolfe (eds.). 2017. *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections*. New York: Berghahn.
- Shaw, Kristian. 2018. "BrexLit" in Robert Eaglestone (ed.) *Brexit and Literature: Critical and Cultural Responses*. Routledge. 15-30.
- Vallet, Élisabeth. 2014. *Borders, Fences and Walls—State of Insecurity?* London and New York: Routledge.
- Vallet, Élisabeth. 2017. "Border Walls Are Ineffective, Costly and Fatal—But We Keep Building Them" *The Conversation* (July 4). <https://theconversation.com/border-walls-are-ineffective-costly-and-fatal-but-we-keep-building-them-80116>
- Weier, Sebastian, Astrid M. Fellner, Joachim Frenk, Daniel Kazmaier, Eva Michely, Christoph Vatter, Romana Weiershausen, and Christian Wille. 2018. "Bordertexturen als transdisziplinärer Ansatz zur Untersuchung von Grenzen. Ein Werkstattbericht" *Berliner Debatte Initial* 29(1): 73-83.
- Wille, Christian. 2024a "Border Complexities. Outlines and Perspectives of a Complexity Shift in Border Studies" in Christian Wille, Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, Frank Bretschneider, Sylvie Grimm-Hamen, and Hedwig Wagner (eds.) *Border Complexities and Logics of Dis/Order*. Baden-Baden: Nomos. 31-56. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783748922292-31>
- Wille, Christian. 2024b. "European Border Region Studies in Times of Borderization: Overview of the Problem and Perspectives" *Borders in Globalization Review* 5(1): 92-100. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr51202421528>
- Wille, Christian, Fellner, Astrid M., and Eva Nossem (eds.). Forthcoming. *Bordertexturen: A Complexity Approach to Cultural Border Studies*. Bielefeld: transcript.
- World Economic Forum (2023). *The Global Risks Report* 18th edition. https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risks_Report_2023.pdf
- Zaiotti, Ruben. 2011. *Cultures of Border Control: Schengen and the Evolution of European Frontiers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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.

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.



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

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.



Photo © UniGR-Center for Border Studies 2022