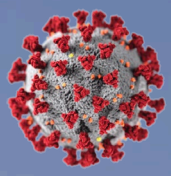
BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

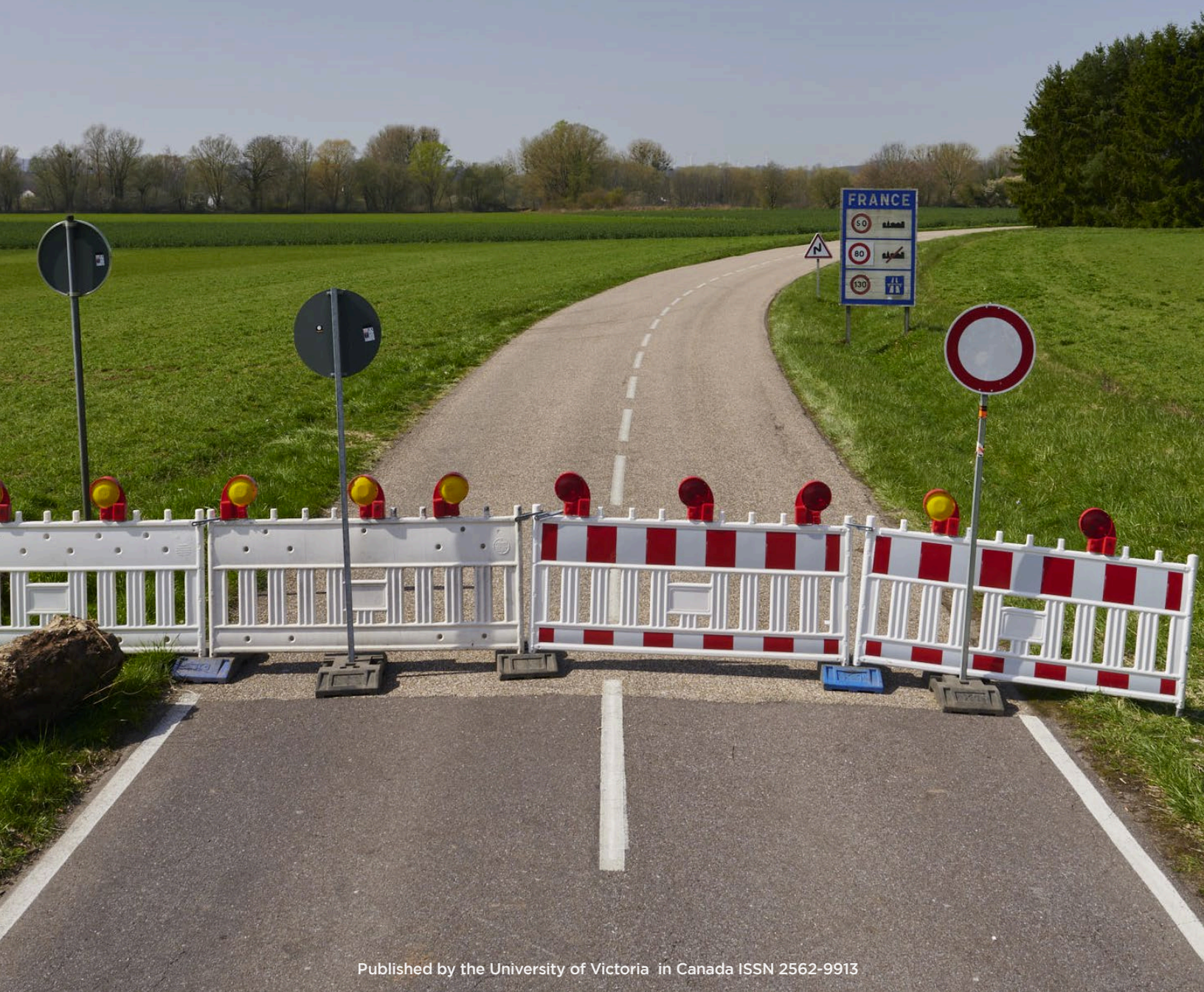
Volume 2, Issue 1
Fall / Winter 2020

Academic and artistic explorations of borders in the 21st century

Cover: "Closing Time" by Marco Kany (portfolio enclosed)



SPECIAL ISSUE: BORDERLANDS IN THE ERA OF COVID-19



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BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

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Borders in Globalization Review (*BIG_Review*) provides an open-access forum for academic and creative explorations of borders in the 21st century. Our interest is advancing high-quality original works in the social sciences, humanities, and fine arts, exploring various aspects of borders in an increasingly globalized world. The journal is committed to double-blind peer review, public access, policy relevance, and cultural significance. This is made possible by a dedicated team, past funding grants, and modest publication fees for academic research articles. See About the Journal and For Contributors (reproduced at the back of the issue). We welcome submissions from all disciplines and backgrounds, including artistic submissions.

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ROLLING CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Borders in Globalization Review invites **academic** and **artistic** works on borders

BIG_Review is a bi-annual, multidisciplinary, open-access, and peer-reviewed journal, providing a forum for **academic and artistic explorations of borders in the 21st century**. We publish scholarly work (academic articles, review essays, research notes, film reviews, and book reviews) as well as 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.

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BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

SPECIAL ISSUE: BORDERLANDS in the ERA of COVID-19

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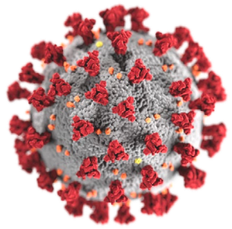

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Letter from the Editors

Dear Reader,

Early this year, 2020, when border-gates and airports started closing around the world, colleagues on the Editorial Board suggested that a focus on COVID-19 was timely, because so much suffering was evident in borderlands across the globe, and governments everywhere were implementing unprecedented restrictive measures. Artists and scholars from many parts of the world showed tremendous interest in documenting the border closures as they happened in their communities. This special issue focuses on the many ways governments implemented lockdowns nationally, regionally, and locally, and on the many ways local communities were impacted and responded.

Our lead research article by Adrian Delmas and David Goeury takes a big-picture approach. The authors challenge the notion that international borders were ever receding under globalization and argue that the near-synchronous and knee-jerk border closures around the world in the spring of 2020 rather exemplify continuity and accelerating processes of "bordering" everywhere. Delmas and Goeury strike a chord that resonates with fundamental assumptions of the BIG research program, namely that borders and globalization were never divergent or mutually incompatible. Most of the issue—more than a hundred pages—is made up of 23 essays by more than 30 borders scholars documenting experiences of more than 20 international boundaries across nearly all continents of the world. These timely case studies lay groundwork for better imagining borders in a post-COVID-19 world. The issue also includes three art features: a photo collection by Marco Kany, documenting dozens of strikingly lackadaisical closures between Germany, France, and Luxembourg; a short video documentary by Bertha Alicia Bermúdez Tapia and Mario Jímenez Díaz, highlighting the harsh realities of coronavirus lockdowns on residents of the U.S.–Mexico border; and a poem about bodies under lockdown by Natasha Sardzoska. Readers will also find a film review by Matthew Pflaumi, and two book reviews by *BIG_Review*'s chief editor, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly. There was more material we wanted to include that will be published in 2021.

The present issue marks our first anniversary and our third publication. We are grateful to the BIG team and all our contributors who mustered focus and dedication during these uncertain times to contribute to the production of this important publication. Thanks, are also due to Inba Kehoe and colleagues at the University of Victoria Libraries for hosting the journal online, and to the Centre for Global Studies for space and invaluable support. *BIG_Review* has been made possible by the Borders in Globalization research program, a Partnership Grant supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC #895-2012-1022) and by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (see Funding and Support).

Most of all, thank *you* for your interest, engagement, and support. Please share this journal with friends and colleagues, especially border specialists, residents of borderlands, and others with interests in borders—it's open access and free to share online.

This issue is dedicated to everyone impacted by the deadly virus and struggling under conditions of lockdown and closure.

Kind regards,

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly
Chief Editor

Michael J. Carpenter
Managing Editor

SPECIAL ISSUE

Borders in Globalization Review
Volume 2, Issue 1 (Fall/Winter 2020): 7-11
https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr21202019960

Introduction: Borderlands in the Era of COVID-19

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly [i]
Michael J. Carpenter [ii]

This introduction outlines the themes of the special issue (borders, borderlands, and border theory since the onset of COVID-19 lockdowns) and summarizes its contents (a research article, two dozen essays, plus photography and videography). The introduction also includes an interactive map hyperlinking the contents of the issue, and raises new lines of thought for border studies in the era of COVID-19.

Introduction

At time of publication (December 2020), more than 70 million people have been infected with the novel coronavirus worldwide, 1.6 million have died, and the global economy has contracted by about four percent. The virus is present in more than 200 countries and territories around the world, virtually all of them. In early December, there were more than 200,000 new infections daily in the United States alone, where because of the pandemic nearly 300,000 people have died since March 2020, making the U.S. one of the hardest hit countries in the world. Interestingly, the U.S. was also one of the first countries to close its borders (on March 20th) though the virus had already arrived. Since then, COVID-19 has spread particularly across poor, minority, urban sectors of the population. Recent news of expedited and promising vaccine trials are currently juxtaposed with surging and record levels of infections and deaths.

What is the role of border policy in confronting infectious disease? Can international boundaries contain pandemics? What are the impacts on local communities of using borders as blunt public-health instruments? What do COVID-19 border closures look like from *inside* borderlands? How have borderland communities responded? In what ways can border theory enhance both our understanding of and response to global pandemics?

This special issue of *Borders in Globalization Review* offers some preliminary responses and lays groundwork for developing research along these lines. The idea was conceived because, for many of our colleagues on the journal's editorial board, the pandemic and global response demanded a critical rethink of border theory. We think, for example, the lead research article by Goeury and Delmas exemplifies some of the new work that is required in the era of COVID-19. The article contends that the global pandemic has not challenged or confounded international boundaries but rather accelerated historical processes of 'bordering the world' (a general thesis shared by Borders in Globalization researchers—namely that globalization was never about diminished borders).

Moreover, with most of the action and urgency in borderlands, we decided to document the moment of closure by inviting well-positioned colleagues to contribute a short essay on their borderlands of residence and expertise. Each scholar was invited to

i **Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly**, PhD, Chief Editor of *BIG_Review,* Professor of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, Canada. Email: ebrunetj@uvic.ca Twitter: @ebrunetj

ii **Michael J. Carpenter**, PhD, Managing Editor of *BIG_Review*, postdoctoral fellow, at the Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, Canada. Email: carpentm@uvic.ca Twitter: @MJCarpenterPhD

Figure 1. Maps with hyperlinks to 25 COVID-19 borderland entries (23 essays and 2 art features)

Note: to return to these maps from any essay, click the red '**SPECIAL ISSUE**' link on the essay's title page (return links only function in whole-issue document).

contribute a couple thousand words on their respective cross-border regions, comparing conditions before and after the onset of the pandemic, considering how governments and communities responded, and assessing whether border policies were effective. The 23 essays produced here, written by more than 30 authors,[1] capture the experiences of borderlands under pandemic lockdown around the world, including locations in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Europe, and North, South, and Central America.

The essays are followed by three art features that disclose quite-different borderlands under lockdown. The first is Marco Kany's portfolio, a series of photographs of the closures of borders internal to the European Union in the region connecting France, Germany, and Luxembourg. The non-European viewer may be struck by the seeming minimalism of the European 'closures' (also pictured on the cover of this issue), certainly in contrast to other parts of the world. The second art piece on the theme of borderlands under COVID-19 lockdown is a video documentary by researcher Bertha Alicia Bermúdez Tapia and visual artist Mario Jímenez Díaz; it offers an empathetic view of resilient and creative lived experiences at the US–Mexico border. The third is a poem by *BIG_Review* poetry editor Natasha Sardzoska, written under lockdown; her work depicts the solitary human body as a kind of borderland.

That makes a total of 25 borderland-specific entries (not counting the poem) that are plotted and hyperlinked on the interactive maps in **Figure 1**.

Together, the findings are staggering. Each contribution demonstrates unprecedented border closures. Indeed, at the peak of the pandemic's second wave, 37 internal dyads (shared border segments) of the European Union were closed—inside the supposedly 'open' Schengen area of the European Union. Additionally, each essay demonstrates that closing international borders did not prevent the spread of COVID-19 as effectively as expected (or at all, according to some). Colleagues from all continents also illuminate the dramatic and nearly instant transformations of daily life. Surprisingly, despite the prominence ascribed to the border in the fight against COVID-19, most border-crossings examined in these essays had neither health professionals nor sanitary measures in place during the first weeks and sometimes months of lockdown. Overall, the papers demonstrate that policies addressing the pandemic vary greatly and their

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politics are contextual, regionalized, and nationalized. Readers will find more than 20 case studies detailing conditions in those many cross-border regions and as almost many discussions of the theoretical implications for border scholars and the policy implications for governments and communities. The issue shows that when travelers, tourists, migrants, and asylum seekers were barred more completely than ever before from crossing borders, the mobility of 'essential workers' and the transportation of goods simultaneously remained robust. There could be no starker reminder that borders are not just instruments of closure but also *filters* of mobilities and flows. Border theorists are encouraged to rise to the challenge of the moment and develop new concepts, enhance public understandings, and better inform governmental policy.

Of course, a pandemic is not easily handled by those government services that traditionally work with international borders. The pandemic has turned out to be no simple matter for any border agency, including customs and migration services, policing and military forces. Pandemics raise questions that are both complex and multi-system. This is why new thinking is required.

A virus spreading around the world connects every human being at once with the rest of the world together. From the perspective of individual human beings, a pandemic gives the world a *wholeness*. Suddenly all of us face a single virus, even though with much social, economic and generational inequity. This raises important questions about the role of international boundaries as possible limits of the pandemic, i.e. the important question of the role of international boundaries in *limiting the spread of the virus* by containing populations territorially, and also the question of the *limits of the environment and our ecological systems*.

Clearly, the novel coronavirus is little bothered by international boundary lines. In fact, it defines its own borders. The first boundary of the virus is the human body because it is inside the human body that the virus reproduces and multiplies like a Trojan Horse (Brunet-Jailly 2020a, 2020b). For the pandemic, the ultimate border is the whole world. The limits of our planet are the outer limits of the virus's reach; it cannot go beyond Earth's atmosphere. In between these two border scales are networks of human beings being progressively infected. While the virus finds it difficult to survive across more than two meters of air, it spreads freely between the individual human and the periphery of the planet, disregarding other borders.

COVID-19 confronts our understanding of what borders are from two extreme opposite positions: one is the 'human body' as a border, and second, at the other extremity of our world, is the periphery of the planet we live on. Our shields have been varied. In some ways, every individual human is a set of borders to be defended; in the pursuit of self-preservation in this biological state of nature, human sovereigns fortify their skin boundaries, tediously disinfecting contact points and raising barricades over portals of nose and mouth. At the national level, for most countries, respecting World Health Organisation's recommendations has required a broad consensus and commitment (and ability to manage) public health guidelines about individual distancing and wearing masks. As early as February 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) published documents on how to make tests, but also how pre-vaccination procedures could allow communities to 'wall-the-virus-out' of our bodies, as well as mechanisms to break the chain of reproduction of the virus, i.e. wash with soap and water, wear mask, protective gear, and, isolate from others, self-isolate and limit interactions outside one owns community (Brunet-Jailly 2020a).

Very early in the year, economists suggested that full community / city / region / country lockdowns would likely to be less costly than massive losses of life. Furthermore, full lockdowns were perceived as a blunt unsophisticated mechanism of control (Brunet-Jailly 2020b). However, in the end, many countries, maybe too many countries, used full lockdown.

Full lockdown is one of possibly three forms of virus control. In such a case the border may remain far from each communities' individual member—the border is around the area that is locked out of the rest of the world. Clearly, this does not prevent virus spreading within the lockdown area itself, and can lead to the development of dense clusters of infection. Indeed, in a full-lockdown the border is not the body itself, nor the room or habitation of each one of us but our own community, neighborhood, city, region or even country.

In a partial lockdown, public places are non-grata, but schools may remain open. The partial lockdown is in essence a public disciplining strategy unheard of in the modern history of states. In this model, testing may be used at the periphery of the country, region, city, neighborhood or community but not within each community or by each individual. As illustrated throughout this special issue of *BIG_Review*, partial and full lockdowns were widely used and in the end nearly four billion people submitted to some forms of lockdown, including for instance the whole of India and parts of China, and a number of states in the Americas and Europe.

A second and a bit more sophisticated mechanism includes the tracking down of community transmission, and imposing a quarantine of 14 days to all infected

persons. Once contact tracing is used there is a clear differentiation between infected and non-infected individuals, and processes of isolation are much more individualized. Similarly, those needing help are numbered and identified with or without symptoms. In this situation testing may be used more often than not.

What is remarkable for border scholars then, is realizing that the process of identifying a virus-positive-individual is actually similar to positioning a border—the boundary line is a positive polymerase-chain-reaction or PCR-test, because, it reveals the presence of the virus inside a host or body of a human being. The process is *individualizing* and requires more testing. The process also points to virus spreading across clusters and particularly to individuals spreading the virus with or without symptoms. Importantly, for border theorists *the border moves from the outer territory of a community towards the individual.* Individualizing the virus-host frees the community from virus, which is counter-intuitive, because we tend to think of bordering as large-scale and peripheral (South Korea, Taiwan, and most of China demonstrated the efficiency of individualizing virus borders).

The third and even more sophisticated method to eliminate the virus includes testing upfront, as well as contact tracing and quarantine/lockdown of each infected individual thanks to individual discipline as well as electronic surveillance. Surveillance helps isolate each infected individual from their communities and family surroundings. The onus is on the infected asymptomatic or virus shedding individuals, because, thanks to digital contact tracing and isolation, each infected body is *bordered-out* of the community.

In this border model, contrary to full lockdown, each infected individual is in a sort of house-arrest while the community may be free. Again what is notable here for border scholars is the displacement of the border, i.e. *the boundary line moves toward each infected body*. This model points remarkably to the individualization of responsibility but also to the individualizing mechanisms used to monitor both the reproduction and the spread of the virus i.e. contact tracing and the disciplining of the virus carriers thanks to electronic monitoring mechanisms, often a bracelet or a phone app, or both. In this situation, testing is the most important aspect of the policy but disciplining is the most obligating. The ethical implications may be vast and are beyond the scope of this publication, though they urgently require exploration.

Interestingly, the WHO has been arguing that testing was essential in all strategies to control virus spread. WHO Director General Adhanom Ghebreyesus repeated recently again that 'testing is the spotlight that shows where the virus is … but investments in testing must be matched by investment in isolation facilities, protecting health care workers, contact tracing and cluster investigation, and supported quarantines' (Adhanom Ghebreyesus 2020). Too many countries moved to lockdown without testing or monitoring. Too many have had disordered responses to the virus because of their own specific contexts and politics.

COVID-19 is a vivid reminder of the *cosmopolitan* condition of humans on earth; indeed, as suggested by Ulrich Beck (2014), and in a recent commentary by Michel Augier (2020) the coronavirus is a harsh reminder of the cosmopolitan condition of humanity. Because COVID-19 confronts us all in our relationships with the various vegetal, animal and terrestrial worlds suddenly our common cosmopolitan condition raises questions about our relative deficiency of political dimensions worldwide. The only multilateral organization that helped the world deal with the pandemic, the World Health Organization, was repeatedly undermined and attacked while trying to organize its members around a unified policy response to the pandemic.

In sum, not many experts and elected officials understood what the virus borders were and how to limit its spread in the absence of vaccination. All those countries shared the same challenge: holding the virus back and preventing its entry as a Trojan horse in their country's population. Other countries, such as Taiwan, South Korea, New Zealand on the contrary were much more effectively able to slow down and, in some cases, nearly eradicate the virus from their population without vaccination (New Zealand). Their health officials imposed policies sometimes perceived as extreme from the perspective of economic downturn and cost, or the psychological health of their populations.

The pages that follow offer borders scholars and policymakers a valuable trove of insights into dozens of borderlands around the world during the first weeks and months of coronavirus lockdowns, complete with specialist knowledge, local data, firsthand research, and critical observations. The project begs further synthesis and follow-ups in the months to come, as well as expansion to additional borderlands, including parts of the world untouched by this issue (namely East Asia and Oceania), and we hope to spearhead some of those efforts at *BIG_Review* in 2021 and beyond.

Note

1 The essay authors are: Juan Agulló, Pierre-Alexandre Beylier, Edward Boyle, Ana Marleny Bustamante, Francisco Javier Sánchez Chacón, Kimberly Collins, Michael Darroch, Adriana Dorfman, Willie A. Eselebor, David Goeury, Walid Habbas, Katy Hayward, Natalia Horobets, Edith Kauffer, Martin Klatt, Robert L. Nelson, David Newman, Lacin Idil Oztig, Iva Pires, Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman, Licio Caetano do Rego Monteiro, Leticia Parente Ribeiro, Lee Rodney, Tatiana Shaban, Buddhi N. Shrestha, Luís Paulo Batista da Silva, Regina Coeli Machado e Silva, Sanjiv Krishan Sood, Kathleen Staudt, Rebeca Steiman, Dhananjay Tripathi, Daniela Trucco, and Birte Wassenberg.

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ARTICLE
SPECIAL ISSUE

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Bordering the World in Response to Emerging Infectious Disease: The Case of SARS-CoV-2

Adrien Delmas [i]
David Goeury [ii]

Facing emerging zoonose SARS-CoV-2, states decided unilaterally to close borders to individuals and revealed deep processes at work 'bordering of the world'. Smart borders promoted by international organizations have allowed the filtering of indispensables (merchandise, data, capital and key workers) from dispensables (human beings) and, above all, the redefinition of the balance of biopolitical power between state and society. The observation of the unprecedented phenomenon of the activation and generalization of the global border machinery captures a common global dynamic. After a round-the-world tour of border closures between 21 January and 7 July 2020, we concentrate on a few emblematic cases: the Schengen zone, the USA–Canada and USA–Mexico borders, Brazil–Uruguay, Malaysia–Singapore and Morocco–Spain. We interrogate the justification and the strategies of border closure in a context of the global spread of an emerging epidemic, going beyond the simple medical argument. Choices appear to be dependent on ideological orientations henceforth dominant on the function and role of borders. We will discuss the acceleration of the bordering of the world, the forms of its outcome and its difficult reversibility.

Introduction

In a few weeks, the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, spread across the planet at an unprecedented speed, attesting to the sheer density of human relations around the globe.[1] If all viruses evoke the shared human condition in its most fundamental dimensions (Leroy-Ladurie 1978), this one immediately revealed the intensity of international movements and the multiplicity of social relations that they entail. In this paper, we do not wish to interrogate the ways in which the virus spread but rather the ways in which governments responded to the spread. Governments massively chose to lock down their populations and to close their national borders to individuals. Between 10 and 17 March 2020, increasingly drastic public policies of control were applied, followed by the suspension of mobilities altogether. This international unanimity poses questions. Indeed, in the face of emerging zoonoses (diseases or infections transmitted from animals to humans), which should henceforth be considered the principal global health threat (Jones et al 2008), international organizations, experts and many governments were defending, until recently, a completely different approach. 'One Health, One World, One Medicine' (Zinsstag et al 2011, 2015; Chien 2012) aimed to articulate the levels of intervention, whether local or global, without resorting to closing borders, because such measures were regarded as counterproductive (Colizza 2007; Nuzzo 2014; Chinazzi et al 2020). But the often unilateral decisions to close borders to individuals revealed another process at work, one very much older

i **Adrien Delmas**, PhD History, director of Centre Jacques Berque, CNRS USR 3136, Rabat, Morocco. adrien.delmas@cjb.ma
ii **David Goeury**, PhD Geography, Médiations. Sciences des lieux, sciences des liens. Sorbonne Université, Paris, France. david.goeury@gmail.com

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(Noll 1997) and much more powerful than the reasoned mobilization in the face of emerging zoonoses, namely, the new 'bordering of the world' (Mbembe 2018, 2020). The so-called smart borders promoted by international organizations (Pécoud 2010) have allowed for the filtering of indispensables (merchandise, data, capital and key workers) from dispensables (human beings) and, above all, for the redefinition of the balance of biopolitical power between state and society (Foucault 1975).

To begin with, we have tried to produce a close chronology of border closures worldwide between 21 January and 7 July 2020.[2] The observation of the unprecedented phenomenon of the activation and generalization of global border machinery captures a common global dynamic. If this analysis reveals very different situations, the fact remains that in the end the majority of states closed their borders. Only a minority maintained open borders throughout the pandemic (South Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Laos, Cambodia); others developed selective strategies (Brazil, United States, Japan, Switzerland, Slovenia, Sweden, Uruguay), sometimes border by border, or dyad by dyad (Brazil–Uruguay, Slovenia–Austria). We do not claim to be comprehensive but concentrate on a few case studies: the Schengen zone, the USA–Canada and USA–Mexico borders, Brazil–Uruguay, Malaysia–Singapore and Morocco–Spain.

Beyond the accumulation of particular cases, the task is to try to understand this global phenomenon at work since the start of the year. The bordering of the world flowing from the coronavirus pandemic cannot be reduced to the sum of particular closures, country by country. To the contrary, collective logics can be seen. States have simultaneously opted for methodological nationalism (Beck 2006), breaking with the principles of health cooperation on a global scale. Our hypothesis is that this posture has allowed governments to display their biopower by imposing a new sanitary governmentality (Foucault 1975). Far from mobilizing appropriate healthcare resources, they have given priority to security mechanisms for controlling mobility developed in the context of the fight against non-regulatory immigration (Mbembe 2020).

We will interrogate strategies of border closure in a context of the global spread of an emerging epidemic, going beyond the mere medical argument, inasmuch as the choices appear to be of a different order, that of political choices strongly dependent on ideological orientations henceforth dominant regarding the function and role of borders. Confronting the justifications given for the various border situations observed from January to July 2020,we first discuss the acceleration of the bordering of the world, then the forms of its outcome and finally its difficult reversibility.

The Health Argument as Biopower

From February 2020, with the confirmation of the presence of the virus in different parts of the world, states imposed the closure of national borders because of the acknowledged risk of the virus being imported by travellers. Indeed, air travel had allowed the virus to make territorial leaps, revealing an economic archipelago linking the Chinese province of Hubei to the rest of the world, before spreading by means of multiple mobilities. The question of the health efficacy of border closures cannot be addressed here. One thing is certain, however: despite the closures, few if any countries have been spared the presence of the virus. They have at best slowed the spread of the pandemic (Chinazzi et al 2020). During previous emerging epidemics, such as H5N1, this strategy was considered a posteriori as less effective (Colizza 2007). Moreover, the doctrine of the World Health Organization (WHO) was "vigilance, not bans" (Nuttall 2014) since the closure of borders was liable to generate negative effects on the wider health response without halting the epidemic (Nuzzo 2014). On the contrary, international collaboration, notably in the use of air transport to deploy prevention, detection, and monitoring measures across borders, was considered to be particularly effective (Colizza 2007).

On the other hand, the response of the first countries affected by the new coronavirus, China and South Korea, was organized around the erection of non-national barriers: infected people were placed in isolation; clusters, blocks, cities, provinces were locked down, etc. The reasoned articulation of multiple scales and the identification and targeting of clusters allowed the propagation of the virus to be controlled and its impact greatly reduced. While China mobilized later, South Korea was prepared for this type of risk, and never resorted to the closure of borders or generalized lockdown. Control of the pandemic in fact requires a targeted health policy, implemented early, with a rigorous system of monitoring.

On a global scale, health professionals tried to organize a collective medical response through research into treatments and vaccines. On the eve of the irruption of the pandemic, the WHO was promoting the "One Health, One World"[3] doctrine, which had gradually been established since the beginning of the century to confront emerging diseases, particularly zoonoses.[4] The WHO and its partners proposed an intensive international collaboration linking doctors, veterinarians and environmentalists to build a global response, negotiated with stakeholders, governments, agribusiness professionals, environmentalists, residents and local associations at all levels of interest, from the local to the global. In this context, outbreaks were to be the object of reasoned social distancing policies that would not hinder the health response nor international cooperation.

But, in the face of multiple centres of contamination, from March 2020 the majority of governments chose national withdrawal. The closure of borders seemed like a way of taking back control, of returning to the sources of the sovereign state. Even though no leader could deny having acted 'late', since no country was exempt from COVID-19 cases, many states rejoiced at having closed 'in time', before the wave created a catastrophe. The orchestration of a concerted common response, notably in relation to the WHO, was quickly abandoned in favour of unilateral initiatives. The president of the United States could then indict the response of the WHO before announcing that his country was quitting the organization.

The result was that the closing of borders transformed the pandemic into so many national epidemics, thus becoming a paradigmatic example of nationalist methodology, to use the terms of analysis of Ulrich Beck (2006). A residential logic was imposed: citizens present in a territory became accountable for the spread of the epidemic and for the maintenance of the care capacities of the medical system. Their respect (or not) for the barrier measures was punished through the discomfort of the lockdown. The dialectic between rulers and governed came to revolve around daily counts of figures that were immediately compared, even though they were not always commensurable, notably with those of neighbouring countries. Observers dissected the better and poorer countries around questionable indicators, while the modalities and means of detection of the epidemic varied from state to state.

In the absence of dialogue, governments arguing for reciprocity (Snidal 1985; Noll 1997) experienced the prisoner's dilemma. In the face of anxious public opinion, any head of government ran the risk of being considered lax or irresponsible in keeping borders open when other countries were closing theirs. These mimetic phenomena between states multiplied in a few days as the pandemic spread. States rediscovered their biopolitical mastery through the implementation of barrier measures; they defended their rationality in following scientific advice and dismissing emotional or religious approaches; and they favoured the suspension of rights through a great number of exceptional measures (Foucault 1975; Fassin 2005).

The overall risk, then, legitimised the affirmation of national authority in an atmosphere of relative unanimity, even as governments witnessed a process of the denationalisation of their border apparatus, faced with the flow of goods and, above all, information (Sassen 2006). The suspension of international mobility allowed many heads of government to mediatise their authority, usually for electoral ends (Margulies 2018; Waslin 2020). In a few days, borders as institutions of bilateral cooperation became the horizons of a discourse with military overtones (Foucher 1991). They were then transformed into fronts against the epidemic, against which heads of state 'declared war', concealing their lack of preparation and their lack of understanding of the epidemiological mechanisms at work. Overnight, borders once again became one of the privileged settings for the policies of central governments (Foucher 2016).

A Chronology of Suddenness

The sequence experienced from the end of January 2020 led to a series of accelerations that reinforced the principle of border closures. The development of the epidemic in China quickly alarmed the international community, starting with the countries on its borders. North Korea made the first move, on 21 January, by closing its border with China and banning all tourist travel on its soil. When China straightaway developed a targeted lockdown strategy from 23 January in the most affected districts of Hubei, neighbouring countries closed their land borders or, as in the case of Pakistan, did not open their high-altitude seasonal frontiers. In parallel, non-bordering countries began a policy of closing air routes, which represented so many potential points of entry for the virus. If certain countries simply asked national airlines to suspend their flights, closing their borders de facto (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Rwanda, France, Canada, among others), others favoured a frontal approach, for example the United States, which, on 2 February, forbade entry to travellers who had stayed in China. Finally, some countries took advantage by immediately enlarging the interdicts, for example Papua New Guinea, which from 28 January banned all travellers coming from Asian countries.[5]

From 20 February, the rapid propagation of the epidemic in Iran led to a second global attempt at placing a particular country in quarantine. Iran's role in terrestrial traffic from Afghanistan to Turkey pushed neighbouring governments to close crossing points. Likewise, the Iraqi government, otherwise closely tied to Teheran, eventually closed the border on 20 February. Travellers who had stayed in Iran were in turn gradually considered undesirable. Governments then decided on targeted ban policies or enforced quarantine, through the creation of lists of territories at risk.

A change of paradigm in the management of the health crisis took place from 24 February with the development of the epidemic in Italy. From this point, the epidemic was effectively considered global, which paradoxically again placed Europe at the heart of global mobility. The density of intra-European relations and the intensity of extra-European mobility generated a feeling of anxiety, prompted by the risk of submersion, and the concept of a 'wave' was constantly invoked. Some read the restrictions on circulation placed on Europeans as an inversion of the nature of planetary migration (Marmié 2020). Countries with low or weak incomes began to close their borders to individuals from higher-income countries. Lebanon, for example, drew up lists of undesirable nationalities, while Fiji set a threshold of 100 identified COVID-19 cases in the last country visited. The lists of exiled origins progressed inexorably: thus, on 9 March, Qatar and Saudi Arabia added many European countries to a list of forbidden origins that already included China, South Korea and Iran.

On 10 March there was a flurry of border closures. By closing their borders with Italy, Slovenia and Austria were the first countries to suspend free movement within the Schengen Area, the European zone of free movement encompassing 26 countries, that have officially abolished all passport and all other types of border control at their mutual borders. On 12 March, they were followed by countries of central Europe, in particular the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The two countries, which had been one until 1992, closed their common border for the first time on 13 March. The phenomenon was precipitated by the abrupt decision of the United States to bar entry to travellers from the Schengen zone from midnight on 13 March. In Africa and in America, relations with the European Union were soon suspended. For example, on 10 March, Morocco suspended maritime and air links with Italy. On 12 March, after talks between the Moroccan and Spanish kings, Morocco closed its borders with Spain, including the border posts in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and then with many European countries, such as France and Belgium, on 13 March, before generalizing this to all other countries on 15 March. Morocco completed this closure at Guerguerat, on its border with Mauretania, on 18 March when two Moroccan nationals were handed over by the authorities after transiting via Spain and the Canary Islands.

The interdict placed on travellers from the European Union was almost immediately widened to the entire world, as if the banishment of Europeans had precipitated the suspension of international flights. Between Friday 13 March and Friday 20 March more than 80 countries closed their borders to all foreign travellers. Air borders were the first to close, followed by land borders. The countries that escaped this logic were very much in the minority, for example Mexico, Nicaragua, Laos, Cambodia and South Korea. Among these, some were dependent on their neighbours, for example Laos and Cambodia, which again found themselves hostage to the restrictive policies of Vietnam and Thailand, respectively. There are also countries at war that were unable to close their borders, for example Libya, where arms and fighters continue circulate in order to feed the ongoing civil war.

Transfrontier Realities

Beyond the few governments who resisted the pressure to restrict mobility, the logics of daily movement seem to have become a rampart against total closures. Thus, and often contrary to the proclaimed discourse, many states maintained the cross-border circulation of workers. Within the Schengen zone, Slovenia, the first country to close its border with Italy, maintained its relations with Austria. The many crossing points remained open, some for 24 hours a day. The Slovenian government justified this by citing its dependence on the Vienna agglomeration, and especially its international airport, but also by advancing the case of the many farmers who have land on either side of the border. Even so, on 16 March, Switzerland guaranteed access to its territory to cross-border salaried employees, even though these largely came from northern Italy and the Grand Est region of France—the two regions of Europe most affected by the pandemic. At this time, the geometry of border controls was nevertheless variable, with some French and Italian commuters travelling by less frequented and less observed byways. Within the Schengen zone, Germany, Belgium, Norway, Finland and Spain thus continued to authorise 'essential travel', a category that comprised health professionals, patients being cared for in another country, cross-border employees considered as essential and drivers transporting goods. Borders were then more or less supervised and solidified with the means at hand. Norway mobilized reservists and retirees to control the many crossing points along its extensive borders with Sweden and Finland. In Scandinavia, health personnel have largely operated on both sides of borders due to the very low density of residents.

On the other side of the Atlantic, and despite the ramping-up of the US president's authoritarian discourse, an agreement on maintaining essential travel was reached with Canada on 18 March and with Mexico on 20 March. This was ratified in a joint declaration on 21 March. Travel deemed essential corresponds to European categories and includes schoolchildren and students registered in an educational establishment in another country. Nevertheless, based on official data from February and May 2020, the dynamics of the two North American borders are very different. In order to maintain supply chains, trucks continued to cross the border between Canada and the United States, with the number of crossings declining from 440,166 in February 2020 to 316,002 in April. On the other hand, the number of crossings by private vehicles fell by 95%, from 3.1 million in February to 150,734 in April. The situation on the Mexico–United States border shows more intensive professional traffic: the movement of freight by truck dropped by 20%, going from 520,000 to 402,000 crossings between February and April 2020. The number of private individuals crossing by vehicle went from 10.5 million to 3.6 million, or 35% of the normal flow, while crossings by foot dropped from 3.7 million to 916,000, or 25% of the normal flow (United States Department of Transport 2020). A strong proportion of essential journeys were accounted for by the significant number of Mexicans working in the agricultural and manufacturing sectors in the United States, whose need for labour was continuous during the pandemic.

Cross-border arrangements thus present many exceptions to the closure of borders for health reasons. The example of the Uruguay–Brazil border is equally remarkable. The two governments closed their external borders with Argentina from 17 March, but on 22 March renounced the closure of their common border, on the grounds that the inhabitants had developed 'a binational way of life'. The crossing of the Uruguay–Brazil border was thus forbidden only to non-resident foreigners. Some 1000 kilometres in length, the border is punctuated by six cross-border agglomerations, of which the two most important, Rivera (Uruguay) and Santana do Livramento (Brazil), are separated by a simple boulevard. There is no physical border apparatus dividing the two towns, and since 28 September 2016 a joint office of the Uruguayan and Brazilian administrations has been responsible for border arrangements. Residents are thus free to circulate within the agglomeration, as are the many tourists and day-trippers who visit the town on weekends and during holiday periods. On 25 May, with the propagation of the virus, the authorities decided to create a binational commission in order to coordinate actions between Brazilian neighbourhoods and Uruguayan neighbourhoods, and to generalize actions on either side of the border. On 12 June, a binational health intervention unit was thus set up to act throughout the agglomeration. The authorities and the residents have defended the singularity of this agglomeration, which embodies the principle of a peaceful border (Resende 2020c). Nevertheless, from 25 May, the Uruguayan authorities decided to increase the controls at the exit of Rivera, creating a closely guarded border outside the city and away from the international boundary line. Rivera was thus transformed into an enclave of 100,000 people within Uruguayan territory, controlled by military checkpoints (Resende 2020a). Finally, on 15 June, the Brazilian authorities implemented a curfew and banned non-essential activities, a decision that frustrated cooperation between the two administrative bodies. Uruguayan elected officials judged these measures excessive and inappropriate, while their Brazilian counterparts urged that they be extended to Rivera, especially in the many commercial spaces that make the city attractive (Resende 2020b).

However, the resilience of cross-border logics in the face of global border closures should not be overestimated. Unlike the preceding cases, in South East Asia, Malaysia's unilateral decision of 16 March to close its border from 18 March, in terms of the Movement Control Order, caught the city-state of Singapore by surprise. The Johor–Singapore Causeway carries more than 350,000 cross-border commuters per day, close to 300,000 of whom are residents of Malaysia who travel on a daily basis to work in Singapore. Businesses and the government of Singapore thus had to make accommodation arrangements for many tens of thousands of workers who were deemed essential. On 18 March the government made 10,000 beds available, while thousands of workers had to camp out for days before finding accommodation. But this decision, normally taken for 15 days, proved to be particularly difficult to resolve. In July, the two governments were negotiating the modalities to allow cross-border commuters to resume normal activity. In the meantime, many thousands of Malaysians have had to return to Malaysia due to increasingly difficult family constraints, renouncing all or part of their salaries. Any prospect of a return to cross-border life was shattered by the imposition of a 14-day quarantine before individuals were allowed to return home. On 6 July, 25,000 workers residing in Malaysia were still in Singapore. These were given priority during intergovernmental negotiations, to benefit from a privileged status of cross-border commuters medically tracked by the two governments. However, more than 250,000 Malaysians are also waiting to be able to resume their professional activity in Singapore, which they left several months ago.

These closures of variable intensity highlighted the state of bilateral cooperation, with certain closures proving much easier to achieve when there are pre-existing rivalries. Thus, Papua New Guinea closed its border with Indonesia from 28 January, even though the Indonesian archipelago was very weakly affected by the pandemic. This decision points to the tensions between the two governments over the Papuan secessionist movements active in western Papua, which have been a particular target of repression by the Indonesian authorities. Conversely, some governments have refused to close their land borders, for example Tanzania, so as to guarantee direct access to the sea for neighbouring states in Central Africa.

The Acceleration of the Bordering of the World

The brutal closure of global borders reminds us how the security systems of many states were prepared for the complete suspension of human traffic. As in many areas, the pandemic powerfully magnified the features of a world that is easier to diagnose now that it is suspended. In the past few years, the increase in international air travel has been accompanied by the implementation of more and more drastic filtering systems, particularly in the context of the fight against terrorism and clandestine immigration. These multiple stages of control, articulating computorized administrative systems for visas, and ever more intrusive systems of physical control, have made airport borders increasingly thick, dividing humanity into two categories: the mobile and those whose residence is imposed. At the same time, international land and sea routes have remained active, and have even reinvented themselves within the framework of so-called illegal mobility. But, here again, the obsession with control has fostered a border sprawl through the creation of multiple border stages,

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turning entire countries into places of surveillance and house arrest through continuous investment in security systems. The thickness of borders is measured by the height of walls and by the exploitation of geophysical obstacles—rivers, passes, deserts and oceans—where armed forces and border agencies are active, or, again, by the growing number of camps where undesirables are placed on hold for an indefinite period (Cuttitta 2015). Smart borders are linked to digital tracking and surveillance systems, coupled with an administrative apparatus whose labyrinthine steps are designed to forestall unauthorized passage. To describe this phenomenon, Achille Mbembe speaks of the "bordering of the world" and of the implementation of a "new worldwide security regime in which the right of foreign nationals to cross the frontiers of another country and to enter its territory becomes more and more bureaucratic and may be suspended or revoked at any moment and under any pretext" (Mbembe 2020, 153). While borders have never been so polymorphic (Sassen 2006), they are embodied in the contemporary passion for walls as territorial iconography (Gottmann 1952), which supports social representations of the perfect control of human movement. Since its establishment, the Schengen zone has been emblematic of this obsession with filtering, even if this involves the suspension of human rights, notably vis-à-vis refugees. Walls are imposed on external borders (Saddiki 2017) while national governments balk at all forms of multilateral coordination (Noll 1997).

With the onset of the pandemic, most governments had no difficulty in mobilizing border engineering and imagination, relying first on airlines to close their countries and suspend travel, then closing airports before blocking land borders. In so doing, for the millions of individuals on the move at the moment of closure the border system thus erected came to generalize the experience of irregular migrants. Travellers who were away for business or leisure suddenly found themselves unable to return to their homes. The richest governments organized return flights, although without the ability to assure most of their nationals a speedy repatriation. To make individuals wait, governments foregrounded the argument that their return to the place of residence would not fundamentally change their situation, since it would in any case be forbidden to leave one's domicile, as lockdown policies were widespread across the globe.

The fact remains that international displacement has become, virtually overnight, synonymous with repatriation, a particular terminology that links every individual to a precise territory. But the conditions and modalities of repatriation proved to be particularly confused. While great movements were organized within a few days of the announcement of the suspension of commercial flights, these possibilities wilted away over the following weeks, with many people banking on an eventual return to normality that became ever more distant and uncertain. Furthermore, repatriation posed the question of attachment to a national territory. Certain governments, such as that of France, proceeded according to criteria of nationality, excluding foreign residents; others, such as Belgium, Italy and Spain, privileged place of residence, thus allowing foreign nationals stranded in their country of origin to reach their domiciles, sometimes after many weeks of negotiation with local authorities over the criteria. Finally, the scope of the task sometimes seemed insurmountable for certain low-income countries. In the case of Morocco, consular authorities identified nearly 32,000 nationals stranded abroad. If the authorities managed to organize the repatriation of Moroccans stranded in Wuhan from 28 January, it took many months for the country to propose solutions to its other nationals, even for those grouped together in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla and merely requiring transport by bus. The first Moroccans were repatriated on Friday 15 May, more than two months after the closure of the border. Many dozens of young Moroccans, made desperate by the wait, were tempted to return their country by clandestine means, whether by swimming from the beach at Ceuta or by motorboat. Other nationals stranded across the globe had to wait until the end of June to benefit from return flights from Algeria, Europe and the Middle East.

For foreign workers whose contracts were ending or had been broken by the economic shutdown, successive extensions of closures have placed them in the category of persons to be repatriated. Hundreds of thousands of workers have progressively found themselves without income, with their only prospect a return to their country of origin. Faced with this situation, governments responded by extending visas, anticipating a resumption of commercial flights. The experience of the uncertainty of movement, hitherto the sad preserve of irregular migrants, spread to growing categories of mobile populations. This experience took the form of emergency accommodation and even camps. These were primarily hotel rooms and campsites, but also public buildings such as gymnasiums and schools that were made available to travellers. In Morocco, tourists and their vehicles have been grouped in campgrounds or car parks close to ports in the northern part of the country to wait for specially chartered ships. In the south, irregular sub-Saharan migrants have also been assembled in buildings made available, as at Laâyoune or Tarfaya, when their camps have not been moved and closed by barriers, as at Tiznit. In both cases, the Moroccan authorities ensured daily resupply due to the strict lockdown. These arrangements were put in place within a few days, attesting to the ability of the authorities to organize waiting structures before a possible travel authorisation. Most countries were well prepared to activate these border systems for the management of human beings, replicating models that have been circulating internationally for the past few years (Cuttitta 2015).

However, the rapid and generalized activation of border systems should not hide the fact that many states also maintain the geographical fiction of border control. France, for example, decreed the closure of its borders in French Guiana and Mayotte, though without the means to supervise them. More generally, clandestine migration has continued, even though it is increasingly visible and exposed. Thus, 23,118 migrants crossing from Mexico to the United States were detained in May 2020, though this was far from the record set in May the previous year, when 144,116 persons were detained (Miroff 2020). From May 2020, new tensions were generated by the resumption of clandestine crossings to Europe, which had fallen by more than 75% (Frontex 2020). Thus, on 17 June, scores of sub-Saharan and Moroccan migrants were stopped near Fuerteventura, in the Canary Islands, before testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 by the Spanish health service. At the same time, the Moroccan authorities launched screening campaigns in the Tarfaya and Laâyoune assembly centres, which had become clusters, affecting both the migrants and the personnel in charge of their resupply. In Laâyoune, many sub-Saharan migrants refused the screening for fear of being even more strictly observed and missing a window of opportunity to cross to Europe.

Reversibility

We have asked this locally activated global border apparatus to play a new health role, but it seems caught in a trap of its own making. Its very vocation—deciding who can move, where and under what conditions—got lost during the process, as the restrictions became absolute over a few days. The world has been plunged into a universal regime of house arrest, not so much through a health decision to confront an unknown disease as through the simple activation of multiple systems that pre-exist the disease. Closures were imposed in the absence of other available answers. Without consultation, the outcome was closing down the world. More than ever, borders have become a balance of power attesting to economic dependence, notably through the migration question, but also symbolically, in the principle of national sovereignty, through the figure of the foreigner. The political classes and public opinion have demonstrated a common adherence to a segmented vision of the world.

The activation of the border has led to its consecration. Systems have not only been activated but have also been reinforced and generalized. The observation of a barrier to movement is henceforth valid for everyone, and free circulation has become impossible, in fact as in law. At the global scale, only the repatriated, a new status of movement in a time of pandemic, are still allowed to go home, though within the limits of the financial means of the states they wish to reach. This generalized obstacle to movement has been valid for those who decided it, as well as for those who analysed it. This is indeed a central characteristic of the process underway: there is no longer an overall point of view; there is no exterior because no foreigner, no more thinking from the outside (Foucault 1966). Faced with the mobilization and growth of a governance of movement based on hindrance, the pure and simple abolition of the right to move around—of the right to be foreign, of the right to cross the borders of another country and to enter its territory—is no longer perceived as dystopian. The systems that monitor these rights, although laid bare, no longer seem controllable. In this sense, one can doubt the reversibility of these measures of closure.

We can interrogate the temporary nature of the border closures carried out in March 2020 on the basis of the observation that the new processes of the bordering of the world by thickening and hardening borders were already at work when the epidemic struck. Camps and fences have multiplied as new border control devices to stuck unwanted motilities. The SARS-CoV-2 response has just strengthened existing systems. A process already set in motion should not be expected to go into reverse at the moment of its acceleration, as if the acceleration was a condition of reversal? It is rather as if the process of bordering has crystallised. The international movement of goods, maintained at the very peak of the health crisis, has not only allowed the supply of populations but has also recalled that, contrary to what liberal theories defend, the global economic model functions according to the following axiom: goods circulate more and more independently of individuals. We have just demonstrated the superfluous nature of the movement of men and women as long as goods themselves can circulate. How many people are stuck at a border, unable to cross, when the tiniest parcel or other product crosses? If international passenger traffic fell by 98% between May 2019 and May 2020 (IATA 2020), world trade has only diminished by 27%, returning to the level it was at prior to the crisis of 2007. The global digital network has also demonstrated that it can largely make up for a generalized immobility, with an increase in traffic from the third week in March of between 20% and 40% according to national networks. There is no prospect of internet outages, at a time when everyone has come to tap into the network for one's work, one's data, one's leisure time and one's feelings. Humanity has never been locked down, that is, locked in a closed space; it has only been immobilized (Desjardins & Milhaud 2020). From here it is but a small step to think that data flows could replace migratory flows, as some already believe. The pandemic has quickly been made the ally of the followers of enmity between nations, the partisans of separate development and destiny (Mbembe 2015), and the projects of autarchy and demobility (Damon 2013).

The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, by the fact of its origin—linked to the live animal markets of Wuhan and the pangolin trade—seemed, as an emerging zoonosis, even to justify the concerted response defended by the WHO: One Health, One World, One Medicine. This failure is a clear indication of the priorities of governments since the early 2000s, specifically their reluctance to take collective action integrating all forms of life, and to ensure the quality of life of human beings in the face of epidemiological and environmental hazards. They prefer to impose an increasingly systematic disciplinary system to control bodies (Foucault 1975). Collective security is no longer ensured by collective mobilization but rather by the prohibition of mobilities considered to be unnecessary. These decisions, as sudden as they are arbitrary, place all individuals in the uncertain situation of the 'non-regular' (Mbembe 2020).

The contemporary political context led to the privileging of the logics of methodological nationalism, which have proved particularly dysfunctional, since the pandemic was slowed for only a few weeks. Many months later, governments are struggling to reopen their borders. Case-by-case negotiations lead nowhere, and many states only envisage a progressive return to normality sometime in 2021. What was suspended in a few days will require many years to re-establish. Whereas the virus reminds us of our common humanity, the reimposition of borders forbids us more than ever from thinking of the conditions of cosmopolitanism, of society as a long, unbroken living thread able to cope with hazards, emerging zoonoses, climate change and threats that could mortgage the future. This methodological nationalism was hailed as a return of the state, without taking into account the previous dysfunctions and the immoderate social and psychological costs that it imposes on populations. The border response elaborated from January 2020 has opened no new horizon, other than that of falling back on ever smaller local communities, forming so many localised heterotopias. More than ever, the social sciences must tackle the question of pandemics and emerging zoonoses, inasmuch as these are also the result of the policy choices of governments (Craddock & Hinchliffe 2014).

Notes

1 Phylodynamic analysis proposes a precise chronology of the spatial diffusion of the virus on the basis of its marginal genetic variations; see David Larousserie (2020).

2 See our 'Frontières' for a visualization of progressive border closures around the world: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv-OFB4WfBg. The data were extracted from government declarations regarding travel restrictions, the closure of land, sea and air borders and information distributed by embassies around the world. Working with Mehdi Benssid, we have produced a chronology that represents cartographically the closure of national borders between 20 January and 30 April 2020 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a phenomenon unheard of in its speed and scope.

3 "To effectively detect, respond to, and prevent outbreaks of zoonoses and food safety problems, epidemiological data and laboratory information should be shared across sectors. Government officials, researchers and workers across sectors at the local, national, regional and global levels should implement joint responses to health threats" (World Health Organization 2017).

4 One World, One Health homepage, http://www.oneworldonehealth.org/.

5 The first case was identified more than two months later, on 20 March, as an Australian national who had transited via Spain.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Tri-Border Area of Parana and COVID-19: A Tale of Two Bridges in the South American Hinterland

Juan Agulló *

During the COVID-19 lockdown, at night on the stretch of the Parana River that goes from the Ponte Internacional da Amizade (International Friendship Bridge) south to the geographic trifinium, where the river splits and three borders meet, the sound of outboard motors and gunfire has intensified. Seven-and-a-half miles (twelve kilometres) of border space separate Brazil from Paraguay in South America's hinterland. Since 1965, the main transversal gates of a long-shared border of 848 miles (1,364 kilometres) are located on both sides of the Amizade Bridge. In 2020, during the pandemic, work on a second bridge, started the previous year, was intensified. This essay focuses on the study of the border space between both infrastructures: the old and the new.

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...
— Charles Dickens, 1859

Introduction

The Tri-Border of Parana is a strategic area of about 900 miles squared (2,300 square kilometres) in the heart of South America, where three countries (Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina) and two rivers (the Parana and the Iguassu) meet. Its global reputation is often greater than real knowledge of their complexities. Little is known, in fact, about this border space characterized by many segmentations, mergers and stereotypes that blur its common characteristics and its developments.

This region was, until the COVID-19 pandemic, the second most visited tourist destination in Argentina and Brazil, due largely to the nearby wonder of Iguassu Falls (on the border between both cuntries). Close to there, one of the fluvial boundaries between Brazil and

* **Juan Agulló**, PhD in Sociology at the Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales de Paris (EHESS, France), lecturer at the Instituto Latino-Americano de Economía, Sociedade e Política (ILAESP, UNILA, Brazil).
Email: juan.agullo@unila.edu.br Twitter: @JAgulloF

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Paraguay houses the Itaipu Dam, second largest in the world. Nearby, Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, is an important commercial node in South America. The whole region is a transnational area little larger than New York City with two national parks and three international airports.

Its geopolitical importance goes beyond its strategic location. From here, for example, the energy needs of Paraguay and the southeast of Brazil are met. It is also where the South Atlantic Ocean connects with South America inland. The Guarani Aquifer, the third largest underground drinking water reserve in the world, flows through its subsoil. Finally, the entire area is surrounded by one of the most productive agribusiness regions of the planet, the so-called "United Republic of Soybeans" (Pengue 2017, 26-27).

It is interesting to consider that, in contrast to the current scenario, when Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, was founded in 1914 its population consisted of some military officers and their families, some loggers and a few producers of yerba mate.[1] Indeed all the area attracted close to a million people in just over a hundred years due to a carefully planned and consistent development strategy (Farias & Zamberlan 2013, 59). Its core was a territorial capitalization strategy inspired by the American New Deal (Sneddon 2015). This strategy enabled the enlargement of the Brazilian intensive agricultural area, the development of a sustainable source of energy, and geopolitical control over the South American heartland (Travassos 1947, 11).

One of the cornerstones of infrastructure was the BR-277 motorway, opened in 1969. This 455-mile (732-kilometre) route, which connects the ocean with the continental midland, was a key to gaining effective entry and control of the whole region. The icing on the project was the Amizade Bridge linking the two banks of the Parana River, and therefore Brazil with Paraguay, a few miles or a handful of kilometres from what, since 1984, has been the Itaipu Dam.

Photo 1. Amizade Bridge from the Brazilian bank of the Paraná River in front of 'Microcentro' of Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, late July 2020; closed to the transit of people. © the author.

All these interventions changed the borderscape and the evolution of the entire area allowing the construction of the dam, the extension of the motorway to Asunción, Paraguay's capital city 200 miles or 321 kilometres away, and the founding of Paraguay's border city Ciudad del Este in 1957 that has always based its dynamism on a tax dumping tolerated by Brazil. These structural transformations, although little studied, could be considered the matrix of modern Brazilian border policy.

Half a century later, when the 2020 pandemic broke out, the practical capacities of the Amizade Bridge were already insufficient but it remains a local symbol. Currently it is 1,811 feet (552 metres) long, 256 feet (78 metres) high and just 44 feet (13 metres) wide: two lanes for vehicles, including trucks, and two others for pedestrians. At each end is a border gate: since the 1990s, thanks to multilateral agreements within the framework of Mercosur (South America's regional integration organization), formal controls of cross-border movement have been relaxed.

Commercially it is a little different. There is a maximum daily fee for retail transit of goods per person (US$ 500). For wholesale goods the difference is remarkable: Brazil, for instance, processes them in a 'Dry Port' that is about two and a half miles (almost four kilometres) away from the river. Probably this explains why the fluvial border area close to Amizade Bridge has always been prone to smuggling activity. Not coincidentally it is estimated that, in the 11 miles (18 kilometres) between the Itaipu Dam at the north end and the trifinium at the south, there are more or less a hundred clandestine piers, especially active during the night.

COVID-19 Arrives

Our attention, between March and July 2020, focused on the seven-and-a-half mile (twelve kilometre) river stretch that runs from the Amizade Bridge (three-and-a-half miles, five-and-a-half kilometres, south of the Itaipu Dam) to the place where, in 2019, construction began for a second bridge between Brazil and Paraguay. This new site is close to the geographical trifinium where the Parana and Iguazu rivers connect, in a "T" shape. The Parana River strip that goes from this point to the old bridge (Amizade) further north, is one of the Tri-Border Area's most active and attractive spaces. Observing its development helped to understand what happened and what could happen after COVID-19.

The key events to understand the dynamic predated the arrival of the pandemic. The most important and discreet one was the foundation in late 2019 —in the closed outer perimeter of the Itaipu Dam, just five miles (eight kilometres) away from the old bridge— of a *Centro Integrado de Operações de Fronteira* (CIOF

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or, in English, Integrated Border Operations Center). It is the first Fusion Center installed in Brazil: through its 70 security cameras and thanks to artificial intelligence, the Brazilian State will have the ability to control, with a panoptic efficiency, all the border transit.

Certain indicators could suggest a political intention that goes beyond the officially argued security reasons for installing digital border control. Products from the Free Zones of Paraguay, for instance, that in previous years freely crossed the Amizade Bridge to Brazil were slowed down in 2020, due to a sudden tariff between 16 and 32 percent. Transborder commercial traffic never stopped during the pandemic. It supposes terrible omens for the *maquila* (local assembly factories) in Paraguay that until now had taken advantage and expanded, not only because of the low cost of labor, but of tax differential between the two neighboring countries.

The function of the new bridge seems, in fact, less designed to complement the needs of the old one, that before the pandemic had an annual transit of 100,000 people and 40,000 vehicles per day. This rather appears about guaranteeing multinational (including Brazilian) companies the best export performance of agricultural goods from South America's Heartland towards the South Atlantic Ocean. This is because the new bridge has been designed, in principle, for the exclusive transit of goods (agricultural and commercial), leaving the old one exclusively for the transit of people. It is also about the possibility of greater control by the Brazilian State over the transborder transit of people and retail goods.

Photo 2. New bridge works between Brazilian and Paraguayan banks of the Paraná River, seven-and-a-half miles (twelve kilometers) from the Amizade Bridge, May 2020; active lock-down in all the Tri-Border Area. © the author.

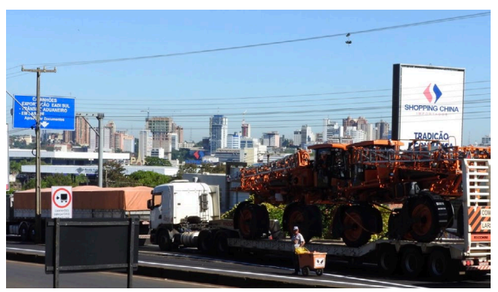

Photo 3. A line of trucks with agricultural machinery waiting to cross the Amizade Bridge into Paraguay, mid-May 2020; still open exclusively to the transit of goods. © the author.

The consequences of this subtle interventionist 'New Normal' that started to be deployed during the pandemic were devastating for an integrated and complementary territory, although politically and administratively 'non-existent', such as Tri-Border Area (De Souza & Gemelli 2011, 13).

In Ciudad del Este, for example, the borderscape changed suddenly: its vital tourist *Microcentro* (commercial area) became a ghost zone for months while the Parana River, in the midst of a severe drought, revealed in May rusty goods in its riverbed, dumped by smugglers over the years. During the lock-down period, the region became almost apocalyptic. In July 2020, some 30,000 jobs were lost or disrupted in the area, many with a direct and tragic link to the border closure: some 8,000 residents in Foz do Iguaçú were not able to return to work in Paraguay.

A lot of small companies went bankrupt on both sides; only the largest endured. In addition, some 7,000 people were trapped on the Brazilian side of the border, mainly Argentinian and Paraguayan citizens residing in nearby Brazilian States who lost their jobs and were not allowed to return to their respective countries. Many had to turn to charity and some ended up begging, like most local informal workers who, during the quarantine, were forced to stop their cross-border activities in the Amizade Bridge area.

In this framework, the capacity of local powers to act depended on the attitude of their national governments. Perhaps for this reason the health deployments were scarce and inconsistent. Moreover, paradiplomatic cooperation did not work: the first meeting between the mayors of the twin cities took place on July 27. As a consequence of this and of the combination of a strong local budget deficit and low national interest rates, municipal building licenses shot up prompting a little construction boom in the midst of the pandemic, paradoxically.

But this small boom was not enough to relaunch the economy. In Foz do Iguaçu, socio-political pressure led to a premature commercial opening that contributed to the degrading health situation (in July, the number of deaths by COVID-19 was slightly lower than that of the entire Paraguay). Frictions followed after the

Paraguayan border closure and smuggling grew and diversified. Thus, while lobbying for reopening the economy worked in business offices, clandestine piers along the river stretch, especially at night, fought to survive. Smuggling, the eternal last resort to the most vulnerable social sectors grew and diversified (Cardin 2012, 231). The noise of the outboard motors and the rattling of gunshots signified the struggling economy's most dramatic test and epilogue.

Conclusions

The pandemic in the Tri-Border Area of Parana shows that, far from being marked by exceptionalism, such spaces are clear exponents of prevailing ideas in political centers and of the tensions in global economy. The current dynamics on the Brazilian fluvial border with Paraguay are clear: for years there has been a subtle dispute between the Brazilian state and global markets for the control of commercial gains in the area. The implementation of the CIOF and the behavior detected during the quarantines seem to demonstrate that Brasilia was determined, before COVID-19, to redefine any form of pre-existing competitive integration (Becker 1991, 50) with the international value chains.

The 2020 health crisis has slowed down some of the political interventions aimed at promoting a new type of territorialization based on an introduction of technological inputs and on a new governance of state spaces. It seems that, rather than increasing tariff revenues in a period of fiscal deficit, what may have been happening was a conscious attempt to change some of the commercial practices that, historically, have characterized the entire border area.

Effectively, the immediate impact of all that has been both a reduction in the cost of local labor and an exponential increase of crime. This has served to feed back a popular security discourse that supports the rhetoric justifying an administrative 'modernization' of the entire Tri-Border Area which, considering its planning antecedents, could be a precursor of a different border management model. What happened in this stretch of Parana River during the pandemic could be, indeed, only an indicator of the global orientation of the Brazilian border policy: more filters and more control with an apparently justifiable public health basis.

Note

1 Yerba mate is a South American endemic plant. An infusion of its leaves —similar to tea— is widely consumed across the region.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

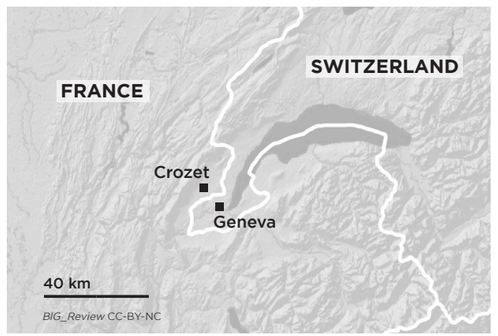
The Swiss–French Border Closure During COVID-19: A Cross-border Worker's View

Pierre-Alexandre Beylier *

This paper examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Swiss–French border in the Geneva region. This cross-border metropolitan area, which is structured by many cross-border flows, transcends the boundary line. The paper presents testimony of Clément Montcharmont, who works in Geneva and lives in France and was much impacted by the closing of the border.

Geneva, Center of a Cross-border Region

Defined as a "cross-border agglomeration" (Moullé 2002, 114), the Geneva region is one of the most integrated border regions in Europe. However, it was not until the 1970s that the City of Geneva and the French border regions around it started developing cross-border links (ibid). In recent years, the French–Swiss border has been crossed by hundreds of thousands of people annually. In the third quarter of 2019, there were 86,535 cross-border commuters.[1] Besides, the region is marked by some kind of "continuity of its urban fabric" (ibid 116) while also enjoying a cross-border institution—the "*Grand Genève*"—which is in charge of governance of the region. The most recent cooperative mechanism came in December 2019 with the inauguration of the Leman Express, a cross-border train that is part of a larger public transportation network aimed at encouraging links between France and Switzerland and transcending the border (Makim 2008). The Geneva region is therefore the site of both functional integration, which has to do with "socio-economic interactions", and institutional integration, which is linked with cooperation between the different actors (Sohn 2007, 3). The result is a degree of cohesion across the border (Schultz 2002, 52). Until the COVID-19 pandemic, the border was highly defunctionalized, almost invisible, and could be crossed in a few seconds. Indeed, most border facilities had been removed. Controls were only partial at the major crossings. Not a lot of border officers were present, and no documentation was needed to enter either country.[2] For some residents with transnational lives, crossing the border every day, it was as if there were no border at all, as a binational student recently told *Le Temps*: "I had never realized that I lived France until now" (Scuderi 2020). This paper presents the shift that the border underwent with reference to the experience of Clément Montcharmont who, living in France and working in Switzerland, was caught in the middle of this territorial lockdown.[3]



* **Pierre-Alexandre Beylier**, PhD in North American Studies, Université Grenoble Alpes/ILCEA4.
Contact: pierre-alexandre.beylier@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

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Lockdown Complicates Lives of Border Residents

The long-standing tradition of openness and cooperation abruptly came to an end with the 2020 pandemic that saw countries use their borders as tools to slow the spread of the disease. The territorial lockdown was at cross purposes with the ideal of freedom of circulation that the EU had built itself around through the Schengen Area of free movement between more than two dozen European countries. As a result of COVID-19, open, highly defunctionalized borders turned almost overnight into hardened borders. On March 18, all non-essential travel across the French–Swiss border was suspended. People could only enter Switzerland for professional reasons or in case of "absolute necessity" (Keystone-ATS 2020). Non-official ports of entry where customs building had been closed for many decades were barred with concrete barriers and metal fences. On top that, border agents were deployed at the nine official ports that remained open to ensure that people who crossed the border had proper documentation (ATS Keystone 2020). Every person was screened and required an "international derogatory authorization" in order to pass (MD 2020). At some crossings, such as the Thônex-Fossard port of entry, the closing of the border verged on militarization with the deployment of two Swiss soldiers wearing bulletproof vests and carrying assault rifles (Lecomte 2020). On the French side, it was revealed that 15,000 people were pushed back at the border during the three months of its closure (SC 2020). Given the tradition of friendship and cooperation that had prevailed between the two countries the change was unexpected and dramatic. It was the first time since World War 2 that the France–Switzerland border had been sealed (MD 2020).

The border did not reopen all at once. It was gradual. On May 11, when the lockdown loosened in France, France and Switzerland jointly decided to open up 17 border crossings in the Geneva region. Traffic was almost "back to normal": it was estimated that cross-border travel reached 90% of its pre-closure levels on that day (ATS Keystone 2020). Then, on June 15, it reopened entirely. Although people experienced free circulation again, the cross-border train, the Leman Express, reduced service until August 24 (MD 2020).

This shift was experienced firsthand by Clément Montcharmont, 27, who started working for and was missioned to the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) and *Radio Télévision Suisse* (RTS) during the lockdown. Living in Crozet, France, he crossed the border twelve times to go to work in Geneva during the French lockdown at the Saint Genis le Pouilly Port of Entry. He noted a shift in terms of border controls: every vehicle was stopped and every person had to present their work permit as well as an employer's document affirming the employment and location. If you did not comply, you were turned away. Since he and his colleagues were subcontractors for RTS and CERN, they were not cross-border commuters[4] *per se—frontaliers* as they put it in French—and they lacked a G work permit required by the Swiss government.[5] Therefore, this sometimes created some problems at the border on the part of some "zealous officers" who opted not to let them in. He also noted that border controls were the same in both directions. However, no health inspectors were deployed at this border crossing and no one ever took his temperature when crossing into Switzerland or back to France.

Although he only started working in the region on March 16, at the beginning of the territorial lockdown, Clément Montcharmont was already a "borderlander" (Martinez 1994) in that he grew up in Alsace, near Mulhouse, and, for his whole life, he only experienced the free circulation of people, crossing into Germany for vacation and recreation. The hardening of border controls thus made him feel "irritated (…) and not as free as before".[6] He argued that "you are hassled on your way to your work place (…) just to travel three kilometers", which created "a bit of frustration".

Since he was also missioned to CERN, which is a European cross-border organization that straddles the international line, he could circumvent the hassle of crossing the border by entering by the "French entry", given the fact that CERN had two entries, one for the employees of each country. This special configuration took on heightened significance under these circumstances, circumventing a national border apparatus that had been substantially hardened.

In Clément Montcharmont's experience, the impact of this new border apparatus was that even though fewer people were crossing, the lines at the border were longer and sometimes even "three kilometres long", especially at rush hours in the morning and in the evening. It could take as long as 20 minutes whereas usually it only took less than five minutes.

When the border "reopened" after May 11, when the French lockdown loosened, Montcharmont noted that controls were still very much present. It was only after June 15 that the situation was back to normal. But the spin effect was that when the border reopened completely, traffic jams increased. Indeed, although there were no longer any controls, the fact that more people were crossing into Switzerland entailed more border congestion: "paradoxically, now, it takes longer to cross the border".

Still, the reopening of the border allowed him to go to Geneva and to Lake Leman for recreation and not just for work. He also noted that Swiss people are now also coming back to France for shopping[7] or to go to apartments or houses they own. In other words, after a three-month closing of the border, which complicated the daily lives of border residents (Scuderi 2020), people on both sides retrieved their crossing habits and resumed their transnational lives. The border became less associated with fear and control and has assumed its open nature again, linked with different activities not just limited to work.

What happened at the French–Swiss border is a sign of the "rebordering"[8] phenomenon that has been emerging throughout the world in the last 30 years (Popescu 2012): as a response to terrorism, immigration and drug trafficking, governments have reinforced their borders with more controls as well as with the construction of walls and fences (Vallet 2014). The pandemic showed that Europe was not immune to this phenomenon. As the last decade has shown signs of a hardening of European borders especially in the context of the wave of terrorist attacks that flared up across Europe—especially in France in 2015-2016—and of the so-called migrant "crisis" that started in 2015 (Bartel, Delcroix, and Pape 2020; UNHCR 2020; Wassenberg 2020), this trend of chronic reinforcements of borders within the Schengen Area has persisted and expanded. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily put on hold the Schengen Area insofar as all countries closed their borders. Common wisdom has accepted that in times of crisis, protectionist and nationalist instincts prevail. Given the uniqueness of the situation, the EU gave in to such instincts, even if cooperation was still very much present in taking these closing decisions, thus eroding the ideal of open borders and free mobility—as elsewhere in the world. The questions that remain are the following: will the pandemic have a long-term impact on how we see (open) borders or will it reinforce in the long run the rebordering phenomenon and sound the death knell for the faltering Schengen Area?

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Notes

1 This number corresponds to the commuters living in France and working in the Geneva County. If Vaux County is added, which is a part of the Grand Genève, there are 32,206 additional commuters (https://www.pxweb.bfs.admin.ch/pxweb/fr/px-x-0302010000_104/px-x-0302010000_104/px-x-0302010000_104.px/table/tableViewLayout2/?rxid=d82d41ab-8197-419a-b85a-c0d6a5980987)

2 Even though Switzerland is not a part of the European Union, after entering the Free-Trade Area in 1972, it signed with the EU a series of Bilateral Agreements in 1999 and 2004, which granted the Helvetic Confederation a special status. It made Switzerland a part of the Schengen Area thus consecrating the principle of free mobility and defunctionalizing the border between the country and its neighbors. Other topics such as the opening up of the labor market (Bilateral Agreements I) as well as security cooperation and the streamlining of fiscal policies (Bilateral Agreements II) further formalized the Switzerland/EU relationship as integrative and cooperative (for more information see Radio Télévision Suisse (2017).

3 A friend of the paper's author, Clément Montcharmont was asked five open questions about his job, his crossing habits, the controls he had gone through while crossing the border and his perception of the changes that the border had experienced.

4 The workers are considered French citizens employed by a French company, who are missioned to work in Switzerland. It means that their wage is in Euros and they work under French law.

5 A G work permit is granted to European citizens living in the EU (most of the time in France, Germany, Austria and Italy) and working in Switzerland. This work permit is valid for five years and cross-border commuters are required to go back to their home country at least once a week.

6 The interview took place in French and the quotes were translated for the purpose of this article.

7 It is well known that Swiss people come to France to shop. But the border closure modified people's shopping habits. Since Swiss people could no longer cross the border, French retailers saw a "significant impact" on their businesses whereas Swiss retailers experienced a 30% increase since Swiss people had to shop in Switzerland (Rutz 2020).

8 Popescu defines the rebordering phenomenon as process that has seen the "qualitative and quantitative transformation of borders" in the last 20 years. In other words, borders have been experiencing a change in nature, through their securitization, and a multiplication in number (Popescu 2012, 3).

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

A Cordon Sanitaire at the India–Bangladesh Border

Edward Boyle [i]
Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman [ii]

This commentary considers the effects of COVID-19 on the borderland communities of Meghalaya, a hill state in Northeast India. Efforts to fence this border have failed to deter informal exchanges with Bangladeshi neighbours, but the national COVID-19 lockdown looks set to shift locals into relations of dependency on and within the nation's borders, rather than across them.

Introduction

Perched high in the treetops of the Indian village of Mawlynnong are platforms built from local bamboo, from which the verdant plains of Bangladesh are visible approximately three kilometres distant.[1] This village, like others nearby, is dotted with such treetop vantage points, popularly known as 'Bangladesh View Points', and frequented by droves of Indian tourists every year. The vista is simple: the canopy of the forest surrounding the village ends with India at the divide between hill and plain, while beyond lies Bangladesh. Here, ethnic and national identities have been determined and ascribed by geography. Now, political and epidemiological events are accentuating this geographical division, with COVID-19 cordoning populations off from one another.

Underlying Conditions

The India–Bangladesh border is a colonial carving that bisects the land lying between the respective provincial capitals of Shillong in India, and Sylhet in Bangladesh. Originally an administrative boundary demarcating a division between the hills of Meghalaya and plains of Sylhet, it transformed into a national border following the separation of Sylhet from Assam in 1947, as the former became part of East Pakistan and the latter India. Yet the geographical basis for this boundary did not prevent movement across it, which ensured that the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo peoples inhabiting the southern flanks of Meghalaya's hills remained far more closely connected to the people of the plains than to their brethren at higher altitudes,

i **Edward Boyle**, PhD, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Law, Kyushu University, Japan. Email: tedkboyle@gmail.com
Twitter: @BorderStudiesRM Website: borderthinking.com

ii **Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman**, PhD, Visiting Research Associate, Institute of Chinese Studies, Delhi, India.
Email: mirzalibra10@gmail.com Twitter: @mirzalibra10

BIG_Review journal homepage: https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/bigreview
Borders in Globalization homepage: https://biglobalization.org/

let alone distant Delhi. The presence of informal yet regular markets at various points along the border shows these connections persist into the present.

These informal markets demonstrate the restricted view the state has of its own edges. It officially banned this local "international" trade forty years previously, so in the eyes of those watching the border from Delhi, such regular cross-border exchanges do not exist. Official transit across this border necessitates copious paperwork earnestly recorded in authoritative documents that will ultimately ascend to form the nation's statistics collated in Delhi itself. Numerous agents, the Border Security Force (BSF), customs, and police, represent the state at formal border crossings and along the boundary (Boyle and Rahman 2018). On the ground, however, the situation is suppler; away from official crossings, locals engage in regular exchanges across the border with the full connivance of both the BSF and their Bangladeshi equivalents, who are rewarded for acceding to and securing the market.

This local bartering is supplemented by other trades which attract greater official attention from both BSF and state. Drugs, guns and counterfeit currency join bovine border-crossers in being shuffled across this boundary, which for many years also sheltered some of the many insurgent groups operating in India's Northeast. Nevertheless, the impetus for the ongoing construction of a fence along the full length of Meghalaya's border with Bangladesh, across 445 kilometres of frequently inhospitable terrain, stems from broader national narratives regarding the pervasiveness and dangers of illegal Bangladeshi migration effectively tapping into the fears of Meghalaya's resident tribal populations over migration into the state (Mcduie-Ra 2014).[2] The overlapping edges of the Meghalayan body politic and Indian territory are thus experienced as intensely "sensitive space" (Cons 2016), and currently 320 kilometres of this border has apparently been fenced in one form or another.[3]

The War sub-tribe of the Khasis reside in the foothills of the India–Bangladesh borderland where the authors conduct their fieldwork, and dominate Mawlynnong, a small village of about 120 households. Pestilence, or *khlam* in the local Khasi language, is not a novel experience here. Locals recollect an episode of *khlam* decades back, which necessitated removing all domesticated animals out of the village to a communal pen in the forest, located down towards the India–Bangladesh border. When a tarmac road finally connected this village to the main state highway in the mid-2000s, tourism flourished as Mawlynnong was branded the 'cleanest village in Asia'. The recent flow of visitors inspired by accounts of the neatness and cleanliness of the village were unwittingly responding to a community shaped by disease. The potential of epidemiology to shape space for broader social and economic forces is one that has re-emerged in recent months.

Symptomatic Treatment

India announced the implementation of a nationwide COVID-19 lockdown on March 24, 2020. The immediate, visible, and scrutinized effect of halting economic activity was to trigger an enormous internal migration, as some 100 million Indians sought to return from their places of work to their home villages (Baas 2020). In this borderland, however, the lockdown worked as intended. Villages along the border imposed their own fractal versions of national policy, severing communications with neighbouring villages and halting movement within their areas. This was implemented at the village level rather than through federal institutions, who have neither the authority nor infrastructure to enforce such a drastic curtailment of mobility in the area. Instead, the state government of Meghalaya relays the imposition of the lockdown to the Autonomous Governing Councils which co-ordinate local tribal administration within the state. These Councils communicate with the *Sordars*, traditional leaders representing a series of villages, who are then responsible for seeing its implementation in the villages under their jurisdiction, through village units locally known as *dorbarshnong*.

A COVID-triggered transformation of rural villages into literally 'gated' communities has been one visible in other countries (Liu and Bennet 2020). In the Meghalayan Hills, though, there has been no need for recourse to physical barriers to manage movement. Nor is "intimate surveillance" in the borderlands a technologically sophisticated operation: compliance is secured through direct social pressure rather than indirect social stigma or the "selfie governance" that results from the introduction of facial recognition systems to quarantine apps (Datta 2020). Despite the recent focus on India's "Smart" borders, the same direct imposition of controls applies here to any movement across the nation's boundaries. The BSF manning the border with Bangladesh received strict orders that the international boundary be immediately sealed, and the market handlers, who ensure the smooth operation of such mercantile spaces through negotiation with the BSF, had no choice but to comply with the government's demands for lockdown. Despite the Indian state's fixation on infrastructural and technological solutions to its "sensitive" boundaries, their management continues to involve the engagement of state representatives with local life (Sur 2019).

The borderland is a space where locals have drawn on resources from both sides of the border, out of sight of the state while under the gaze of its agents. This is reflected in attitudes to the border fencing project, which has been distinctly mixed in the areas we study due to traditional informal market relations with their counterparts in Sylhet as well as land ownership across the border. Closures of village and national borders have severe impacts on local livelihoods dependent upon tourism or selling produce at border markets. The situation is not entirely novel; past irritations and flare-ups have been cauterized by restricting movement, markets are often put on hold due to border incidents between the BSF and their Bangladeshi counterparts, while changes in border guards every three or four years necessitate fresh negotiations to reopen these market spaces of exchange. The state here is "enacted as much through the reproduction of uncertainty" (Reeves 2014) as enforcement. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has already seen these market spaces of exchange closed for several months.

For villagers, this has influenced their daily lives, particularly diet and seasonal food-preserving practices such as smoking fish, or fermenting betel nuts.[4] Normally sustained by the movement of vegetables and fish across the border, by June local distress had compelled the state of Meghalaya to announce the distribution of relief to these communities through the market town of Pynursla, 30 kilometres back from the border. Formerly a key node in a regional *transborder* economy (Boyle and Rahman 2019), turning this local market into a site for the distribution of state largesse accelerates the dependence of border villages on the government. In these straightened times, the channels of communication open to villages now travel in only one direction; away from the border. The closure of the border markets and of any other exchanges across the border during this Covid-19 pandemic will enable the state to push through the border-fencing project.

The policy of establishing official border 'haats' to replace traditional informal markets means that this may not sever cross-border exchange entirely (Boyle and Rahman 2018). In these formal institutions, however, local borderland communities are no longer active decision-makers in the functioning of these markets, which are instead manned by the state agencies such as the BSF and Indian Customs. It is not the presence of such figures in the borderlands which is new, but the institutions and structures within which they are embedded. The India–Bangladesh borderland in this part of Meghalaya is being transformed into a space devoted to repelling threats from across the border, rather than interacting across it.

Cordon Sanitaire

The cross-border connections that have sustained life in these regions for decades have been in abeyance since lockdown was announced at the end of March, halted through the combined efforts of the state and its agents and the determination of locals not to allow the spread of COVID-19 within their villages. This exercise on self-restraint has extended to the informal markets that have traditionally preserved the economic autonomy of these borderland areas against both provincial and national centres. Anxiety regarding the prospect of COVID-19 circulating freely on the other side of the border increases support for the fencing project, which in the circumstances becomes much easier to sell to the population.

The result of local concerns over the transmission of disease is their adoption of the state's blinkers: the border becomes a securitized line preventing the movement of people or goods across it (Ferdoush 2018). In a post-COVID-19 world, for spaces traditionally sustained through exchange across the border, the dependency of these villages on the state will severely limit the potential borderland communities have for negotiating with it. A cordon is created by viewing the world through the lens of the pandemic; this congruence of state and local visions may be effective at responding to the obvious threat, but at the cost of narrowing political possibilities in its aftermath.

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Notes

1 The authors of this piece have made regular visits to this particular village for five years, as part of a decades-long engagement with this borderland region by one of them. Methodologically, the piece uses interviews and news reports to build upon the extensive ethnographic observation conducted prior to lockdown.

2 In March earlier this year, the death of a Khasi man in a clash with non-tribal villagers down near the Bangladesh border led to the stabbing of non-Tribal residents in the provincial capital of Shillong. See https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/citizenship-amendment-act-caa-meghalaya-violence-simply-put-6301430/

3 See: https://shillongtoday.com/certain-pockets-of-indo-bangla-border-in-meghalaya-fence-from-zero-line-sangma/

4 While the Khasi community prefers to smoke its fish, Bengali communities dry theirs in the sun. On the other hand, Bangladeshi villagers on the other side of the border buy raw betel nuts from Meghalaya and dry them to make 'supari', while the Khasis ferment raw betel nuts over a couple of months at least, to accentuate their intoxicating properties . All of this smoking and drying and fermenting happens during the summer months, and has been disrupted by lockdown. Neither fish nor betel nuts are coming across the border this year.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

Venezuela–Colombia Border: Epicenter of Hemisphere's Largest Migratory Crisis during COVID-19

Ana Marleny Bustamante [i]
Francisco Javier Sánchez Chacón [ii]

COVID-19's pandemic declaration worsened the Táchira–Norte de Santander border as the epicenter of the second largest forced migratory crisis in the world due to the Complex Humanitarian Emergency in Venezuela. COVID-19 changed the direction of the flow from emigration to returned migration, at a border that had already moved from open to semi-open, and since the pandemic, became closed to all formal movements.

Introduction

The Táchira–North of Santander border (TNS) of about 140 kilometres has four of the seven formal border crossings in the approximately 2160 kilometres of common borderline between Colombia and Venezuela. The two countries have had strong relations, and TNS was the most important and transited terrestrial hub, especially with the Andean Community membership until 2011, when Venezuela formally withdrew. TNS was the main terrestrial port for goods and people, because the Pan American Highway and the Andean Road System crosses its territory. Prior to 2011, relations between the two countries were stable, and a significant exchange and flow of all goods, services and people occurred, to the point that it was called by some "an integrated borderland region" (Bustamante et al. 2016, 274).

TNS has witnessed different migration flows. Up to 2002, Venezuela was a recipient of migrants primarily from Colombia, but also from other South American countries. Since then, it slowly became a migrant ejector: until 2015, emigrants consisted of upper and middle-class citizens, either because they were politically persecuted or because they found that the deterioration of political and economic conditions affected their welfare. They frequently left the country through international airports, and rarely traversed TNS. From 2015 up to February 2019, relations between Colombia and Venezuela became hectic, and progressively shifted until

i **Ana Marleny Bustamante,** PhD, Senior Researcher and Professor, Center for Border and Integration Studies (CEFI), Universidad de los Andes (ULA), Venezuela. Email: apernia@ula.ve ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3914-7088
ii **Francisco Javier Sánchez Chacón,** MA, Associate Researcher and Professor, Center for Border and Integration Studies (CEFI), Universidad de los Andes (ULA), Venezuela. Email: francs@ula.ve ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9755-2095

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Venezuela tightened and finally closed the border crossing to all goods and services. Nicolás Maduro—whose Presidency is not recognized by Venezuelan opposition leaders and a third of the international community since January 2019—decided to break relations with Colombia, declaring that Colombia was attempting to overthrow him. However, despite political upheaval, 2015 represents the milestone when Venezuelans began to cross the border with migratory purposes and Venezuela became a migrant ejector. In 2017 there was a sudden increase of emigrants and also concern of South American countries, especially Colombia. That year, political harassment and imprisonment of dissenters multiplied (Rodríguez and Ramos 2019). Emigration increased up to March 12, 2020, when the border was 'cordoned off' due to the COVID-19 pandemic declaration in Venezuela (El Mundo 2020). Colombia did the same on March 14 (Migración Colombia 2020a). Since then, TNS has a new and increasing form of migration: returning Venezuelan migrants.[1]

The Border Before COVID-19

Between 2015 and 2020, TNS inhabitants suffered a severe decline in living conditions. Various factors were in force: the armed conflict and the implementation of the FARC agreement in Colombia (Rodríguez and Ramos 2019); the reduction to near closure of the flow of goods and services between Colombia and Venezuela; the ever-increasing number of Venezuelan migrants who arrived with the intent to migrate and then remained; the worsening of basic services, hyperinflation, and several economic and social crises in Venezuela. Moreover, added to these factors, was the long-term political crisis in Venezuela, aggravated by the contested legitimacy of the Maduro regime from January 2019. The conflation of these dimensions has been officially called a Complex Humanitarian Emergency (CHE)[2] (Asamblea Nacional 2019; UCAB 2020).

There are no official statistics of Venezuelan emigration nor of precisely how many have crossed by TNS, because Venezuela does not publish them and Colombia does not effectively collect them. Nonetheless, international agencies, e.g. the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have provided an approximate number that has helped orient public policies in Colombia and other receiving nations. They have estimated that 4.5 million Venezuelans fled the country through December 2019 (ACNUR 2020, 3), i.e. 14.36% of the Venezuelan population. Of these, 90%—4.2 million—crossed the border with Colombia (Universidad del Rosario and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung 2019, 11). The estimation of those who crossed the border in TNS is about 75% or 3.1 million.[3]

The migration flow was so unusual and unpredictable that no authorities or facilities were sufficient to organize and prevent chaos at the border. International organizations helped manage the exceedingly high flow of emigrants; some of them are United Nations agencies such as the IOM and the UNHCR, as well as Doctors Without Borders, the Argentinian White Helmets, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Jesuit Refugee Service. Venezuela's government tried to distract attention from the worsening CHE and the causes for migration, using expressions such as "asymmetrical war" from Colombia—"a puppy of the USA", Maduro said—whose government is supposedly involved in a *coup d'etat* against Venezuela. The Colombian side of the border suffered negative impacts of the CHE and of migration. For example, unemployment in the metropolitan area of Cúcuta, capital city of North of Santander, has increased to 18.1% in February 2020 (from 17.7% in February 2019), the third largest in Colombia, whose unemployment rate is 12.2% for the same month / year (Gaceta Regional, March 29, 2019; La República, March 31, 2020). The migratory trend seemed unstoppable heading into 2020 as different national and international organizations forecast the possibility of 6.4 million Venezuelan migrants leaving the country by the end of the year (Stein 2019), a forecast that the COVID-19 pandemic brought to a standstill.

There were, nevertheless, positive effects of Venezuelan migration to Colombia, especially those in the TNS border region that prevented higher unemployment rates. Some economic sectors have become dynamic. For instance, the service sector in areas such as transportation (flight and road trips), retail sales, university teachers, real estate, international calls, the reception and exchange of remittances from Venezuelan migrants worldwide because Venezuela has an exchange rate control and the currency value is lower than the black market rate. Even more, some of the benefits with long-range perspective are the labor market, a demographic bonus, capital investment and co-development (Banco Mundial 2018).

The Arrival of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had a particularly dramatic effect on life in TNS. On March 12, Venezuela issued a State of National Alarm Declaration (the legitimacy of which was contested by some law professors and Constitutional Law Chairs) and since March 16, applied a quarantine at the border with Colombia. In the border municipalities of Táchira, the government accompanied it with curfew and closure of border passages and gates. Movement between municipalities was indiscriminately restricted, only somewhat alleviated during the day, and only for people who transport food, have production farms or facilities, or work in health services. In addition, petrol shortages and precarious public services decrease

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movements. In North of Santander there are restrictions to movement of people and vehicles according to specific schedules and sometimes curfews. Nevertheless, the number of COVID-19 cases continued to increase (Table 1).

On March 12, Venezuelan migrants had to stay wherever they were. Some were travelling to TNS; some were caught at the border zone. Others had recently arrived or were arriving at their intended destination but had not settled down. They suffered tthe most from the COVID-19 pandemic declaration. They are also the most vulnerable together with the inhabitants of TNS, because it has become a paralyzed and overcrowded place (Figure 1).

The deteriorating conditions and restrictions everywhere forced the most vulnerable Venezuelan migrants in Colombia or other South American countries to attempt to return. Many intended to return through TNS, although sometimes authorities diverted them to the Zulia or Apure border crossings in order to avoid overcrowding in TNS. This time both countries stopped most official crossings. Without any formal option to move further, those who were already on the Venezuelan side and wanted to emigrate formally, and those who wanted to cross illegally and could still do it, stayed in TNS border area. However, illegal border crossing became the primary, and sometimes only, option of movement between the two countries and within TNS border towns if they wanted to return. Formal pendular migration[4] ceased.

After a month, migrants who were caught on the road decided to return to the border by their own means but faced further restrictions. Then the governments attended to their return, sometimes in special caravans organized by different local or national authorities as well as by the migrants themselves in Colombia. The handling of the situation by the Maduro regime has given way to the so-called "Doctrina Táchira". This doctrine refers to a refinement of the different strategies used to restrict entry to returning migrants by establishing a limited and always-changing system of days and quotas,[5] but also to limit the distribution of petrol.

Táchira*	North of Santander	Dif.	Venezuela*	Colombia
1,046** 1,120***	1,388	342 268	14,263	233,541

Table 1. Covid-19 cases in TNS region, Venezuela & Colombia, 24 July 2020. Data sources: *La Opinión*: https://bit.ly/30QGtYt, *Diario La Nación*: https://bit.ly/3jMXsUf, *Patria Blog*: https://bit.ly/2Eki3yS, *Efecto Cocuyo*: https://bit.ly/3lXx0HG.

* Figures provided by Maduro government, accepted by Pan-American Health Organization.

** 148 community cases, 898 estimated at government shelters.

*** Figures from the Ministry of Health differ from those provided by the Presidency Commission of COVID-19.

At first, governments put in place migratory and health protocols,[6] but as the number of migrants increased, it became evident that in Venezuela there were not enough facilities to host them until they were given clearance to return to their homes. As a result, many returning migrants stayed on the Colombian side, unless they illegally crossed. By July 19, there were 2,500 migrants wandering, waiting and hoping to return home (La Prensa Táchira, July 19, 2020). Colombia provided some lodging (La Opinión, July 18, 2020), while Venezuela denied the Human Right of Entry to their home country. Disparities regarding statistics resurfaced. The Colombian Migration Agency has indicated that since March 14 to July 22, 90,000 Venezuelans have legally returned home, 76% of these through TNS (Migra Venezuela 2020) while the Maduro regime in Táchira estimates that by July 21, 45,391 have done so (El Venezolano Colombia 2020).

Another means of distracting attention from the Maduro regime's mishandling of the returning migrants is stigmatization. They are called 'fascists and camouflaged *coup* plotters', 'infected', 'biological weapons', 'bioterrorist' and '*trocheros*' (when they cross the border by informal crossroads named '*trochas*') (CDH 2020, 1-2). COVID-19 is called the "Colombian Virus", emulating Trump with the "Chinese Virus". Despite the formal disruption and friction between governments, meetings at different levels—national, regional and local—have addressed current topics, by means of the Pan-American Health Organization, to implement certain protocols with migrants (Muñoz 2020).

Figure 1. Migrants at the Border, May 2020. *Top*: migrants in *cambuches* waiting to cross to Venezuela in North of Santander. *Bottom*: a line of returning Venezuelan migrants near the TNS border. Photos: Rosalinda Hernández.

In the economic sector, the formal flow of goods gave way to astounding growth of smuggling since the pandemic, to the point that Colombian food and medicine are openly sold on the streets and from door to door and even in formal businesses in Táchira. In San Antonio, an estimated 500 people are dedicated to this activity (La Prensa Táchira, July 21, 2020). Remittances have fallen by 80% in the currency exchange offices in North of Santander (Caracol Radio 2020).

Conclusions

TNS is decaying and suffering greatly from the lack of any clear articulation of policies, especially border policies during the COVID-19 crisis; it is, progressively, a formally closed border and is suffering the negative consequences of closed bilateral relations on human security. The migratory crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of the border only worsen life conditions in the TNS region.

COVID-19 has deepened and extended the Venezuelan CHE beyond the border to North of Santander, which no longer benefits from pendular migration, remittances, permanent migration or the services provided to the migratory flow.

The return of Venezuelans will continue until the COVID-19 pandemic reverses because living conditions are quite precarious in the hosting countries, and people still count on family support networks in Venezuela. If the CHE continues or worsens with and after the pandemic, the emigration flow will likely resume with or without formal open borders and TNS will continue to be the passage.

National and international authorities, public and civil society organizations at all levels must remain vigilant and denounce human rights violations whenever they occur. There is also an urgent need of aid both to migrants and to the inhabitants at the border as they have increasingly suffered from the pandemic and the lack of understanding between governments. The lack of resources and ongoing fear of prosecution make the work of national organizations in Venezuela significantly problematic.

Notes

1 In this paper, we follow a qualitative research method using primary (newspapers, interviews) and secondary sources, as it is an exploratory study of recent and changing events.

2 Following the ideas and categorization of human crises and complex emergencies of FAO (2020), Transparencia Venezuela (2017) and UN-Human Rights Council (2020), which point out that human crises and emergencies can be multifactorial, and have economic, social, political and human rights patterns beyond accepted standards.

3 This percentage is confirmed by the rate provided by Colombia which points out that 76% of the returning Venezuelans make it through TNS (Migra Venezuela 2020).

4 Pendular migration refers to people who usually live or work in the border region and commute back and forth, usually crossing through a single border crossing (Migración Colombia 2017, 6).

5 At first, everyone could enter. Then, a daily quota of 700 people was established, followed by 300 per day during three days of the week and more recently it is 350 daily from Monday to Friday (Migración Colombia 2020b).

6 First, returning Venezuelans were received in San Antonio del Táchira, where their migratory status was checked, along with body temperature and a quick test for COVID-19. If negative, they were sent to improvised shelters (schools/sports facilities) in the border municipalities and the metropolitan area of San Cristóbal. If positive, they were sent to a health center. Then, after a 14-day period, a second test was taken. An "illegal" returned migrant did not follow these protocols, but if detected, an epidemiological fence was established. A recent disposition stipulates that they would be sent to prison and prosecuted if they illegally cross the border (CDH 2020).

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

Governance in Imperial County and Mexicali at the U.S.–Mexico Border during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Kimberly Collins *

The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the lives of those living in the United States–Mexico border. From the Imperial Valley–Mexicali region, along the California–Baja California border, we find two interesting cases in public management that were impacted by the border population—medical care and informal importation of consumer goods. A lack of federal policy and guidance to improve the quality of life for people in the region leads us to rethink the role of governments and governance in the border region.

Introduction

The border region of Imperial County in southern California, United States, and the city of Mexicali in northern Baja California, Mexico, is located in the desert region of the two adjoining states. The region is just east of the coastal and metropolitan San Diego County and Tijuana/Rosarito/Tecate but a world away in ability to cope with the COVID-19 crisis. The same set of rules and regulations govern all of the communities along the California–Baja California border, yet this crisis has brought to light inequities along the border in terms of resources, ability of local governments to manage the public health in the region, and the role of national governments in cross-border relations.

The reader should recall that the response by both the federal governments in the United States and Mexico was delayed and insufficient to provide the needed resources, information, and aid to local communities. When learning of the pandemic, the messaging from President Donald Trump of the United States was that "everything was 'under control' and the virus would just 'disappear' in the warmer months" (Steven and Tan 2020; Superville and Seitz 2020).

A very similar situation occurred in Mexico. The Mexican President's initial response was to encourage Mexicans "to go to fiestas, eat in restaurants, and go out shopping" and he displayed "pictures of saints as protection against COVID-19" (Felbab-Brown 2020). Both nations were subsequently hit hard by the virus, with the U.S. leading the way in the number of cases and deaths. In July of 2020, there were more than 434,000 people infected with COVID-19 in Mexico and 47,472 deaths throughout Mexico. In the U.S., official data shows more than 4.6 million cases, and 154,912 deaths (New York Times 2020a and 2020b). There has been a lack of federal leadership in providing a vision for managing this pandemic with inconsistent messaging, poor handling of supply chains of medical supplies, lack of testing, and hospitals struggling to meet the demands.

As the border is a federal zone, the absence of federal leadership adds a level of difficulty for those who live on both sides. It also led to the subnational governments (states, counties, and municipalities) taking an active role in managing the crisis. This created an uncoordinated response at times, within the countries and across the borders. In the San Diego–Tijuana region, local leaders discussed how the government response was slow, but the ability of the non-profit sector to step up and help was tremendous. In the Imperial Valley and Mexicali region, this was not the same since local leadership and humanitarian non-profit organizations were weaker.

A major joint federal decision was to limit the number of people crossing the border to only essential trips and trade beginning March 21. The tentative date to fully reopen the border has been moved a number of times and is currently set for November 21, but unless the number of cases diminishes, this date could be extended. The restrictions applied to non-essential travel (by non-citizens) and movement of goods. Essential travel included crossing for work, education, or medical reasons. To highlight the impacts on the travel across the region, the San Diego Association of Governments compared the April 2019 and 2020 data for the California–Baja California ports of entry. It showed the monthly average pedestrian crossings were down 76%; personal vehicle traffic down by 53%; and truck crossings were down 26% (SANDAG 2020).

A point of confusion and discussion early in the pandemic was how to define essential business. Even with 25 years of a free trade agreement, no standardization was created on what would be considered essential and non-essential businesses in each country leading to disruptions in the supply chain. This led to more than 300 U.S. CEOs sending a letter to Mexico's president requesting the country align the definition of essential industries with the standards provided by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The Mexican government responded by opening previously non-essential businesses.

A U.S. federal decision that was detrimental to many people living in the border was the temporary closure of federal offices managing visas and trusted traveler programs. Many border residents had their lives in limbo, unable to access U.S. government offices for documents required to cross the border. It is expected that these offices will reopen once the pandemic has ended, but the closures resulted in a large amount of uncertainty and anxiety from this decision.

Even with these restrictions, U.S. citizens and permanent residents were still able to cross without restrictions, as long as it was considered essential travel. This limitation on travel has hurt local border businesses, but it has provided insight into the connections for people that bridge the border. Tens of thousands continue to cross daily as it is their legal right and also a necessity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated and exacerbated social problems within the United States and Mexico, and these have compounded at the border. The following sections of this paper will look at the impact on Imperial Valley–Mexicali region, looking at two specific cases—hospital capacity and the informal importation of beer into Mexicali. It will then provide some general concluding thoughts for moving regional governance into the 21st century.

Managing Regional Consequences from COVID-19

Two prominent cases speak to the handling of the virus at the Imperial Valley–Mexicali border region. The first has to do with the impact on Imperial Valley hospitals and the second has to do with the question of what is considered essential, particularly regarding the informal importation of beer. These might seem like two seemingly different issues, but have much to do with the local connections of the people and economy, and the place of government oversight in the movement of people and goods across the border.

A crisis in medical care on the U.S. side of the border

Imperial County had one of the highest percentages of COVID-19 cases in California. The county had 9,409 confirmed cases with 220 deaths as of August 1 (Imperial County Public Health Department 2020; California Department of Public Health 2020). Mexicali had 7,142 confirmed cases and 1,251 deaths. More people were treated and recovered in Imperial, but there were also more cases than in Mexicali, even though there were six times as many people living in Mexicali than Imperial.

At the beginning of the crisis there were many suppositions by locals on why the number of cases had been so high in Imperial and who brought the virus first to the region. At the time of writing, the county government was specific that the high number of cases was because of Mexicali and people coming across the border for medical care. When Mexicali hospitals were unable to admit any more patients in May, they were sent to Imperial County. There were reports that by early June patients were being transferred every two to three hours across the border. Before the pandemic, this number was 17 for an entire month (Jordan 2020). Officials from El Centro Regional Medical Center in

* **Kimberly Collins**, PhD, Professor of Public Administration Executive Director of Leonard Transportation Center, California State University. Contact: kimberly@csusb.edu http://www.csusb.edu/ltc www.linkedin.com/in/Prof-kimberly-collins

Imperial County announced on May 19 that they would no longer be accepting COVID-19 patients in their emergency room. Since that time, more than 500 patients were air lifted out of county to other hospitals throughout California. It was likened to a warzone with helicopters coming and going from the hospital's rooftop helipad. Additionally, it should be noted that 60 employees of the El Centro Regional Medical Center lived in Mexicali and commuted across the border to work (Shih Bion 2020).

This medical situation shows the strong connections among the people living on either side of the border. People living in the region have always used medical providers on either side of border for a multitude of reasons. This movement of people to access healthcare has been reinforced by institutions on both sides. For just a couple of examples of the work done, see: Collins-Dogrul (2006); Ruiz-Beltran, and Kamau (2001); and Davidhizar and Bechtel (1999). What added to the health crisis in these two valleys was the number of people with pre-existing cases of asthma and other medical conditions such as diabetes and obesity with notoriously bad air quality and high rates of poverty.

Informal consumer imports and the border wait

On June 27th, the mayor of Mexicali began to implement checkpoints at the two border crossings coming south into the city. The first time this was done, there was little communication with its closest neighbor, the small city of Calexico, which created a seven-to-eight hour wait at the border. These checkpoints were justified as the city stated many residents of Imperial Valley continued to travel to Mexicali to visit family and socialize. There was a fear they were bringing the virus with them.

Figure 1. Sign by the Baja California Tourism Office, near the Mexicali Border, requesting people not travel. It reads: "This is not vacation time. We are under a quarantine. Stay in your home. Avoid a ticket".

At the checkpoint, the officials checked peoples' temperatures, and also if there was any merchandise in their cars, such as beer. Any beer that was over the permitted limit for import was confiscated by authorities. It was therefore reasoned that these checkpoints were also intended to stop the informal importation of beer (Montenegro Brown 2020).

This problem goes to the decision taken by governments on what was considered essential business and what was not. In Mexico, the production and sale of alcohol was not an essential business, but Mexicali has the highest beer consumption per capita in the nation. The mix of these two factors led people and small entrepreneurs to import beer from the Imperial Valley and sell at times for triple its retail value. So, for example, a case of beer that sold for $20 in California stores was sold for as much as $60 in Mexicali. The government stepped in and tried to stop this flow of alcohol and caused long lines to cross south.

The informal movement of goods is not a new line of research or something new to the region (Buehn and Eichler 2009). This type of commerce has been happening for years and it has been linked to agreements at the national level. So, in this case, the disagreement over what was essential during the pandemic was an issue at both the national and local levels. In other words, national disagreements played out at the border, impacting local quality of life.

Border Management During Crisis and Thoughts for the Future

These border management problems during a time of crisis lead a researcher to question the effectiveness of the high-level conversations and collaboration between the U.S. and Mexico since the last major national security crisis, September 11, 2001. It is clear that the current binational management regime based on the federal government's supremacy is not improving the lives of the more than 14 million people in the region.

Are there other possibilities for public management, governance, and decision making at the border? The border states are highly engaged in policy fora such as health, transportation, environmental protection, natural resource protection, emergency response, and education. Their role in each is based within their jurisdictions, and they work well together to get things done. This is seen in their response to COVID-19. The local governments took the lead to keep residents safe and provide a response to the pandemic. The problem is that it is difficult for governments to work across the border to provide solutions.

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The pandemic has provided an opportunity to rethink governance. For more discussion on regional cross-border management, see Collins (2017) and Brunet-Jailly (2004). Those working in the border region should view the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to propose new modes of government. Values should be based in human needs and solving problems of residents and taxpayers. Without innovative solutions to 21st-century challenges, the border region may be consigned to increasing marginalization, impoverishment, and inequity.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Detroit–Windsor Border and COVID-19

Michael Darroch [i]
Robert L. Nelson [ii]
Lee Rodney [iii]

This brief essay chronicles the closure of the Detroit–Windsor tunnel during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the Canadian government's containment measures in the spring/summer of 2020 from the authors' perspectives as both residents and researchers living in the border city of Windsor, Ontario (Canada). Drawing upon crossings in March and June 2020 as well as reflections on the urban cross-border context that Windsor and Detroit facilitate, the article details the changes in border operations and the resulting difficulties faced by local communities. In conclusion we point to the current, local quagmire that Windsor–Essex finds itself in, having some of the highest case COVID-19 counts in Canada as of July 2020. Caught between a laissez-faire approach to managing the migrant worker outbreaks in Essex County, and slow-moving county/provincial and federal responses to the pandemic, local attitudes toward reopening the border here seem more divided than in other parts of Canada.

The Windsor–Detroit Border pre-COVID-19

The border crossings between Windsor, Ontario (Canada) and Detroit, Michigan (U.S.) are noted for the high volume of trade that passes at the narrows of the Detroit River which has facilitated the transnational development of the auto industry for over a century. Truck traffic on the Ambassador Bridge became notorious after 9/11 as the crossing became a choke point when security concerns increased, while the Gordie Howe Bridge, the 21st century security enhanced "smart border", is still under construction. Windsor and Detroit are also one of the most populated cross-border regions in North America. The two cities are separated by the Detroit River (between Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair) and joined by the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit–Windsor tunnel. This interconnected urban fabric has developed over two centuries and has only recently been divided by the "thickening" of the border in the last two decades (Rodney 2014). As of this writing, the Canada–U.S. border has now been closed to travelers for four months, since March 21st, 2020. Crossing is now limited to essential workers, crossing from Windsor to work at one of Detroit's many hospitals. With the exception of brief periods of closure after September 11, 2001, this situation is unprecedented.

i **Michael Darroch**, PhD, Department of Cinema & Media Arts, York University, Canada. Contact: mdarroch@yorku.ca
ii **Robert L. Nelson**, PhD, Department of History, University of Windsor, Canada. Contact: rnelson@uwindsor.ca
iii **Lee Rodney**, PhD, School of Creative Arts, University of Windsor, Canada. Contact: lrodney@uwindsor.ca

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The Detroit sector was established in 1926 along with the El Paso sector as the two first stations for U.S. border patrol agents. For much of the 20th century, traffic between the two cities was heavy. The Detroit–Windsor tunnel and the Ambassador bridge were Progressive Era projects that accommodated the expansion of the auto industry and encouraged the adaptation of the automobile as a cultural symbol of efficiency and a way of life. Prior to the Second World War, however, most traffic still moved by ferries which crossed the river multiple times a day, shuttling commuters and cross-border shoppers as well as immigrants between the two inner-city centres (Bavery 2016; Klug 2008). By the late 1950s, Detroit and Windsor were beginning to envision the region as a modern, cross-border "international metropolis". As Detroit prepared for a bid for the 1964 Olympics, the "Americanada Teleferry" project was floated in the spirit of the times as a cross-border gondola that was proposed to link Detroit's Cobo Hall (now TCF Center) to Windsor's waterfront in the early 1960s.

For residents of Windsor and Detroit, the 'experience' of the border over these postwar, pre-9/11 decades was merely a slight inconvenience. Passports were not required and a non-verbal 'wave through' was not out of the ordinary when crossing. For the most part, the only stress was whether or not the Canadian border guards would notice the 'layering' of newly bought clothes the returning Windsorites were wearing/smuggling after a day of shopping in Detroit (older Windsorites today state that 'shopping downtown' in the 1950s and 1960s meant downtown Detroit). Arab-Canadians testify to the same nonchalance from border guards, even in the 1990s, when entering the USA at this border (Nelson 2019). All this would change quite suddenly on 9/11, when the border became a hard and fast division, cutting through the heart of an old and deeply-established, cross-river community. Unlike the COVID-19 crisis however, the border did shortly reopen to most traffic. Yes, in the early months many encountered three-hour delays, and the likelihood of being pulled into 'secondary' by the Department of Homeland Security increased for all, but especially Windsor's significant Arab-Canadian population. Yet, for the vast majority of Windsorites who had always had access to the shopping and entertainment of Detroit, already by late September 2001, American shopping malls could be patronized, and on the 10th of October, Canadians could witness the Calgary Flames defeat the Detroit Red Wings at the Joe Louis Arena at the Detroit River's edge. The world had changed, but one could continue to live the cross-border life of Windsor–Detroit.

In the past decade, Detroit has witnessed revitalization and gentrification in its downtown districts, just as Windsor also began promoting a new downtown Cultural District and university arts campus. Prior to COVID-19, these changes brought a wave of new businesses and cultural events to each city's centre. In October 2018, Detroit-based entrepreneur Dan Gilbert announced that his Quicken Loans online mortgage company was expanding to a previously empty building in downtown Windsor. Gilbert had recently failed to land the new Amazon Headquarters as a cross-border Detroit–Windsor venture. Since 2010, Gilbert's companies had already redeveloped as many as 100 downtown Detroit buildings, bringing a pool of tech-savvy workers to the heart of Detroit. In 2018, as the future of North American trade agreements looked grim, Gilbert could see the advantage of tapping into the talent pool of southwestern Ontario's rich university and technology sectors, without the necessity for all workers to cross the border physically. "One campus, two countries" was the slogan used for the Amazon pitch.

The Windsor–Detroit Border Since COVID-19

The invisible barrier that divides Windsor from Detroit under COVID-19 is, amazingly, vastly thicker and (for the time being) more life-changing than 9/11. Windsor is a house in lockdown where only those who have jobs in Detroit may cross the border, and almost no one else.

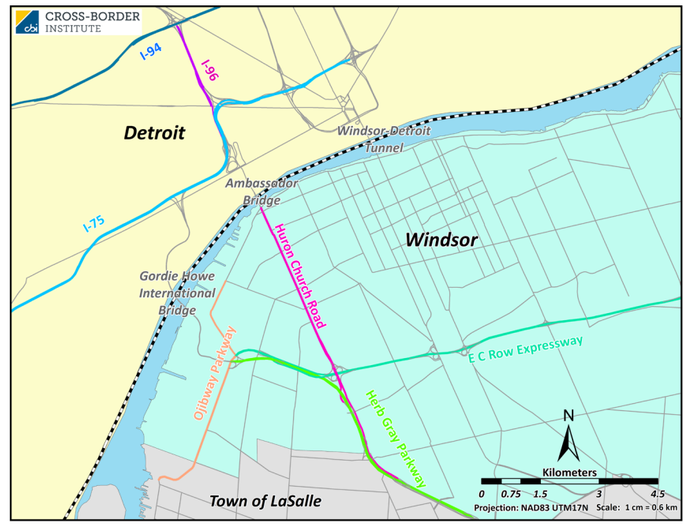

Figure 1. Detail of Detroit–Windsor border crossings.

The statistics for June are as follows: "There were 112,150 car crossings at the bridge, which is 70 per cent lower than a year ago. The tunnel saw 53,232 cars, a decline of 85 per cent." At the same time, as an indicator that international trade continues to flow right past Windsor and Detroit, truck crossings on the bridge were down a mere 9 percent for June (Waddell 2020).

The massive cross-border flow to take advantage of sports teams, restaurant and bar culture, and of course 'cross-border shopping' has come to a standstill. On the one hand, those living in Scarborough have not been able to travel into Toronto to watch sports or live music either, and shopping and restaurants have been similarly severely curtailed. Yet, a total ban on travel to your neighboring major city is quite different as Windsor in many ways relies on Detroit's amenities. And this difference will only become more acute if, as is currently expected, Ontario will slowly be opening up shopping and entertainment while the border is expected to remain iron tight into 2021. An important caveat here, however, is the significant daily workforce that travels from Windsor to work in Greater Detroit, some 6000 Windsorites, mainly working in the Healthcare sector. These people maintain the connection to Detroit, and surely conduct some shopping for family and friends after their shift is over. Finally, it must be noted that although some normalcy returned shortly after 9/11, the border was permanently securitized and changed. There is every reason to expect that while, in the short term, the current disruption is in many ways greater, the 'normalcy' that returns after a vaccine will presumably be much more 'normal' than the world of late 2001.

Many families in this area live on both sides of the border. Lee Rodney reflects on the impact it has had on her situation:

My family is split between Ann Arbor, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario. Upon hearing of the border closure in mid-March my partner and I crossed into Canada with our marriage certificate in hand for a three month stay. After watching the news coverage of crowded airports and temperature checks, we were anticipating a similar kind of pandemonium when crossing into Canada through the Detroit-Windsor tunnel. The border agent at the NEXUS lane waived us through and welcomed us back. Normally this would be comforting, but we were anticipating additional health screening that was not yet in place. Three months later in mid-June, my partner had to return to the US for medical appointments. I drove him across the border and dropped him two metres past the customs booth on U.S. territory and was directed to do a U-turn in the customs plaza as I am not allowed into the U.S. as a Canadian citizen. We were the only people crossing at that time. It was eerily quiet. Driving back through the empty tunnel several questions were racing through my mind: Will I see him again? Will I get a record for "attempted entry" when the border is officially closed? Will I have to quarantine for 14 days after being in the U.S. for 5 minutes in my car? Thankfully, no, though my American partner has since quarantined in my attic once already and is scheduled to do so again. This will make one month of attic dwelling for him this summer. We understand why quarantine in essential and feel happy to be under the same roof.

Yet we have been extremely fortunate thus far. Stories of couples separated by the Canada–U.S. border make headlines frequently, as living "common law" is not often possible for those in the region who hold jobs in different countries. Writing in the Detroit Free Press, Jamie LaReau reports that a cross-border petition by a group called "Advocacy for Family Reunification at the Canadian Border" has been signed by nearly 3500 people. The petition, representing couples across the U.S and Canada was presented to the Canadian Government on July 10 (LaReau 2020; Wilhem 2020). Another petition still circulating at Change.org currently has 22,248 signatures as of this writing. It highlights the restricted and outdated definition of family that excludes many LGBTQ couples, "committed partners, adult children, siblings, etc," and calls for an expansion of the current policy to allow for "greater exemptions for compassionate reasons, such as a serious illness" (Change.org 2020).

The traffic at the Detroit-Windsor tunnel is exceptionally quiet with the official border closure. Essential workers and family members who use this crossing are screened by Customs and Border Patrol agents upon entry to Canada. Visiting family members from the U.S. are required to quarantine for two weeks, reporting on a mobile app and monitored by a quarantine officer for two weeks after crossing.

Conclusion

Finally, in conclusion, it should be noted that as of late July 2020, Windsor has the highest per-capita rates of COVID-19 infection in Canada. As the border has been closed since March 21, the infection rates are not rising significantly due to cross-border travel in recent months. The situation locally was hastened by outbreaks among migrant workers in Windsor and Essex County living in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. The Windsor–Essex region has the highest concentration of agricultural production in Canada with over 8000 migrant workers who travel annually to work in the county's many greenhouse operations (Basok and George 2020). These workers all tested negative upon arrival in Canada in March and rates of infection only started to rise in June (Windsor-Essex Health Unit 2020). In contrast, infection rates among Windsorites crossing to work in Detroit have been relatively quiet, a point that raises serious questions of equity and invites further study. There have been many calls to address the situation which is currently caught between county, provincial and federal jurisdiction. Over the summer, the balance of new cases has been through community spread, suggesting that we may be facing an emergency situation in the near future if the transmission rates continue to rise. Ultimately, it is arguable that closing the border has been an effective means of containment in the Detroit–Windsor borderlands. A longer-range study of border closings as a policy to limit the pandemic is necessary to understand its influence across different geographies and populations.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

Seme Border, Nigeria: Safety and Collective Vulnerability

Willie A. Eselebor *

The induced border closure at Seme Border, Nigeria, on March 23, 2020 is just one among other closures carried out from 1984-2020. The closure brings to the fore issues of safety and collective vulnerability of the border communities and the existing coping mechanisms for addressing their fears. In the absence of constructive engagement with the vulnerable, the people often resorted to self-help by creating alternate routes (bush paths and waterways) thereby rendering the securitisation of border security (Border Drill) management ineffectual. In decision-making and for a successful implementation, it is important to allow for a buy-in from those affected by such policy.

Introduction

The Seme Border closure of 2020 has fundamentally changed lives. It caused dislocations in border governance and bordering activities because it has compelled self-isolation and social distancing for safety. Nations responded by shutting their borders to prevent spread, an action that pointedly demonstrated the role of borders in public health and safety of vulnerable groups.

According to media reports, the first person (whose name was not disclosed) that arrived in Lagos, Nigeria on February 20, 2020 was an Italian. Following his arrival and subsequent visit to Lafarge Africa Plc. a leading sub-Saharan African cement company, the land border of Nigeria with Benin was closed on March 23, 2020. Militarised personnel were immediately deployed to enforce the restriction on movement. In view of this development, border users diverted to bush paths as alternative routes to evade security clearance. Seme Border town, the busiest gateway to markets in Africa, is the geographic focus of this study.[1] This research looks at the situation before the outbreak; the existing governance regime; and how the closure has shaped the way we think and do things.

Scholarly discourse on borders often interrogates the interplay of sovereignty and the deployment of security to legitimize governance of the territorial space. In context, the governance of mobility is of interest, based on gaps left unexplored in literature. This throws up the issue of security threat as a justification for border closures because the control of borders remains an exclusive preserve of the state. Closure affects the livelihood and the daily encounters of bordering. Conversely, the policy, practice, perception

* **Willie A. Eselebor**, PhD, Institute for Peace & Strategic Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
Email: willivizz@gmail.com Webpage: http://ipss.ui.edu.ng/waeselebor Facebook: Willie Eselebor

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approach, remains helpful in countering the notion of territorial borders, in which Kolossov believes that "The boundary is not simply a legal institution designed to ensure the integrity of state territory, but a product of social practice" (2005, 625).

Kolossov's viewpoint converges with the present thinking that the custody of the border management initiative is not the sole responsibility of the state rather, it involves other interested stakeholders—border communities. Unfortunately, the communities were excluded from the decision to close the border. The current border closure or *Border Drill* is an example of intervention, managed by a pool of federal agencies to the exclusion of the federating state, local government and the border communities. Exclusion usually generates tensions and uncooperative attitudes from border inhabitants. This study has been organised into four sections. Section one introduces the discourse; section two examines the status of Seme Border before and during closure and section three, presents the findings of post-closure Seme Border. Section four consists of the summary, observed changes and conclusion.

Seme Border Before and During Closure

Seme is on the coastline, along the Lagos-Abidjan corridor, with a shared 773-kilometre border with Benin Republic in West Africa. It is one of the busiest land routes in West Africa and is used for commuting and commerce. It has a full complement of border security agencies, including Immigration, Customs and Port Health Services, among others. Administratively, it is under Badagry-West Local Council Development Area (LCDA) of Lagos State, Nigeria. The border is located on a new multilateral one-stop-border facility that opened on October 23, 2018. Nigerian operational activities of Immigration and Customs clearance are carried out inside Beninese territory.

Historically, Nigeria and Benin are culturally linked but both countries experienced different colonial history (Nigeria-Britain and Benin-France). Since 1889, part of the Benin monarchy has owed allegiance to the old Oyo Empire in Nigeria. Both communities in the border region speak Ogu or Egun and Yoruba languages in the South-Western parts of Nigeria

Benin and Nigeria are both member nations of the ECOWAS but the economic relationship is asymmetric, with Nigeria asserting more pressure on the Francophone country. Due to these power dynamics, Benin operates an *entrepôt* port, where goods are imported, stored in warehouses, and re-exported to Nigeria through porous borders. A high level of smuggling of prohibited goods, trafficking of humans, arms, and hard drug take place unabated. Trading activities are mostly informal and undocumented and often lead to security threats and revenue losses to Nigeria. This unregulated activity has led to about four Seme Border closures in April 30, 1984; October 08, 2003; August 19, 2019 and March 23, 2020. The last two closures which this article examines are classified as *Border Drill*, a new approach in border policing. The last two closures still subsist and the reason adduced for the March 23, 2020, closure remains public health safety.

Border Drill refers to a combination of task-force put together by the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) to enforce the Presidential Directive on border closure of August 19, 2019. The team comprises core security agencies such as the military, police (border patrol), customs, immigration, and the department of state security. *Border Drill* is the deployment of Special Forces with a mandate to enforce border closure and restrict mobility of persons and goods entering and exiting Nigeria's land borders. However, certain categories of returnees of Nigerian descent were granted entry in strict compliance with the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) protocols on testing and isolation. The following arrivals were documented from field survey:

Arrival date	Number of persons	Point of departure	Isolated in
April 05, 2020	67	Cotonou, Benin	Badagry, Lagos
May 16, 2020	53	Accra, Ghana	Badagry, Lagos
June 10, 2020	13	Paris via Cotonou, Benin	Badagry, Lagos

Table 1: Seme Border returnees during closure. During the period of fieldwork, three dates (above) were designated for Nigerians to return under special conditions in which the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control activated protocols for screening, testing, and isolation. Source: field surveys.

As of July 15, 2020, 167 persons had been screened, admitted and isolated in centres in Badagry.[2] There were no records of departure.

The 'partial' closure of Seme Border from August 19, 2019[3] and the continued closure from March 23, 2020 till date, implies that there have been two subsisting orders in force. This has impacted negatively on the border community and equally led to diversion to bush paths and waterways for commercial activities. Some of the border community stakeholders interviewed revealed that most returnees prefer to use the porous bush paths so as to evade the mandatory isolation for 14 days. It was observed that the use of facemasks was not so common with motorcyclists, traders and crossers, who periodically ferry passengers across the bush paths and maritime routes.

Post-closure Status of Seme Border

The border communities experience regulated controls and this has led to paralysis in informal trading activities. Due to restriction on movement, preparedness in terms of healthcare facilities, sanitation and testing facilities could not be assessed. The nearest health facility is located in Badagry, about 15 kilometres away but expectations that government should set up a testing centre at the border crossing did not materialise, thereby calling attention to issues of safety and vulnerability of border community people. From interviews carried out with frontline workers, NCDC border procedures on health security and environmental hygiene such as steam cleaning, disinfection and surface decontamination of border facilities, hand washing, waterless sanitisers were not strictly enforced. Personnel protective equipment for border security agencies were in short supply and therefore constrained enforcement to reducing infection.

Seme Border is exemplified in a case study of two border closures (August 19, 2019 & March 23, 2020) which affected and exerted tensions on the border communities. Economic activities had reduced considerably due to the earlier closure of 2019 and later worsened with the outbreak in 2020. Paradoxically, these two factors boosted patronage of unauthorised channels. Field visit to *Iyafin* waterways which connects Nigeria with Benin attest to the shift to locally constructed boats (wooden canoes) as means of transportation. The newly created routes undermine the essence of closure. The capacity to conduct cross-border testing or laboratories to analyse samples are unavailable in the maritime routes.

What has changed (or will) in the context of Seme Border as a post transit hub are unwillingness by international travellers to voluntarily submit to health screening. People are becoming more attuned to commuting through unauthorised routes and usage of waterways. Invariably, when the border is opened for normal clearance activities, it is doubtful if passengers will adhere to social distancing because awareness of the risk factors is lacking in the rural communities. This is because the non-provision of relief packages to cushion the adverse effects of 'stay-at-home' restrictions also challenged the survival strategies of the border communities.

In addition, Customs and Immigration clearance procedures will transit from manual to technological. As suggested by a respondent, it is envisaged that if the border is opened, the health security threat of the pandemic will make searches of goods or people without protective equipment a risky exercise. This also extends to physical handling of passports and placing of index fingers on scanners. These are new challenges that will require deployment of technology that will fundamentally alter the way agencies will work in the future. However, the fact that the border is still on lockdown makes it difficult to postulate.

Figure 1. Seme Border during *Border Drill* closure. Photo credit: W. Eselebor, August 2019.

Figure 2. Seme Border during COVID-19 closure. Photo credit: W. Eselebor, April 2020.

Figure 3. Marine border at *Iyafin*-Badagry, Lagos. Photos credit: W. Eselebor, April 2020.

What will remain unchanged are smuggling or criminal activities. Smuggling as an activity may have substantially increased due to the border closure, whereas the *Border Drill* was meant to reduce it to zero. Evidences in the local markets around the border and Badagry town, about 15 kilometres away, suggest an overflow of prohibited goods like parboiled rice, poultry products and other consumables. This calls to question the effectiveness of the border closure regime in place. Consequently, it has led to a spiral increase in the prices of staple food items. It has been observed that there is increased smuggling of petroleum products through maritime routes not covered by *Border Drill*. So, smuggling into Nigeria and outwards to Benin has remained unchanged.

Summary and Conclusion

In summary, this study has attempted to situate contemporary problems generated by outbreak and its impact on borders to determine what has changed or remain unchanged while focusing on safety and collective vulnerability in Seme Border, Nigeria. A detailed explanation of the border was undertaken to highlight its importance as one of the busiest commercial gateways in the West African sub-region. However, given the nature of transnational security threats, the border has been closed four times from 1984-2020 and this has led to diversion and resort to the usage of bush paths and maritime routes for commuting. The securitisation of border controls through the adoption of *Border Drill* has created alternative routes, thus undermining border security. The creation of slippages constitutes health security concerns, as findings revealed that majority of persons travelling through waterways as an outcome of restrictions, do not comply with NCDC guidelines as part of the changing dynamics of health security content of border management.

In conclusion, there seems to be no terminal date for the end of induced border closure; and so, we must begin to accept the new culture of transition by wearing facemasks, washing and sanitising hands, avoiding overcrowding and managing transmission of cross-border health security threats. *Border Drill* does not appear to be effective because there has been a relative increase in smuggling and criminal activities, due to porosity of borders and largely because the capacity to cope by the local communities have waned. The use of robots and biometrics in passenger clearance will reduce physical contact.

Notes

1. Seme Border remained closed since August 20, 2019. In terms of methodology, to source data was difficult. Individuals who volunteered information were security agencies and selected border community people.
2. About three hotels were reserved for international travelers located in Badagry (names not mentioned as part of ethical considerations). Travelers are to self-isolate and undergo NCDC testing before discharge. No positive case was recorded out of the 167 persons screened.
3. Commuting was restricted from 6 am to 6 pm, which makes it partial closure. Hitherto, the border was opened for twenty-four hours a day. Seme Border therefore had two subsisting border closures; one related to security threats and the other necessitated by the outbreak of the pandemic.

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ESSAY
(FRENCH)
SPECIAL ISSUE

Ceuta–Bab Sebta (Espagne–Maroc), le SARS-Cov-2 comme accélérateur de la reconfiguration frontalière

David Goeury *

La frontière Ceuta-Bab Sebta est un point de tension récurrent entre les autorités marocaines et espagnoles. Cette enclave espagnole en Afrique est devenue l'un des points d'entrée des migrations clandestines en Europe mais aussi d'un commerce atypique au Maroc. La crise du SARS-CoV-2 a constitué une opportunité pour les autorités marocaines pour mettre fin au commerce atypique aux dépens des transfrontaliers marocains.

Introduction

La frontière Ceuta-Maroc fait partie des frontières emblématiques des rapports de pouvoirs entre pays à revenus élevés et pays à revenus faibles (Ferrer Gallardo, 2007; Saddiki, 2012; Gabrielli, 2015, Soto Bermant, 2015; Fuentes Lara 2016). Ancienne tête de pont de la colonisation européenne en Afrique depuis 1415, Ceuta est, avec Melilla, l'une des deux seules communes européennes sur le continent africain (Ferrer Gallardo, 2007). A la signature de la convention Schengen par l'Espagne en 1991, les autorités européennes considèrent les deux enclaves comme des points faibles du dispositif frontalier européen. Les deux cités entrent dans un processus de frontiérisation, soit un renforcement des dispositifs de filtrage. Ceuta est alors clôturée de plusieurs barrières grillagées (Gabrielli, 2015; Saddiki, 2017). Les derniers travaux en cours en 2020 ont permis de rehausser la clôture à une hauteur de 10 mètres et de remplacer les barbelés par des tubes pivotants anti-escalade (Yabiladi, 16 août 2020). Malgré la médiatisation des assauts collectifs de la barrière comme celui d'août 2019, cette modalité de franchissement clandestin est très minoritaire représentant moins de 15% des passages, 343 en 2019, contre 606 par voie maritime et 1361 par le poste de frontière terrestre de Tarajal.

Or, pour le Maroc, cette frontière est surtout le point d'entrée d'un commerce atypique de biens de consommation non taxés, transportés à pied par des milliers de Marocains autorisés par les autorités de Ceuta à travailler dans l'enclave du fait des liens historiques la liant aux villes de Fnideq et Tétouan (Fuentes Lara 2016, 2017). Outre les pertes fiscales (Bentaouzer, 2019), ce commerce prend la forme d'une violente exploitation de femmes porteuses largement dénoncée (Fuentes Lara, 2016, 2017; Krichker, 2020). De ce fait, depuis 2018, les autorités marocaines souhaitent mettre fin à cette situation considérée comme intolérable (Mousjid, 2019).

Dans ce contexte, la crise Covid-19 a inversé l'agenda politique faisant passer la question des franchissements clandestins derrière celle de la volonté du Maroc de mettre un terme au commerce atypique lié au statut de ville franche de Ceuta. Les autorités marocaines instrumentalisent donc l'argument sanitaire pour fermer la frontière à toute circulation et ainsi disposer du temps nécessaire pour organiser une alternative économique au commerce atypique. Cependant, cette volonté de fermeture se traduit par la précarisation accrue des transfrontaliers marocains.

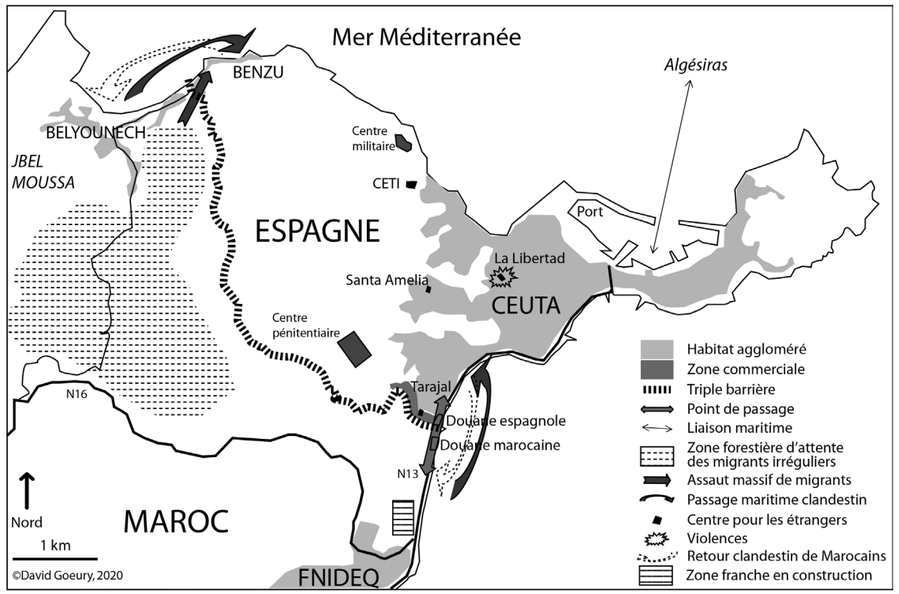
* **David Goeury**, PhD Geography, Médiations. Sciences des lieux, sciences des liens. Sorbonne Université, Paris, France.
david.goeury@gmail.com

Tensions croissantes autour du commerce atypique

L'Espagne a maintenu à Ceuta et Melilla un statut d'exception de villes franches accordé en 1863. Il a permis aux deux présides de développer un important commerce atypique avec le Maroc du fait de privilèges fiscaux (une très faible TVA qui oscille entre 0,5 % et 10 %) et en autorisant les Marocains résidents dans les communes limitrophes anciennement sous autorité espagnole (Fnideq et Tétouan d'une part et Nador d'autre part) à passer la frontière sur simple présentation de leur carte nationale marocaine (Buoli, 2014). Ainsi, même si l'Espagne intègre la communauté européenne en 1986, les deux villes ne font pas partie de l'union douanière européenne. Leur frontière avec le Maroc est donc hispano-marocaine (Gabrielli, 2015). A Ceuta, en 2019, 30.000 personnes franchissaient la frontière chaque jour dont 20.000 marocains. 8.500 auraient une activité économique dans la ville avec seulement 1314 inscrits à la sécurité sociale espagnole principalement des employées de maison. Plusieurs milliers se livraient au transport de marchandises à pied entre les entrepôts de Tarajal à Ceuta et la station de taxi de Bab Sebta au Maroc (Buoli, 2014; Fuentes Lara, 2016, 2017). Depuis 2018, le point de passage de Tarajal II est au cœur de fortes tensions entre le Maroc et l'Espagne suite au décès en 2017 de plusieurs femmes porteuses de marchandises. Entre Tétouan, M'diq et Fnideq, près de 15.000 femmes venaient s'approvisionner dans les entrepôts de Ceuta puis transportaient sur leur dos plusieurs dizaines de kilos de marchandises non taxées jusqu'à Bab Sebta au profit de grossistes approvisionnant tout le nord du Maroc (Buoli, 2014; Fuentes Lara, 2016, 2017). Les Espagnols souhaitent réorganiser le poste-frontière tandis que le gouvernement marocain souhaite réguler ce commerce estimé à plusieurs centaines de millions d'Euros de chiffre d'affaires. En 2018, le passage est limité à 4000 personnes par jour à Ceuta auquel s'ajoute une limitation du nombre de jours ouvrés. Ainsi, 307.000 porteurs ont traversé la frontière sur 133 jours mais deux femmes sont mortes sur le trajet. En 2019, une mission parlementaire marocaine se saisit de la question et recommande une réforme profonde du système avec le soutien des douanes marocaines (Cembrero, 2019). Le 29 juillet, la frontière est fermée au passage à pied avant de rouvrir le 3 septembre. Cependant deux décès successifs suite à des chutes dans la file d'attente nocturne amènent les autorités espagnoles à fermer le passage aux piétons le 9 octobre (Yabiladi, 2019). Depuis, le transport de marchandises à pied est suspendu malgré plusieurs passages en force, comme le 14 novembre où 200 porteurs s'élancent avec leur chargement. La réaction des autorités marocaines est de plus en plus drastique interdisant la sortie du territoire marocain à toute personne ne disposant pas de visa ou de contrat de travail à Ceuta mais aussi en interdisant l'entrée de toute marchandise depuis Ceuta.

Fermeture et hébergement d'urgence de centaines de Marocains à Ceuta

La crise du Sars-CoV-2 joue alors un rôle d'accélérateur dans la redéfinition des relations frontalières. Après un échange entre les deux rois du Maroc et d'Espagne,



les frontières aériennes et maritimes entre les deux pays sont fermées le jeudi 12 mars 2020. Les frontières entre les deux enclaves sont fermées vendredi 13 mars à 6h00 du matin. Bab Sebta n'est rouverte que sous pression de l'Union européenne le 22 mars pour permettre le rapatriement des touristes disposant de campings cars avant d'être refermée le 23 mars par les autorités espagnoles devant les multiples réactions à cette circulation exceptionnelle alors que les habitants de Ceuta ne peuvent franchir la frontière.

La rapidité de la décision surprend de nombreux Marocains dans l'enclave tandis que certains transfrontaliers préfèrent rester à Ceuta de peur de perdre leur emploi. 300 travailleurs marocains sont désinscrits en avril de la sécurité sociale pour abandon de poste selon la CGT de Ceuta. Un accueil d'urgence doit être organisé. Plusieurs centaines de Marocains bloqués trouvent refuge chez des proches ou dans des logements mis à disposition par les habitants de Ceuta mais près d'une centaine se retrouvent à la rue et s'installent sur l'esplanade de Chorrillo où ils reçoivent l'aide de la Croix rouge de Ceuta et de l'association Luna Blanca (association caritative musulmane).

Ceuta dispose de deux centres d'accueil spécialisés, un pour les migrants irréguliers, l'autre pour les mineurs non accompagnés. Or ces deux structures sont déjà à saturation, le CETI (Centro de Estancia Temporal de Immigrantes - Centre de séjour temporaire des immigrés) accueille 637 étrangers pour seulement 520 places. Par ailleurs, 491 mineurs non accompagnés sont présents dans l'enclave pour 295 places au centre « La Esperanza ». Le 19 mars, la décision de confinement oblige à la mise en place de deux centres d'accueil d'urgence dans deux salles omnisports « La Libertad » pour les adultes et « Santa Amelia » pour les mineurs. Ils accueillent une centaine de personnes chacun. L'hébergement collectif d'urgence s'avère très rapidement inadapté car regroupant des profils de jeunes hommes souvent consommateurs de drogues et au comportement imprévisible parfois violent. « La Libertad » est le lieu de nombreuses bagarres obligeant à des interventions des forces de l'ordre. Par ailleurs, ces centres d'hébergement d'urgence sont vus comme des lieux préparant un retour vers le Maroc, or plusieurs dizaines de jeunes souhaitent émigrer et rejoindre le continent européen. Ils s'enfuient régulièrement et préfèrent se cacher dans l'enclave obligeant les autorités à les rechercher. Le 17 mai alors que la rumeur d'un rapatriement se confirme, 30 jeunes quittent le centre La Libertad dans la nuit.

Entre rapatriements et retours clandestins au Maroc : des flux inversés

Les autorités marocaines tardent à organiser un rapatriement du fait de la complexité des statuts juridiques entre les Marocains disposant d'un visa touriste, les Marocains disposant d'un contrat de travail, les Marocains entrés avec une simple carte nationale, les Marocains entrés illégalement, les Marocains résidents en Espagne souhaitant rentrer au Maroc. Elles ont peur que les enclaves de Ceuta et Melilla deviennent des points de passage privilégiés par les MRE d'Europe (Marocains résidant à l'étranger) et devoir faire face à un afflux de milliers de personnes sans possibilité de développer un contrôle approprié du fait de la vétusté des postes-frontières. Le décès dans la nuit du 14 mai d'une ressortissante marocaine dans la rue à Melilla accélère le processus. Les autorités marocaines décident d'organiser un rapatriement sanitaire depuis Melilla le 15 mai (Bladi.net, 2020). Mais les conflits sur les listes entre les autorités marocaines et les présides entraînent la suspension des rapatriements durant une semaine. A Ceuta, le 22 mai, 304 marocains sont autorisés à rentrer au Maroc tandis que plus de 150 déclarent avoir été oubliés et s'agglutinent à la frontière. Les autorités négocient et mobilisent les ONG pour organiser un transfert complémentaire le lendemain d'une centaine de personnes (Echarri et Leon 2020).

Or, ces rapatriements ne clôturent par le phénomène. D'une part, certaines travailleuses transfrontalières préfèrent rester à Ceuta plutôt que de perdre leurs revenus misant sur un retour à la normal en juin ou en juillet. Avec les prolongations successives de l'état d'urgence au Maroc, elles demandent alors, au mois de juillet, à pouvoir rentrer au Maroc notamment à l'approche de la fête de l'Aïd el Adha. D'autre part, des Marocains résidents en Europe rejoignent l'enclave espérant pouvoir franchir plus facilement la frontière et surtout à moindre coût comme les ouvriers résidant en Andalousie. A partir du mois de juillet, ils sont plusieurs dizaines à rejoindre l'enclave parfois en voiture espérant que la frontière s'ouvre au 10 juillet avec la fin possible de l'état d'urgence. Enfin, il faut ajouter la dérive accidentelle des petites embarcations de pêcheurs marocains. Habituellement, elles étaient immédiatement redirigées vers les eaux territoriales marocaines mais du fait des mesures spécifiques liées au coronavirus, elles sont désormais bloquées dans l'enclave.

Les autorités de Ceuta se retrouvent obligées de maintenir les centres d'accueil dédiés aux Marocains. Cependant, devant les tensions récurrentes à « La Libertad » et les plaintes des habitants du quartier de Varela-Valiño, elles décident de transférer le 5 juin le centre pour adultes dans un entrepôt spécialement réaménagé de la zone commerciale de Tarajal, à l'écart des habitations. Le nouveau centre vient donc compléter la géographie périphérique des centres d'hébergement de migrants à Ceuta. Ce basculement apparaît comme emblématique de la situation de Ceuta : les Marocains sont placés à proximité immédiate du poste frontalier dans la zone commerciale dédiée normalement au commerce atypique.

Dans ce contexte, les autorités assistent à un phénomène inédit de tentatives de traversée clandestine de Ceuta vers le Maroc. Ce phénomène commence dès le mois de mars, devant le blocage de la frontière, des Marocains venus faire des achats à Ceuta décident de rentrer au Maroc clandestinement (Heurteloup, 2020). Pour cela, ils privilégient le passage par mer. Ils s'élancent depuis la plage de Tarajal qui longe le poste frontière en déjouant la surveillance espagnole avant de contourner le brise lame à la nage. Les tentatives s'enchaînent. En juin, avec la fin du confinement et l'ouverture des plages, ces hommes se glissent parmi les baigneurs puis courent vers le Maroc sous les acclamations des habitants. D'autres organisent des exfiltrations en jet-ski depuis les récifs du village de Benzu pour se faire déposer à Belyounech en moins de 90 secondes, ne laissant aucunement le temps de réagir aux différentes forces de sécurité. Le 26 août, ce sont des femmes qui ont traversé le brise lame de Tarajal .

Conclusion : Des transformations durables : la fin du commerce atypique ?

La traversée clandestine apparaît donc comme l'unique modalité de traversée de la frontière toujours fermée en septembre 2020 malgré les manifestations des travailleurs marocains transfrontaliers. Les deux enclaves ont été exclues de l'ouverture partielle exceptionnelle organisée à partir du 15 juillet. Les autorités marocaines ne souhaitaient pas faire face à un afflux de MRE sans avoir la possibilité de les dépister au préalable. Par conséquent, seules les lignes maritimes longue distance ont été autorisées (Tanger-Sète, Tanger-Gênes, Sète-Nador et Gênes-Nador) et le transport aérien via des vols exceptionnels. Par ailleurs, le gouvernement marocain souhaite disposer de temps pour construire une frontière intelligente afin d'accélérer le temps de passage via des processus de reconnaissance assistée par ordinateur. Parallèlement, il a lancé la construction d'une zone franche, baptisée zone d'activités économiques de Fnideq. Elle doit ouvrir au printemps 2021 en accueillant 251 entrepôts dont 30% sont réservés aux entrepreneurs de Ceuta désormais invités à localiser leur activité au Maroc. A l'horizon 2022, elle devrait supplanter Ceuta et assurer la création de 9000 emplois. Le coronavirus apparaît donc comme une opportunité pour le Maroc de réaffirmer son autorité sur cette frontière terrestre même si durant la phase transitoire le coût humain et social pour les transfrontaliers marocains est particulièrement élevé.

En revanche, la crise sanitaire liée au Coronavirus n'a suspendu que temporairement les migrations clandestines du Maroc vers l'enclave de Ceuta, ces dernières reprennent progressivement au cours de l'été 2020 par voie maritime. Fin août, les autorités ouvrent l'ancien hôpital de la Croix-Rouge pour disposer d'un lieu où imposer une quatorzaine aux migrants clandestins de plus en plus nombreux.

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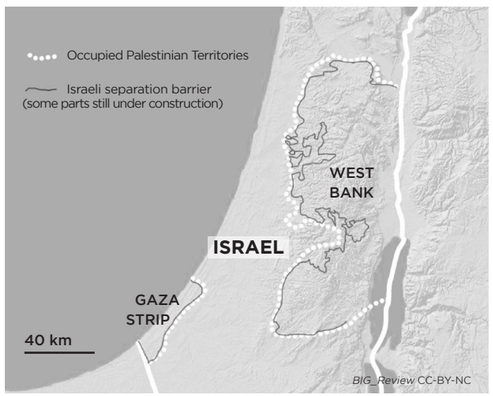
West Bank–Israel Wall During COVID-19: Migrant Labour Upends Border Function

Walid Habbas *

The function of the West Bank–Israeli separation barrier, designed to segregate Palestinians away from Israeli territory, was subverted by the COVID-19 crisis. For the first time, the barrier locked West Bank Palestinians inside Israel. For a two-month period, construction workers from the West Bank were sequestered at work sites in Israel to reduce movement of people between the territories while also minimizing economic losses. This turn of events illustrates the ad hoc economic interests underlying Israeli security policy toward the West Bank.

Introduction

Since 1967, Israeli colonial rule governed Palestinians in the West Bank according to two principles. Demographically, Israel managed Palestinians as non-citizen subjects and governed them through a variety of exclusionary policies aimed at separating them from Israeli citizens (Gordon 2008). Economically, successive regulations rendered the Palestinian economy dependent on, and integrated into, the much more advanced Israeli economy (Taghdisi-Rad 2014). One of the core features of dependency is low-wage Palestinian labour that, from the outset, commuted daily to workplaces in Israel. The practical combination between population-exclusion and economy-inclusion shifted throughout the years, and since 2005 it was organized around the West Bank–Israeli separation barrier, commonly known as the Segregation Wall or just 'the Wall', which was constructed primarily between 2002 and 2005.[1] Since then, Palestinian labour commuting from the West Bank into Israel has followed a cross-border mechanism through designated crossing gates. Yet, Israeli border policies were keen on organizing Palestinian employment inside Israel during the day and locking them out at night in their residential areas behind the Wall. The breakout of COVID-19 upended the segregation function of the Wall and, for the first time, Israel permitted Palestinian labour migrants to reside inside Israel for an extended period. By exploring the factors motivating this extraordinary policy alteration, this essay challenges the general understanding according to which the Israeli military and other governmental agencies exclusively determine the functioning of the Segregation Wall (Braverman 2011; Farsakh 2005a). The interpretation offered here highlights the West Bank–Israel barrier as a site for state-society interactions and emphasizes the economic interests of Israeli private sectors affecting border regulations.



* **Walid Habbas**, PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
Email: walidhabbas1980@gmail.com Twitter: @walidhabbas

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Palestinian Migrant Labour Across the Wall

In 1972, the Israeli military issued a general exit permit that allowed Palestinians in the occupied West Bank to cross freely into Israel. Consequently, labourers began commuting daily to Israeli work sites, turning labour migration into a central feature of the Palestinian–Israeli economic relationship (Farsakh 2005b). In the period between 1972 and 1991, labour crossing was relatively fluid due to the absence of physical borders between the occupied West Bank and Israel. However, migration was organized only in the daytime and labourers were never permitted to stay overnight inside Israel (Bornstein 2001). A primary Israeli governing principle that organized Palestinian low-wage labour migration was a policy of actively preventing Palestinians from changing their residency status. From the Israeli perspective, assimilating more Arab Palestinians inside Israel is considered a major demographic threat that could jeopardize the "Judaism" of the Israeli state (Lustick 2019).

Three significant political developments radically changed the crossing patterns of Palestinians that were much sought-after as a labour force while at the same time very undesired as residents. First, the outbreak of the First Palestinian Intifada (1987-1991) led to the cancellation of the general permit in January 1991; as a result, each Palestinian labourer was compelled to acquire an individual working permit to cross into Israel (Berda 2017). The second development was the introduction of the Oslo peace process in 1993, which resulted in recognition of highly-populated Palestinian areas as semi-autonomous territories under the administration of newly created Palestinian Authority.[2] Consequently, Palestinian labour migration resembled frontier commuting between two distinct economies based on a two-state model. The third event is the escalation of violent conflict during the Second Palestinian Intifada (2000-2004), which radically changed Israel's colonial mode of governing Palestinians. Territory designated for Palestinian self-rule became physically segregated, and severe restraints were imposed on Palestinian mobility by Israeli security forces. During this period, Israel institutionalized a border regime that entails a network of military checkpoints, road closures, electric fences and iron gates, as well as massive concrete walls. According to Farsakh (2005a), Palestinian self-rule localities became *de facto* labour reserves or "Bantustans". Palestinian workers living in these areas became structurally reliant on the Israeli labour market. Still, they could not commute to work without a permit issued by the Israeli military authorities.

These arrangements brought about substantial changes in the mode of Palestinian labour migration. The separation barrier, which is over 700 kilometres long, portions of which are concrete and up to eight meters high, includes designated crossing points through which Palestinian daily migration is allowed to commute after waiting in long and burdensome queues (B'Tselem 2017). The crossing points are connected to the permit system that checks the alignment of each crossing worker with Israeli security as well as economic and political considerations (Braverman 2011). During Shabbat (the Jewish weekend), Israeli holidays and various security events, closing the crossing points becomes an effective incarceration tool, and Palestinian labourers are effectively locked inside their "Bantustans".

There is a general agreement that the Segregation Wall consistently reshapes the scope of Palestinian labour migration through its blocking and sorting function (Taghdisi-Rad 2014; Farsakh 2005a).[3] However, once it was constructed as a colonial interface to organize the inflow of labour, the Wall became a potential site for state-society interactions, an issue that is mostly neglected in the available literature. The outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020 constitutes an illustrative event that highlights the role of Israeli economic actors in negotiating and transforming the segregation policies that are largely conceived as an Israeli security affair.

Upending Segregation, Saving the Economy

On the eve of the COVID-19 breakout, there were about 130,000 Palestinian migrants (about 18 percent of the West Bank work force) commuting daily to Israel, including 64 percent that work in construction (PCBS 2020). It is believed that official statistics underestimate the actual size of Palestinian migration, due to the existence undocumented labour and labour smuggling (Parizot 2012). Kamel Shachra, a prominent real estate entrepreneur in Israel, claims that the actual number of Palestinian construction workers alone likely exceeds 100,000 (author interview with Kamel Shachra, Israeli construction entrepreneur, Jerusalem, May 20, 2020). These labourers are employed in addition to 205,000 Israeli workers and about 15,000 foreign workers (Ben-Reuven 2020).

Although Israeli labour was available to substitute for Palestinian workers in the event of a sudden and prolonged border closure, Palestinian workers proved to be a critical socioeconomic factor in the Israeli economy. Not only do they constitute low-wage yet highly-experienced labour, but also, as non-citizens, they are not organized in labour unions. As a vulnerable population with little opportunity, they are willing to work under challenging conditions and relinquish labour rights (Bartram 1998).

When the West Bank–Israel border closure became a high priority on the Israeli state's agenda to curb the spread of the virus, the construction sector stood to be profoundly affected. In February 2020, this sector, including infrastructure, was responsible for 11 to 12 percent of Israel's GDP and was financed by USD 284 billion of credit from Israeli banks and other financial institutions (Ben-Reuven 2020). Uncertainty regarding the duration of the closure elevated the risk of a shock to the Israeli construction sector that could drag into other vital economic sectors (Avigal 2020), potentially bringing the entire Israeli economy to the verge of collapse.

Emergency measures prepared by the Israeli Ministry of Health were intended to be enforced in the first two weeks of March 2020 and entailed shutting down borders. This meant that Palestinian workers would remain in Palestinian areas behind the Wall and beyond the scope of Israeli emergency health measures. The fate of Palestinian labour in critical sectors, such as construction, was an important factor that postponed this decision. The Israeli Builders Association reflected on the imminent border shutdown by declaring:

> We in the association are making strenuous efforts to exclude the construction industry from the border restrictions... so that the industry will not be harmed. One of the actions taken is to allow workers from Judea and Samaria [the Israeli name of the occupied West Bank] to enter work in Israel continuously"(ACB 2020).

When the Government of Israel shut down land borders with Jordan, Egypt and the West Bank, beginning on March 18, 2020, it immediately exempted "non-nationals" whose "centre of life" was Israel (MFA 2020). This exemption implicitly referred to Palestinian construction labour and was quickly institutionalized due to the role exerted by Israeli construction entrepreneurs (author interview, Shachra, 2020). It should be emphasized that the exemption did not permit Palestinian construction labour to continue commuting on a daily basis, but rather called upon them to be segregated *inside* Israel instead of in their homes beyond the Wall. On March 18, 2020, about 60,000 Palestinians entered Israel and resided in construction sites for a duration of 60 days before the first COVID-19 wave was curbed leading to the lifting of the border closure.

Subverting the function of the Segregation Wall, which was induced by the classification of the construction industry as critical, demanded three innovations. First, in order to overcome the health risk of accommodating "non-citizens" without subjecting them to 14 days of quarantine, the Israeli Builders Association proposed to divide the workers into groups of capsules. Each capsule contained a maximum of ten workers and was treated as one body during the process of crossing into Israel, and Israeli construction companies pledged that each capsule would remain entirely on the construction site (author interview with Isaac Gurvich, deputy director-general of manpower in the Israeli Builders Association, Tel Aviv, July 21, 2020). Workers were tested for virus and were handed hand sanitizers at the beginning of each working day. Second, construction companies were required by the Israeli government to provide three meals, modest sleeping furniture and sometimes rental of apartments in order to accommodate the Palestinian workers. However, the workers were asked to increase their working hours without receiving additional wages to compensate for the new accommodation expenses (author interview, Shachra, 2020). Third, Israeli security agencies imposed additional regulations to guarantee that the Palestinian labourers remained segregated inside Israel. They were obliged to download a tracing application on their mobile devices, and Israeli security officers and patrols paid unexpected visits to construction sites to verify and ensure their segregation (Who Profits 2020).

On June 28, 2020, during the second coronavirus wave, Israel permitted Palestinian workers once again to remain overnight in Israel, this time for 35 consecutive days. However, when Israel declared the shutdown of borders during the third wave on September 18, the Palestinian workers were exempted again, but this time instead of overnighting in Israel, they were allowed to continue crossing on a daily basis. Until the coronavirus is totally contained, new unforeseeable alterations in the Wall function should be expected.

Conclusion

Since its construction primarily in 2002-2005, the West Bank–Israel Segregation Wall operated as a security apparatus to ensure that workers reside in the West Bank although the centre of their economic life was in Israel. At the outbreak of COVID-19, the interests of the Israeli construction sector, threatened by the shutdown of borders and the loss of the low-wage Palestinian labour force, upended the segregation function of the border by accommodating Palestinian labour inside Israel during the border shutdown, even allowing regular passage at a time when the country's international borders were sealed. Although the Wall remains a colonial imposition with far-reaching geopolitical consequences, the case of Palestinian construction labour during the COVID-19 pandemic reveals the role of non-state actors in negotiating and reconstructing the Wall's function. However, this did not bring about an absolute solution to the potential health risk produced by the continuous daily interactions between Palestinians and Israelis. While the West Bank–Israeli wall is a highly securitized border, it should be emphasized that it is not a barrier that separates neatly between two states. Since Israelis settlers also reside in the West Bank, the border might be better understood as a segregating edifice used to monitor the crossings of Palestinians while Israelis on both sides can still move freely. Whether Palestinian workers are segregated inside the West Bank (the pre-coronavirus arrangements), or inside Israel (during the breakout of coronavirus), Palestinian and Israeli populations could still interact on daily bases at least in parts of the West Bank. Therefore, the hardening of the Wall during the pandemic ended most Palestinian border-crossings, yet failed to totally sever daily Palestinian-Israeli interactions. The one-state reality produced after decades of Israeli settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank (Azoulay and Ophir 2013) renders the in-between borders an ineffective policy to contain the virus, yet an effective surveillance tool to monitor Palestinian mobility (Zureik 2011).

Notes

1 In 2004, the International Court of Justice stated that the West Bank–Israel barrier violated international law for extending into Palestinian territory from the Green Line (the 1949 Armistice line separating Israel from the West Bank and constituting Israel's internationally recognized border). The barrier (712 kilometres) is twice as long as the Green line (320 kilometres) and about 85 percent of its meandering route weaves through large portions of the occupied West Bank, annexing de facto Israeli settlements and fragmenting the Palestinian communities. In 2017, about 65 percent of the wall has been constructed either as a concrete wall or an electronic fence (B'Tselem 2017).

2 This did not bring Israeli colonial rule to an end. Palestinian semi-autonomous territories (known as Area A and B) are non-continuous enclaves scattered throughout the West Bank (together comprising 40 percent of the West Bank), non-militarized, and regularly subject to Israeli military closures and incursions.

3 This essay engages with critical literature on the Israeli Occupation and the function of borders in the West Bank that envision a colonial paradigm. For other perspectives please refer to Jones (2009).

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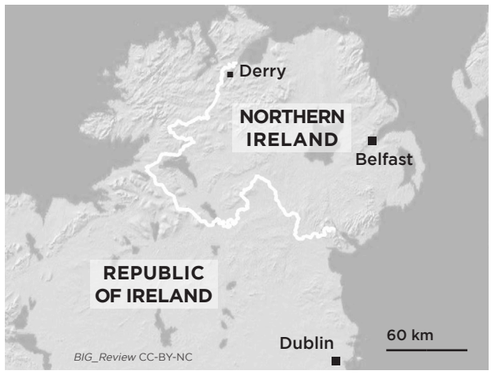
Northern Ireland: Managing COVID-19 Across Open Borders

Katy Hayward *

The early response to the coronavirus pandemic in Northern Ireland revealed three things. First, although part of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland is integrally connected in very practical ways to the Republic of Ireland. Policies and practices regarding COVID-19 on the southern side of the Irish land border had a direct impact on those being formulated for the North. Secondly, as well as differences in scientific advice and political preferences in the bordering jurisdictions, a coherent policy response was delayed by leaders' failures to communicate in a timely manner with counterparts on the other side of the border. And, thirdly, different policies on either side of an open border can fuel profound uncertainty in a borderland region; but this can give rise to community-level action that fills the gaps in ways that can actually better respond to the complexity of the situation. This essay draws on the author's close observation of events as they happened, including news coverage, press conferences and public statements from the three governments concerned over the period of March-October 2020.

The Land and Sea Borders Before COVID-19

Northern Ireland is a small region on the north-eastern part of the island of Ireland that is part of the United Kingdom. It has its own legislative Assembly and an Executive (composed of five parties in a power-sharing arrangement), which uses powers devolved from the UK Government in Westminster. Although Northern Ireland is part of the UK's National Health Service, it runs its own health policy and budget. The 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement established formal channels and institutions that allowed for cooperation across the Irish border, including in the area of health policy. Thus, the Northern Ireland Executive can form (through the North/South Ministerial Council on the island of Ireland) a common policy and approach with the Irish Government in such matters as accident and emergency planning or health promotion. What it does not do is manage its own border policy; immigration and trade policy are powers that are reserved for the UK Government in Westminster. For the most part, however (and at least before Brexit), these borders are characterized by their openness. Movements across the land and sea borders of Northern Ireland typically reflect how integrated it is with the rest of the UK and with the rest of Ireland. In trade, business, retail, the arts, sport, employment, kinship ties, and more, Northern Ireland's borders have become points of real connection rather than division. This meant that



* **Katy Hayward**, PhD, Professor of Political Sociology, Queen's University Belfast, Northern Ireland.
Email: k.hayward@qub.ac.uk Webpage: http://go.qub.ac.uk/Hayward Twitter: @hayward_katy

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managing the coronavirus pandemic was necessarily a cross-border affair. Unfortunately, it took slightly longer for the political decision-makers to adjust to this reality than those living in the borderland regions.

What Happened in Response to COVID-19

The first case of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland was diagnosed on 27 February 2020. It came in a person who arrived in Dublin Airport from Italy and then travelled North, across the Irish land border via train. The second case in Northern Ireland was in someone who had been in contact with someone in Great Britain, across the Irish Sea. In the fortnight that followed, the news of cases in Northern Ireland, in the Republic of Ireland and in Great Britain grew from a drip-drip into a steady trickle. The World Health Organization urged governments to act. The (as it turned out, short-lived) common position of the Northern Ireland Executive towards the coronavirus pandemic was announced on 12 March. First Minister Arlene Foster did not hide her irritation at the Irish Prime Minister (Taoiseach) Leo Varadkar's failure to inform her in advance of his announcement earlier that day of strict measures in the Republic of Ireland to tackle COVID-19. 'Acting together, as one nation,' Varadkar had exhorted, 'we can save many lives' (Irish Times 2020). But his failure to communicate with leaders in Northern Ireland suggested that he viewed such actions as being very much confined by the Irish land border. That this made little sense in real terms was soon exposed by those living in border communities (especially those living on one side and in employment or in education on the other). They expressed confusion as to which policies and advice they should follow.

The guidance of the chief medical officer to the Northern Ireland Executive matched that of his counterpart in the UK Government—do nothing drastic for now; it thus differed from that given by the chief medical officer to the Government of Ireland. Northern Ireland's ministers were caught by the fact that the UK and Irish scientific advice was conflicting. Their political responses were shaped by ideological preferences. The Irish nationalist parties in Northern Ireland, Sinn Féin and the SDLP, pointed south and called for a common approach on the island of Ireland. The other three parties in the power-sharing Executive—the Alliance Party, Democratic Unionist Party and Ulster Unionist Party—however, did not want to move against the medical advice that tallied with the view in London. The politicization of the 'border' question was thus reflected in the initial inability of the Northern Ireland Executive to offer clarity and to set a clear direction ahead.

In the context of political uncertainty, and without anyone particularly wishing it to be so, the reaction to the most indiscriminate and transnational threat of our time increasingly became a matter for community-level decision-making. In practice, those living in border communities, such as in the city of Derry which borders Ireland's north-western most county, opted to follow the lead of their neighbours rather than more distant advice coming from the metropolitan centres. Pressure was particularly acute on all-island organizations. The Gaelic Athletic Association announced the suspension of all its club and county activity, across Ireland and Britain. The Irish Football Association (Northern Ireland) 'having listened to partners throughout the football family' decided to suspend the season (RTÉ, 12 March, 2020). The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh (of the northern province) and Archbishop of Dublin (of the southern province) jointly issued a press release to all parishes which began: 'Follow all public health guidance provided by state authorities' (Church of Ireland 2020). The fact that the guidance could be quite different from one part of a cross-border diocese to another was a problem that was left for the parishes to manage themselves.

As political tensions rose, the leaders, health ministers and chief medical officers of the Irish Government and Northern Ireland Executive agreed to meet to discuss COVID-19 in an emergency session of the North/South Ministerial Council on 14 March 2020. The Irish Government and Executive decided to emphasize that they shared a common goal (to minimize the deaths caused by COVID-19) and differed only in terms of 'timing'. The notion that the differences in the policies between North and South were temporal rather than substantial was clever but offered little comfort, given that 'timing' is everything when it comes to avoiding an epidemiological catastrophe. Deputy Irish Prime Minister (Tánaiste) Simon Coveney admitted that he was 'in truth' 'concerned' about the openness of the Irish border for so long as the Northern Ireland Executive lagged behind the Irish Government in its movement towards lockdown. It was to be a week before the COVID-19 policies and guidance, North and South, became more closely aligned.

If a week is a long time in politics, it felt an agonizing aeon for a society worried about a virus which spread through human contact, with no regard for state boundaries. For this reason, organizations and institutions slowly began making their own decisions. St Patrick's Day parades were cancelled. Church buildings were closed. Belfast International Airport suspended passenger flights whilst Belfast City Airport and Derry City Airport were down to just a few flights a day. The universities announced the suspension of all classes. Small businesses and cafes began shutting up of their own accord. In an extraordinary way, this showed a sense of community in action.

The inching towards a sense of 'public' and the weaving of bonds of common cause among the people of Northern Ireland was only belatedly and

tenuously matched by the building of trust among the politicians responsible for protecting them. The First and deputy First ministers Foster and O'Neill were compelled to deliver policy announcements and press briefings together, but this did not result in a truly common position. In a press conference on 27 March 2020, for example, the Irish and British sign language interpreters appeared side by side, reflecting the fact that both languages are used in Northern Ireland. As the ministers answered questions from journalists, the sign language interpreters had to simultaneously interpret almost-contradictory statements, as the two leaders disagreed over the definition of 'non-essential' businesses and whether they should be closed.

But the tension was higher than party-level and far greater than personality differences. The pressure on the Northern Ireland Executive came from outside, specifically from the fact that the UK and Irish Governments had such different approaches to the pandemic. As is always the case, UK-Irish tensions had the effect of deepening strain on internal Northern Ireland politics. Perhaps recognizing this, the two Governments began to move. At the very end of March, the UK Government's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis, the Tánaiste (deputy prime minister of Ireland), the First and deputy First Ministers of Northern Ireland, and both ministers for health began having conference calls. In issuing a joint statement after their first joint meeting, the ministers promised that:

> cooperation for the practical and mutual benefit of the people living in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland will be taken forward [and they] agreed that all cooperation will be based on the need to be agile, open and consistent and that close and ongoing contact will be maintained North-South and East-West (Department of Foreign Affairs 2020).

This habit of communication began to grow. Although differences persisted in the jurisdictions (there was a less intensive virus-testing regime and a shorter self-isolation period in the North, for example), they were somewhat compensated for by community-level interpretation, which generally erred on the side of caution and helped to keep the R rates (the average number of infections stemming from one carrier) proportionately lower in Northern Ireland and Ireland than in England, Scotland or Wales.

A most substantive practical arrangement for managing the impact of the open border was the Memorandum of Understanding issued for the COVID-19 response, which came on 7 April 2020. It was to enable 'Public Health Cooperation on An All-Ireland Basis' between the Irish Department of Health and the Department of Health in Northern Ireland, and their Agencies. This document stated:

> The COVID-19 pandemic does not respect borders, therefore there is a compelling case for strong cooperation including information-sharing and, where appropriate, a common approach to action in both jurisdictions.

The Memorandum sought timely and responsive communications and decisions between the jurisdictions, common and consistent public messaging. Furthermore, it promised that:

> Consideration will be given to the potential impact of measures adopted in one jurisdiction on the other recognising that the introduction of such measures may differ.

Participants agreed to regularly update respective administrations, including via a weekly teleconference between the respective Offices of the Chief Medical Officers. Although communication did not extend quite so far as to become active 'coordination' between policy-makers, the cooperative approaches helped reduce public perception of those from the 'other' side of the border as a source of risk. Instead, people became concerned about very local borders—down to the two-metre distance that individuals were advised to maintain between each other.

Conclusion

In the coronavirus pandemic, Northern Ireland had to manage the connections as well as the risks that came from across its land and sea borders. The fact that Ireland and the UK are in one Common Travel Area set the principle of openness in the connections between their borders and citizens which went a long way towards easing some of the pressure on the Northern Ireland Executive. However, whilst it avoided some of the worst political tensions, it did give rise to some concerns. As the number of cases in the region rested at zero for several days in a row in early July, the Northern Ireland chief medical officer advised that travelers from Great Britain posed the greatest risk for bringing COVID-19 into the region. In the end, the idea of placing restrictions on entry into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK was untenable. For a region so closely integrated with both Britain and Ireland, policies tackling COVID-19 would always be a mix of the pragmatic and the ideological.

Nowhere was this more evident than in the communities living along the Irish land border. By early fall, cases were on the rise again. They were rising most rapidly this time in Ireland's north west, between Donegal and Derry. As members of the Garda Síochána (police service) took to quizzing drivers crossing the border as to whether their journey was essential, social media was alive with accusations as to which side of the border was the source of the spread. But this was rapidly becoming a problem that could not rely on local pragmatism and a sense of civic duty to address. The Chief Medical Officer advised that Northern Ireland was on the brink of a second lockdown. How would such a decision be made? All eyes turned to the two ministers leading the Northern Ireland Executive:

> First Minister Arlene Foster said any new period of full lockdown in Northern Ireland should only happen as part of a co-ordinated move across the UK. Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill said a lockdown, if it were to be required, should be undertaken across the island of Ireland (RTÉ, 2 October, 2020).

These views may reflect political preference but also pragmatism. Between them is some reasonable balance as to how to manage open borders in a region so integrated with two separate states. The effectiveness of any policy in Northern Ireland in tackling a threat of this nature—spread by human contact—remains in large part determined by what happens on the other side of its borders.

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Ukrainian Cross-Border Governance since the Beginning of COVID-19

Natalia Horobets [i]
Tatiana Shaban [ii]

European countries that are normally associated with freedom of movement have temporarily closed their internal (within the European Union) and external borders in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 starting spring 2020. Border closures have heavily impacted the whole European region, including its Eastern European neighbours. As of March, Ukraine stopped all regular passenger services, so that people were not able to leave the country by plane, train or bus. It seriously complicated routine activities of those Ukrainians who were planning to travel out of their country through Europe (and Russia) for various purposes, including work, study, and family visits.

Introduction

Ukraine followed the European integration course since it gained independence in 1991 by liberalising its market, introducing governmental reforms and committing to the rule of law. European Union (EU) Member States supported democratic changes and good governance reforms in Ukraine, provided financial aid and professional expertise, and introduced other supportive actions to the government and people of Ukraine. The EU visa-free regime with Ukraine, announced in June 2017, was among those numerous arrangements aimed at facilitating people-to-people contacts as an important condition for further development of economic, humanitarian, cultural, scientific, and other ties between the EU and Ukraine. According to Hugues Mingarelli, who served as the Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine in 2017, Ukrainians had the opportunity to travel to 33 countries of Western Europe without any visa requirements, which made a dream of being in "one (European) family soon" more real than ever (Mingarelli 2017).

Ukrainian Cross-Border Governance

Negotiations of the Visa Facilitation Regime between the EU and Ukraine started long before 2017 and was accompanied by a Political Declaration on Local Border Traffic (LBT)[1] from Poland, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, and Romania. The 2006 EU Regulation made it possible for EU countries and Schengen non-EU members (Schengen refers to an agreement between European countries to lift border controls between themselves) to conclude agreements with neighbouring states on a visa-free land-border regime for residents within a 30-to-50 kilometre zone on either sides of the border (Yeliseyeu 2014, 11). After the 2014 political revolution in Ukraine, followed by economic collapse and civil war in the eastern part of the country, millions of Ukrainians traveled to Poland and further west to find work or refuge. According to Ukraine's Chief of the Ukrainian Mission of the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) Manfred Profazi, "migrant workers are clearly biggest investors in the economy of Ukraine" (IOM 2016). The largest influx of Ukrainians to work in Poland for industries like catering, construction, manufacturing, farming, etc, was recorded in 2017, as shown in the number of work permits issued by year (see Table 1). Employers from Poland actively looked east to fill gaps in the labour market. However, administrative obstacles for getting visas and related documents were difficult to overcome as shown by the discrepancy between the number of declarations of intent and actual number of work permits issued to Ukrainian citizens from 2013 to 2017.. Before 2017 Ukrainian citizens would have entered Poland on temporary visas for a few months at a time and then returned home. After the introduction of the visa-free regime[2] by the EU they did not need visas to enter Poland; however, permissions to work and residence permits[3] were necessary if they intended to work for more than three months (see Table 1).

Many Ukrainians worked, studied and traveled not only in Poland, but to Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Russia and many other countries. However, the COVID-19 outbreak has ruined their everyday plans. European countries that were normally associated with freedom of movement had temporarily closed their internal (within the EU) and external borders in response to the pandemic. Border closures heavily affected the whole European region, including its Eastern European neighbours. Ukraine aligned itself with the European and World Health Organisation (WHO/Europe) standards and locked external borders and all border crossings, declaring borders shut down both for foreigners from 16 March and for Ukrainian citizens by the end of the day of 27 March. Railway travel with Slovakia was stopped on 13 March and with Poland on 15 March (Ukrainian railway 2020). Ukrainian government cut all railway travel with other countries from 17 March and internal railway travel on 18 March until the end of quarantine period (initially it was set for 3 April, later prolonged to 22 May). Also, parliament announced that air travel was completely restricted from 17 March. Those decisions provoked some panic among thousands of Ukrainian citizens in Poland who rushed to return to their home country. Hundreds of people tried crossing the Polish–Ukrainian border on foot, risking their own health and health of others (see Figure 1).

	No. of Work Permits issued to Ukrainian citizens	No. of Declarations of Intent to Employ Issued to Ukrainian Citizens
2013	20,416	217,571
2014	20,945	372,346
2015	50,465	762,700
2016	103,208	1,262,845
2017	192,547	1,714.891

Table 1. Number of Work Permits and Declarations of Intent Issued to Employ Ukrainian Citizens during 2013-2017. Data generated by Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Poland. Cited in Jaroszewicz (2018).

According to the Public Health Center and Ministry of Healthcare report of 23 April, 93 percent of Ukrainians with confirmed cases of COVID-19 were infected abroad (Public Health Centre 2020). On 23 April, more than seven thousand Ukrainian citizens were infected with the novel coronavirus and a total of 187 died (Public Health Centre 2020). Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that all foreigners, apart from diplomats, without temporary or permanent residency status "will not be able to enter neither by plane, nor by car, nor by train" (UNIAN Information Agency 2020). Concerning Ukrainian citizens, tourists had been advised to return home prior to 17 March.

We asked 10 random Ukrainians who crossed borders by different means of transportation (by car, bus, on foot and by air) on their way to Ukraine from Poland, Czech Republic, Russia and Luhansk region what had changed on the border because of the COVID-19.[4] Those were people who frequently crossed Ukrainian borders before the pandemic due to work and family reasons. That random questionnaire allowed us to

Figue 1. Ukrainian-Polish border. Ukrainians returning home after their government decision to close borders. Photo: European Pravda, https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/

i **Natalia Horobets**, professor, Department of Law, Sumy Branch of Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs. Contact: justitsia.n@gmail.com
ii **Tatiana Shaban,** Post-Doc Scholar, Centre for Global Studies, University of Victoria, Canada. Contact: tshaban@uvic.ca https://www.linkedin.com/in/tatiana-shaban-81759925/ https://twitter.com/tatiana903?lang=en

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better understand how Ukrainians felt themselves on the border right after the COVID-19 closures, whether they thought the border responses were adequate to the emergency and which early measures were taken to support their wellbeing. That information did not allow us to generalise or make solid conclusions. However, it let us select original impressions of how effective responses of the Ukrainian government to the emergency have been. This research is important given the government's ongoing efforts to build its social capital and trust among ordinary Ukrainians as well as its international reputation.

Ukrainians who crossed the Polish border on their return to Ukraine generally reported no changes or minor changes which took place on the Polish side. They reported that people and staff started wearing masks, gloves, and used sanitizers. However, Ukrainians felt safer on the Ukrainian side rather than on the Polish side of the border, mainly due to lack of safety measures (Figure 1). It was impossible to respect social distancing, for instance. On the Ukrainian side of the border, all people entering Ukraine underwent temperature screening and free express tests for COVID-19. All safety measures were voluntary apart from obligatory quarantine period of 14 days. People reported reduction in the number of vehicles on the border which together with restrictions concerning the use of public transport increased transportation costs through Ukraine drastically during those days. It became ten times more costly to get to any necessary destination point in Ukraine, according to an interview conducted over Skype.

Also, Ukrainians stated noticeable changes in staffing on the border: medical, social, and voluntary workers in addition to custom officers and police stayed on duty. Border-crossers were asked questions about their health and wellbeing which delayed significantly their return home. However, that delay was understood as justified by the majority of respondents and the process of border crossing since the beginning of pandemic had been perceived as mostly adequate. Respondents paid attention to a lack of some information on certain changes and new procedures during COVID-19. Most of their information came from friends and from Facebook; only limited information was obtained from official websites. One respondent who volunteered on the eastern border of Ukraine reported a serious decrease of number of people crossing the Luhansk/Ukraine (internal) border. The border crossing there slowed to 50 people instead of the usual 14,000 per day (Skype interview).

Apart from actions mentioned above, the Ukrainian government implemented other important measures on border management during the COVID-19 crisis. These included: 1) posting information about preventive measures adopted by the State Customs Service, including an interactive map detailing reduced crossing points, on the State Customs Service's website (State Customs Service); 2) placing important information and updates for Ukrainian citizens travelling abroad on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' (MFA) website (MFA of Ukraine, Updated 21 June 2020); and 3) developed a free and voluntary mobile application for smartphones called "Act at Home"[5] for Ukrainians to stay connected with the latest government health information and track their social distancing and, when necessary, quarantines and isolation.

Conclusion

The closure of the borders led to a massive return of Ukrainian citizens working abroad, which progressively contributed to an increase in COVID-19 cases. Then, during April and May, the situation become steadier and under control. Further spread occurred due to internal movements of citizens around the country after the government relaxed quarantine measures. According to official government figures of October 2020, Ukraine had 250,538 laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 in total, of which 4,779 people died (Ministry of Finance 2020). Moreover, due to a deteriorating healthcare system (OECD 2020), Ukraine's population became particularly vulnerable to the disease. According to the World Bank (2019), the country had a GDP per capita of just $3,659, making it the poorest country in Europe.

The Ministry of Health of Ukraine developed criteria for "zoning" countries depending on the spread of COVID-19 per 100,000 people. It created a 'Red Zone' and a 'Green Zone' country lists. Citizens of countries on the 'Green Zone' list could come in with no quarantine period if they traveled directly from the country (see the government's website VisitUkraine.today). On 15 June, foreigners who were not citizens of countries with a significant prevalence of COVID-19 and had not been on the territory of such countries for the past 14 days were allowed to enter Ukraine" (Ministry of Internal Affairs 2020). Ukrainian checkpoints were "locked up" for three months since their initial closure. In June the country gradually emerged from strict quarantine measures. Ukraine officially reopened for tourism on 15 June, 2020, lifting the entry ban for foreigners and resuming maximum of commercial flights. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced border traffic and changed border crossing dynamics in Ukraine. Demand for more stringent and technological management of border traffic regimes in areas of mobility, security, and public health has increased.

Notes

1 Regulation (EC) No 1931/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 laying down rules on local border traffic at the external land borders of the Member States and amending the provisions of the Schengen Convention. OJ L 405, 31.12.2006.

2 As of 11 June 2017, the visa obligation for citizens of Ukraine who hold a biometric passport and want to travel to the Schengen zone for a short stay was abolished (Official Journal of the European Union 2017).

3 The main origin country of persons who received permits in Europe is Ukraine (500,000, 19 percent of all in Europe), 86 percent of them (430,000) were issued in Poland. (Urząd do Spraw Cudzoziemców 2016).

4 We prepared a simple questionnaire in Ukrainian language about crossing the Ukrainian border since the beginning of COVID-19. Questionnaire contained information about personal safety, health measures, and other noticeable changes that border crossers encountered at their regular border crossing points after the virus outbreak. It was conducted in April and May 2020. Respondents answered questions by phone, skype, and email. With this paper we want to acknowledge the time and effort they spent. Therefore, special thanks go to Dmytro Rybalka, Pogorilyi Eduard, Morenets Elena, Rodionova Elena, Pronin Vitaliy, Luts Eduard, Zomareva Vlada and three other anonymous respondents from Ukraine.

5 The application is designed to maintain contact with the person and control the observance of obligatory self-isolation during the quarantine period. Its installation is voluntary. If a person chooses self-isolation with the Act at Home app, he or she must confirm this decision when passing the passport. Act at Home can only be installed by citizens with Ukrainian phone numbers (+380).

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The Mexico–Guatemala Border During COVID-19: From Open Border to New Assemblage?

Edith Kauffer *

The dynamics at the Mexican–Guatemalan border drastically changed from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper deals with these transformations and tries to evidence a new assemblage that has resulted. The rationale that prevailed until the beginning of 2020 between Mexico and Guatemala was a south-north selective open border derived from migratory controls applied to travelers according to their citizenship and their US or Canadian migratory status. From March until October, 2020 the pandemic gave birth to a new north-south rationale organized around a selective closure: the Guatemalan border was totally closed except to Guatemalans that were allowed to return to their country. On the Mexican side, communitarian, municipal, and local boundaries were established to curb the spread of COVID-19.

Introduction

Established at the end of the 19th century, the international boundary between Mexico and Guatemala was a model of a selective open border based on a south-north rationale until March, 2020. The crossing gates controlled migrations from south to north depending selectively on the travelers' citizenship and their North American migratory status: Mexicans crossed the border in both direction without inconvenience while Guatemalans were subject to severe controls entering Mexico. The Mexican border was scarcely monitored by a few dispersed official crossings with migration and tax offices along an imaginary line of almost 956 kilometres. An entanglement of rivers and tropical forests characterizes the borderlands, clearly evidenced by a ten-metre wide deforestation area scattered with boundary monuments. In 2014, the Mexican State developed a series of sophisticated control and supervision points that concentrate federal offices to face migrations transiting from South and Central America to North America, built between 80 and 115 kilometres away from the border: three of these big installations were installed in the states of Chiapas and Tabasco (Kauffer 2020). Countless pathways supervised by local Mexican inhabitants shaped the border as a huge no-man's land that favored transboundary relations, human and animal movements, and an unregulated universe of multiple activities. In the absence of systematic controls, the south-north border was open but remained selective at the control points.

* **Edith Kauffer**, PhD in Political Science, Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (CIESAS)-Sureste, Mexico. Contact: ekauffer@ciesas.edu.mx

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This selective open boundary shared with Guatemala has been a delicate issue, going back to the border's establishment in the 19th century, based on unfair negotiations, according to Guatemalan perspectives, and continued tensions throughout the 20th century. Security issues intensified when Guatemalan refugees arrived in Mexico at the beginning of the 1980s and settled close to the border. Furthermore, during the last three decades, migration from Central and South America, and other continents, crossed the border to reach North America, converting these borderlands into a US south-north control area (Coleman 2005). More recently, the migrant caravans that travelled from Central America to the United States in late 2018 revealed a complex phenomenon between a welcome openness policy at the end of 2018 followed by a strict closure from 2019 onwards.[1] Thus, Central Americans were first welcomed without migratory controls and received public and private aid to enter and cross Mexico to reach the US border until the Mexican government was pushed by the US executive to change policy. That event evidences how the selective open border also follows international politics imperatives.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed the dynamics of the Mexican–Guatemalan border in at least two important ways. First, the traditional rationale tried to adapt to new circumstances. Second, on the Mexican side of the border, multiple internal borders began to appear. These new realities shape a new assemblage of borders, the focus of this paper.

The "Borders" Between Mexico and Guatemala: Selective Openness

Shortly after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March, 2020, Mexico's three neighbor countries unilaterally closed their borders: Guatemala on March, 17th, and Belize and the United States on March 21st, 2020. In stark contrast to many countries in the world, Mexico did not close its borders. This strict Guatemalan closure was repeatedly extended between March and September 18, when the government announced the re-opening of its borders.

Traditionally, the difficulty of crossing borders into North America from south to north depended on the travelers' citizenship. Among those borders, the Mexico–Guatemala border was the most porous of the region, though the experience of crossing could be totally different depending on the place, the direction, and the chosen modality of crossing, whether at an official gate or through an informal pathway.

Two rivers, originating in Guatemala, define 59 percent of the international border. On the Pacific coast, the Suchiate River divides the countries for 77 kilometres before connecting with the Pacific Ocean (Kauffer 2017). The Usumacinta River flows south to north, along 363 kilometres in Guatemala, where it is known as Salinas-La Pasión River, then it delineates 365 kilometres of the international border, and converts into a state border in Mexico between Chiapas and Tabasco before reaching the Gulf of Mexico 386 kilometres downstream (Kauffer 2013). The land border, in some cases, passes through small urban areas with twin communities, such as Ciudad Hidalgo (Mexico) and Tecún Uman (Guatemala), or connects rural localities, such as Tziscao (Mexico) and El Quetzal (Guatemala), but the main part of the boundary consists of small rural and isolated localities, tropical forests such as the Lacandona Jungle (Mexico) and the Maya Biosphere (Guatemala) and other protected areas.

In this context, the interactions with the border are multiple. A deep empirical difference deals with the existence of a legal, formal and an established border in contrast with an informal boundary, experienced at local scale.

Only eight official inspection stations are distributed along the 956 kilometres and, according to the Mexican Exterior Relations Secretary (SRE 2013), there are 56 unofficial crossings accessible by car. Today, there are probably more, because of ongoing deforestation and new drug routes. The number of footways is impossible to evaluate.

To cross the border from Mexico (north) to Guatemala (south), they are various possibilities depending on the objective: visiting friends or shopping on the other side, for example to El Ceibo, La Mesilla, and Tecún Unám, Guatemala, was possible crossing through official crossings with a visa to enter Guatemala or with a Mexican ID. It was also possible to avoid official monitoring by walking through paths located a few metres away or using the informal border services to transport merchandise without custom controls. Once in the proximity of the border, the transboundary service providers are always ready to negotiate. In more remote areas, where there are no official crossings, the border is invisible except for white signposts and the ten-metre strip of deforestation that indicates the political delimitation.

To cross the border from Guatemala (south) to Mexico (north), the modalities are the same as the former but the official inspection stations on the Mexican side are more strictly controlled, especially if the traveler does not hold a Mexican ID, a US, Canadian, or European passport, or a US Visa. Mexican citizens must typically register, although it depends on the crossing point, and only need basic ID. Foreigners must fill documents and queue up. Finally, there also exist the option of using the nearby unofficial paths or dealing with the informal transboundary service providers for crossing.

Along the border, informal ways are located in rural localities that organized their own community customs

and "tax" services according to volumes and types of merchandise. Berke Galemba (2018) studied one of the most organized and famous places where big trailers arrived and locals organized transfers to Mexican trucks. The number of informal points increased during the last fifteen years where local populations controlled the crossings, revealing an interesting phenomenon of privatization of the border. Finally, where no official or local crossing points exist, crossing was often easy, and sometimes the faster way to travel between two places in Guatemala was crossing through Mexico.

At official crossing points, informal modalities are tolerated and completely observable during fieldwork at horizontal scale –parallel transboundary unofficial paths– as well as at vertical scale like the official crossings through the bridges on the Suchiate River and the informal ones under them walking or biking in the river or by balsas –small boats made with trailer tubes and wooden plank or trunks– that coexist with the Mexican government's inspection stations.

Transboundary communication across the Usumacinta River depends on local inhabitants because there is no bridge and only one official inspection station in the Mundo Maya (Maya World) tourism route. Nevertheless, besides people and merchandise, cattle and also sometimes cars, can be observed navigating the biggest river of Mexico, Guatemala and Central America.

The south-north rationale that defines the traditional dynamics of the border is established to control above all, migration. Selective openness on this border depends on the direction, passport holder's citizenship, crossing points and the decision to cross formally or not. Completely open from north to south but characterized by a selective openness form south to north, the Mexican–Guatemalan border and the Guatemalan–Mexican border shape two different experiences. Consequently, the south-north rationale in addition to the above-described modalities delineate multiple "borders" according to individual and collective experiences along this imaginary line.

COVID-19 and New Assemblage: Inverted Rationale and New Internal Borders

Based on previous fieldwork (1994 to March 4th, 2020) and current online research, the paper now explores how the pre-COVID-19 borders based on a selective openness converted themselves into a new assemblage.

The closure of the border by Guatemala was the first event that changed the logics of the former selective open border. From this event and until the end of the critical situation when the border opened in mid-September, COVID-19 was considered as an external threat. Guatemalan borders were totally closed, air connections interrupted, and only nationals were allowed to enter the country by land. A sanitary filter was organized at the formal border crossings and people sent to quarantine if they were considered potentially infectious. To control the entries and impose this new north-south rationale, the military and the National Police were sent to the Guatemalan borders, especially to the official inspection points.

At the end of May, the Guatemalan president declared that Mexico, that had not closed its borders, was responsible for the increasing numbers of infection in Guatemala. Some days later, the Guatemalan government opened a new monitoring point in Los Ingenieros on the border that corresponds to an existing Mexican official crossing located in a rural remote area, Frontera Orizaba, probably to increase the control. Controlling people's movements was the new north-south rationale applied to the pandemic as a selective border closure policy.

To cross into Mexico during the Guatemalan border closure, the official inspection point included sanitary filters consisting of taking temperature and sharing information about social distancing, that were added to the other requirements about documentation according to the crosser's citizenship. Inside Mexico, some mayors closed the borders of their municipalities to counteract risks associated with the openness of the Mexican international border.

The idea of the external origin of the contagion at local scale has been a powerful motivator to contain the pandemic in Mexico. Agrarian communities, small localities located along the international border, as well as municipalities, decided to close entry to outsiders as well as imposing mobility restrictions on their inhabitants. Thus, tourism-oriented communities closed the door to tourism and imposed quarantine on returned residents from the US, the northern border of Mexico, the Riviera Maya, and from the cities. In Chiapas, three bordering municipalities among 18 haven't officially registered any cases of COVID-19 during the first five months of the pandemic (March-July). For example, the municipality of Las Margaritas was closed on May 17, by the mayor due to the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in the neighboring Ocosingo, the most extended municipality of the whole border in Chiapas. As a matter of fact, Ocosingo had been unsuccessfully closed from April 14, 2020. The bordering state of Tabasco, one of the most affected by the epidemic at national scale in Mexico decided to put sanitary filters –consisting in temperature tests and restricting the people's mobility between municipalities to "essential reasons"– to control the expansion of the illness throughout its territory.

These internal borders were organized with the participation of the local population who controlled entries and exits from the localities and in some cases,

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they were linked with political organizations. In Chiapas, the EZLN (National Liberation Zapatista Army) announced the closure of its affiliated communities as well as all its meeting centers on March 16.

Eventually, the informal transboundary dynamics followed their own way although most of them have been restricted by the new international and local borders above mentioned and by the boundaries that have resulted from the real and imagined threats personified by foreigners, migrants, and tourists. Nevertheless, transboundary informal crossings increased during the summer 2020, especially to evade Guatemalan military control. For example, men carrying merchandise and people crossing the waters of the Suchiate River were observed as a result of the prohibition of the balsas.

At national scale in Guatemala and at local scale in Mexico, the boundaries appeared to be the main strategy for containing the transboundary COVID-19 expansion: a strategy to control freedom of movement and transits, including quarantine, without clear health policy measures. During the closure, Guatemalan citizens were only tested for temperature and when the international borders opened, all the travelers were asked to present a negative PCR test processed within 72 hours prior to crossing and to wear masks.

After six months of closure, the situation on the bordering municipalities in both countries evidenced that a single strategy of movement control, lacking a clear articulation of transboundary health policy, has not impeded the transmission of the novel coronavirus; in October 2020, the sole exception in the borderlands is one municipality of Chiapas, Maravilla Tenejapa, that has not officially registered any case of COVID-19 during the first phase of the pandemic.

Conclusion

The border between Mexico and Guatemala during COVID-19 times presented an apparent new dynamic that combined a traditional selective south-north openness with a selective north-south closure related to the pandemic. Nevertheless, while the traditional openness is defined by migrations, the closure was supposed to be established to control the pandemic but without a specific health-oriented rationale.

In this dual border characterized by formal and informal crossing points, the Guatemalan closure directly concerned the control stations while transboundary movements were supposed to continue. During the first weeks, transboundary activities were reduced but later, an increased phenomenon linked with new informal modalities appeared to counteract the new transboundary north-south conditions. Furthermore, this emerging assemblage of old and new local and international boundaries focused on the control of people's mobility clearly attests to the entanglement of the traditional south-north rationale with north-south and local dynamics enforced by the novel coronavirus. In the Guatemalan–Mexican borderlands, the logics of establishing borders to control the crossings of the people was extended to the COVID pandemic to design a new assemblage in which transboundary health issues followed the traditional south-north rationale: a selective control of humans merged with ineffective results in containment.

Note

1 It was impossible to travel to the border to collect direct information for this paper: fieldwork activities were interrupted by the pandemic in mid-March, 2020, and they will not be officially able to restart until January, 2021. As the paper evidences, access to villages was canceled and a prohibition on fieldwork was directed from my research center. Research was based on secondary sources from Mexican and Guatemalan media, a detailed review of enacted Guatemalan executive ordinances, the Guatemalan Congress Agreements and Ordinances and the National Guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance, from March to September, 2020. Due to the scarcity of Guatemalan information during the first months, I contacted Guatemalan colleagues in order to confirm some data and to be aware of new publications. It was not possible to access data about the numbers of infections and deaths in the Guatemalan borderlands until September, 2020.

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The Danish–German Border in Times of COVID-19

Martin Klatt *

The Danish–German border in the Schleswig region was drawn in 1920. It separated a hitherto economically and socially integrated region, taking into account the right of national self-determination. Since the late 20th century, Danish and German stakeholders have celebrated a narrative of overcoming the border. Thus, it came as a shock to local stakeholders when the border was closed in mid-March 2020 to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The border subsequently reopened in steps with more or less free travel in the summer. Since October, however, new restrictions were imposed as infection numbers began rising in both countries.

Introduction

Denmark was one of the first countries in Europe to react to COVID-19 with a lockdown from 14 March 2020, including the closures of all its national borders. Germany followed two days later, but closed borders selectively: land borders to adjoining Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and Austria were closed, as was air travel from Spain, France and Italy. Germany's land border points of entry from the Netherlands, Poland, the Czech Republic, Sweden (ferry), Finland (ferry) and Lithuania (ferry) remained open in principle, as did air travel within the Schengen zone; but travel limitations existed as Poland, Lithuania, Finland and the Czech Republic had closed their borders for inbound travel. In fact, only the German–Dutch border remained uncontrolled during the COVID-19 crisis; but there was a travel warning.

This paper will briefly explain the situation at the Danish–German border before COVID-19, the situation during the lockdown and the gradual re-opening process.[1]

The Danish–German Border: A Schengen Euroregion

The European Union (EU) Schengen system of open borders for free movement of people within Europe was implemented at the Danish–German border in March 2001. This included the destruction of control buildings, as well as the opening of minor road crossings as well as bike and pedestrian trails. There was even set up a special cross-border bike trail, the *Grenzroute/grænserute*, co-funded with the EU's program for cross-border cooperation, Interreg. Hence, customs or police control only occurred on a random basis, and not immediately at the border crossing points. In early summer 2011, the right-liberal Danish government reintroduced 24/7 custom controls at the border in a domestic political trade-off to get parliamentary support for a pension reform. This move was renounced a few months later after a shift of government and pressure from the EU, Germany and regional political stakeholders (Wind 2012). During the so-called migration crisis of autumn 2015, though, the issue of renewed controls came on the agenda again. In January 2016, Denmark, in line with Sweden, Germany and Austria, introduced border controls for northbound travel. These controls functioned within the Schengen agreement's provision to enact temporary border controls in case of events that threaten law and order. The controls were renewed about every two months, since June 2017 with the argument of the continuous threat of terror. In practice, these controls were at random. Only three of the 17 road crossings were manned 24/7, and vehicles were taken out for inspection on specific profiles only, especially people driving cars registered with Central and Eastern European license plates, and Middle Eastern looking persons had a higher risk of being asked to show travel documents (Klatt 2020). When the African swine fever approached central Europe with the first cases detected in Poland, Denmark decided to construct a fence along the land border to Germany to prevent wild boars from entering the country in late 2018. Even though the usefulness of the fence was debated among experts, construction finished in November 2019. The wild boar fence is the first fencing of the Danish–German border ever, except for provisional fences erected immediately after World War II.

The Border After the COVID-19 Closure

The border closure was announced by the Danish government on Friday, 13 March, in the evening, only a few hours after the Danish foreign minister had affirmed that Denmark would not close her borders. This year is the border's 100th anniversary: it was drawn in 1920 to solve a conflict on the region's national belonging to a Danish or German nation state. The exact line of the border was confirmed in two internationally supervised plebiscites, so it is one of the few borders in the world the people voted on (Fink 1979). The 2020 centennial was supposed to be a year of celebration: of the reunification of the northern part of the Schleswig region with Denmark, but also reconciliation with Germany and accommodation of national conflict into a system of national minorities with cultural autonomy (Danes in northern Germany, Germans in southern Denmark) which made claims for border revision unnecessary. Ironically the celebrations carried a narrative of overcoming of the border in daily life. The sudden closure came as a shock to the mayor of Germany's border city Flensburg, who criticized the decision both on a practical basis (the virus was already in Denmark, therefore isolating infected people seemed a more appropriate response) and an emotional basis (the ideal of Europe without borders was put on ice, and the 100th anniversary celebrations had lost their meaning). The mayor was supported by the German state Schleswig-Holstein's government expressing surprise and disappointment. Several stakeholders criticized the border closure, especially the two national minorities used a narrative of a lifeline being cut, accentuated by the unfortunate coincidence of the border's 100th anniversary.

In effect, Germany followed quickly two days later and closed the border for most entries from Denmark effective 16 March. Out of the 17 crossings, only three road crossings, two rail lines (with reduced service) and two ferry crossings remained open. The closed crossings were barred with concrete blocks and mobile road bars. Controls have been rather rigorous with travelers being asked to document the purpose of their visit. On the Danish side, the crossing points are (still) staffed with police and volunteers from *Hjemmeværnet* (the home-guard militia); in effect the volunteers take a six-months furlough from their regular jobs and receive fully paid work contracts with the Danish Ministry of Justice. On the German side, the federal police *Bundespolizei* manned mobile border control posts. These were removed from 11 June, except for the international main line trains, which are still checked on arrival at the German train station in Flensburg.

The border closure was never total: commuters, goods and the persons transporting them, health service staff and children of separated parents were permitted to cross the border at any time, if they provided documentation. The German state of Schleswig-Holstein imposed a 14-day quarantine on any person entering the country who had been away for more than 48 hours, or five days in case of commuters. From mid-April, Denmark eased access to include parents visiting children and vice versa, as well as couples in a long-standing relationship, meaning having resided together. From 18 May, Germany allowed extended family visits (children, grandparents, siblings, in-laws; all only in case of important family events). At the same time, quarantine rules were dropped for people entering from EU and European Economic Area (EEA) countries as well as from the United Kingdom (UK). From 11 June, there have been no more entry restrictions to Germany for residents of EU, EEA and the UK, but quarantine rules still apply for entries from COVID-19 risk regions according to the daily updated Robert Koch Institute's list (more than 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants within a week). From 15 June, Denmark allowed tourists from Germany, Iceland and Norway to enter if they can document a hotel/campground/summer cottage booking of at least six nights; residents of the neighboring German state of Schleswig-Holstein have a waiver of this rule and may enter Denmark at any time. There is now a mobile COVID-19 test station on the Danish side of the border manned by Region South Denmark health services staff. By September, all small border crossings reopened and border controls entering Denmark have been reduced to pre-lockdown level.

* **Martin Klatt**, PhD, Centre for Border Region Studies, University of Southern Denmark. Email: mk@sam.sdu.dk
Twitter: @klatt_mk

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The 100th anniversary celebrations have become a sacrifice to the coronavirus crisis. The festivities were to start with a one-day historical conference in the Danish parliament, followed by music performance and a reception in the Danish Royal Theatre. A wide range of cultural, scientific and political events had been planned, many in a cross-border perspective. The climax was a planned visit of Queen Margrethe in June, with a reenactment of King Christian X's ride across the pre-1920 border on a white horse. All these events were cancelled or moved to spring 2021, in the hope that the virus will be under control by then. This setback for the multinational and cross-border celebration of the centennial year has a high symbolic impact, the consequences of which cannot be known, yet.

The border closure has increased awareness of cross-border flows and social interaction. The euroregional office Infocenter was suddenly confronted with many issues. On social media, people have exchanged advice on how to deal with issues caused by the border closure in different Facebook groups.[2] Especially the two national minorities were active agents pressuring to reopen the border. They appealed to the necessity of cross-border cultural and personal contacts and the low infection rate in the border region. However, regional institutional cooperation has come to a total standstill.

In effect, cases affecting border region residents present a variety of disrupted cross-border living practices, not only relevant to the national minorities residing in the region: people in the process of moving into the other country, house construction on the other side of the border, child custody issues, living together with a partner who had not registered his/her address, acute family crisis/separation, and also simple issues as access to farmland, a riding horse, a sailboat or machines stored on the other side of the border. The local tourism industry and cross-border shopping centers have suffered. With the reopening, though, there are indications that border crossing practices are in the process of returning to pre-COVID-19 levels. This is partly due to the COVID-19 restrictions Denmark had imposed on her citizens' foreign travel until the beginning of July, when only travel to Germany, Norway and Iceland was allowed. In

Figure 1. Closed border crossings between Denmark and Germany, late March, 2020. Photo credit: M. Klatt.

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consequence, many Danes stayed within the country during the summer instead of travelling to Southern European or overseas destinations.

Conclusions: Renaissance of the Executive

The state's return as the central single actor during the COVID-19 crisis has probably had more impact in border regions than elsewhere. Here, it has replaced formal and informal practices of cross-border multi-level governance. Measures were taken from a state-centered perspective, regarding the state as a bordered container. This implies the exceptions allowed for border crossings during the first weeks of closure: they were all seen in a critical infrastructure framework. Later easing included social aspects, too. But even the opening for tourism to Denmark was effectuated because of domestic political pressure from the tourism industry, against considerable reluctance from the national government. Furthermore, a national rhetoric has dominated government statements especially in Denmark, warlike by naming COVID-19 the country's worst crisis since the traumatic German occupation in WW II, talking about *Danes* and crisis and *foreign* threat. Especially Sweden's more relaxed approach to fighting the pandemic was antagonized rhetorically. When the Danish prime minister presented her government's original four phase plan to reopen Danish society in April shortly after Easter, opening the borders was not even on the agenda of phase four.

Cross-border cooperation within Euroregion Sønderjylland-Schleswig has been set on standby mode. Cross-border rescue services have been suspended, as have meetings in the three-municipality (cross-)Border Triangle. Deeper issues of built-up trust and familiarity are at stake. On the other hand, COVID-19 has demonstrated the extensive interaction on business and personal levels, as well as the density of multiple flows and social interaction across the border. It also has demonstrated stakeholders' and especially the two national minorities' ability to mobilize support and influence government decisions of easing the closure for certain people and flows. The reopening showed a rather quick return to normal. Danes shop in Flensburg again, and Germans still go on holidays in Denmark. Still, incentives to engage in cross-border cooperation will probably move away from a constructivist cross-border region approach with commitments to permanent institutional cooperation and infrastructure sharing to a more flow-oriented, *border as a resource* (Sohn 2014) approach. People cross the border to exploit differences to engage in profitable economic and social cooperation, as shopping, leisure travelling and work-related commuting.

Notes

1 This essay builds on the author's long-standing research on the Danish–German border region, observations during the COVID-19 lockdown and border closure, information provided by the Border Information Centre and media analysis. Observations may be biased by the author's personal experience as a cross-border commuter and transnational borderlander directly affected by the border closure.

2 *Flensbook – for danskere i Flensborg* (predominantly Danish citizens having moved to Flensburg), *Arbeiten in Dänemark* ('Work in Denmark', predominantly Germans commuting to Denmark), *Einreiseverbot Dänemark* ('Prohibition of Entry into Denmark', predominantly Germans affected by the border closure, many tourists) and *Åbn Grænsen NU* ('Open the Border Now', predominantly members of the two national minorities).

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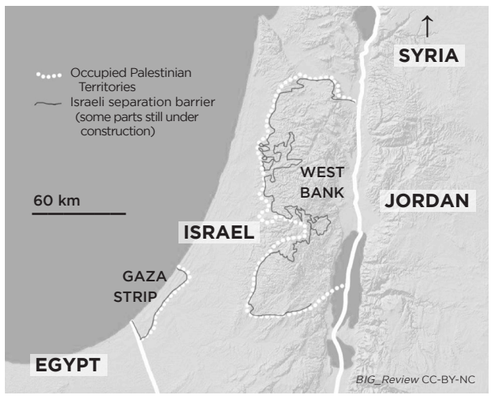
Israel / Palestine Borders and the Impact of COVID-19

David Newman *

This short paper reviews the ways in which the Israeli government has managed the impact of COVID-19, with a special emphasis on the diverse border regimes—from the national to the personal. Israel has experienced two distinct phases of COVID-19, the first involving relatively low infection rates, jumping to high figures during a second phase. Two distinct borders are emphasized, the national airport through which ninety percent of travelers in and out of the country enter and which has been virtually closed down during most of the COVID-19 period, and the barriers operating between Israel and the West Bank, through which tens of thousands of Palestinian workers commute daily into Israel for employment, many of whom are now unable to work due to COVID-19 related restrictions on their movement across the border.

Introduction

Due to the political tensions concerning Israel, the country has always had a tightly controlled border regime. Entry into the country consists of a number of distinct systems of control, the major points of entry (and exit) being at the international airport located in the centre of the country for almost all foreign visitors and tourists (with limited entry and exit through seaports or at border crossings with neighbouring countries Jordan and Egypt), and the daily movement of Palestinian workers from the Occupied Territories in the West Bank in and out of Israel across the tightly controlled Separation Barrier, which, to all effects, operates as a national border for the Palestinians, but not for Israeli citizens who move across without any restrictions or inspections.



During the first eight months of the pandemic, the airport and other international borders have largely been closed, with limited re-openings for foreign travel depending on the ups and downs of coronavirus infections. The border limiting Palestinian movement was initially closed but this has now returned to a pre-COVID-19 situation albeit with much less movement depending on the demands of an Israeli economy, parts of which have been shut down during the period.

COVID-19 Phases

Israel has undergone two distinct phases regarding the impact of COVID-19. The first stage, experienced during the first three months March–May was characterised by extremely low rates of infection and mortality, one of the lowest in the world, while the second stage (which is still being experienced at the time of writing), following what many commentators see as the opening up of the school and business systems too early, have experienced higher and growing infection rates, although this has not, as yet, translated itself into high death rates. As of the end of July 2020, the total number of COVID-19 related deaths remained below 500 during the first phase, following the initial onset of the virus in late February, early March.

This was seen to be at odds with the gradual opening of many public places, including shopping malls, prayer houses (Jewish, Moslem and Christian), the beaches and the growing number of people attending demonstrations against the government and Prime Minister Netanyahu for what they perceive as a failure of his policy, at least in Stage 2 of the virus, and for the charges of corruption against him (presently the subject of court proceedings). The lack of compliance to wear masks at such events has resulted in heavy-handed policing, the imposition of fines, and much protest against a policy which is no longer as clear as it was in the first phase of the virus.

The imposed quarantine for anyone arriving in the country, regardless of point of origin, was also disregarded by many during the early phases, but following media coverage of this, the government have imposed stricter regulations, random surveillance to encourage compliance, and the imposition of heavy fines for those not carrying out the regulation.

Notwithstanding, numbers increased dramatically through August and September, resulting in a second period of lockdown, including the major Jewish festival periods when it is normal for large gatherings to take place. This included the closing of the synagogues, mosques and prayer houses, the shopping malls and the public spaces such as parks and beaches, emphasizing the personal and family nature of borders rather than the national and international ones. At the time of writing, end of October, Israel is slowly relaxing its COVID-19 movement restrictions as it comes out of the Second Phase, albeit much more cautiously than it did following what was believed to be the First and only phase.

The Nature of Israel's Borders—Points of Entry and Exit

Some ninety percent of the incoming and outgoing movement to and from the country takes place at one point—the Ben Gurion international airport. The country's land passages to neighbouring countries are limited. The borders with Lebanon and Syria to the north are completely sealed and Israel remains in a State of War with both countries. There are three land crossings with Jordan, one of which, the Allenby bridge close to the town of Jericho, is exclusively for the use of Palestinians from the occupied West Bank. Two other land crossings, one in the far north of the country and the other in the south, linking the cross-borders towns of Eilat and Aqaba, are limited to a small amount of tourism which, even at the best of times, is not significant. A single land border crossing point with Egypt at Taba, is also limited to tourism, mostly Israelis who travel into Sinai during holiday periods.

The only movement of workers across these borders were the daily flow from Aqaba in Jordan to work in the Israeli tourist industry in Elat, but given the total collapse of the tourist market, this was no longer necessary once COVID-19 had set in, and has only been partially renewed with the opening of the hotels in June.

The international airport was, for a short time, completely closed to movement, excepting the return of Israelis on rescue flights from different parts of the world. This hit the tourist industry hard, especially during the week of the Passover festival in late March, early April, a period when it is normal for increased movement through the airport—of Israelis seeking to go on vacation elsewhere, balanced by the inflow of religious Jews from around the world come to spend the festival period in Israel. None of this took place as a result of COVID-19.

Even during the first phase, it was estimated that between a third to a half of the infections which did occur were from Israelis returning from countries, especially North America and western Europe, which had high infection rates, and before a blanket policy of two-weeks home quarantine was put into effect at a later stage—a policy which applies today for anyone coming into Israel on the few flights which have started to operate.

The Israel national airline, El Al, has completely shut down, and its planes have been used for some rescue flights of Israelis stranded around the globe, and for the import of necessary medical equipment which the government purchased to help combat those infected by the virus. At the time of writing, El Al is due to resume its operations in mid-August, but given the sudden growth of infected people in the second phase of the virus, this could be delayed even further.

Due to its geopolitical situation, Israel has a strong internal security apparatus, and the government has used this to impose tracking and surveillance of infected individuals. While the effectiveness of existing security technologies enabled almost instant implementation, this has raised serious questions concerning the agencies which have been co-opted and the intrusion of security apparatus into civilian life. Many see this, rightly, as an infringement of basic democratic procedures, and are worried that in a post

* **David Newman**, PhD, professor of Geopolitics in the Department of Politics and Government at Ben-Gurion University, Israel.
Contact newman@bgu.ac.il

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COVID-19 era, the security control will not be released as quickly as it was imposed.

Group and Personal Borders—Religious Gatherings and Demonstrations

A particular problem has been the gathering of religious people for daily and Shabat prayers in their synagogues and mosques, where people come into close contact with each other and which proved to be one of the early sources of the spread of the virus. All places of worship were initially shut down, but were gradually opened up to limited numbers (initially up to ten which constitutes a quorum required for community prayer services, and then up to nineteen, assuming that once the number reached twenty they would then split into two separate groups in separate locations). Throughout Israel, people came together in small groups in neighbouring gardens or neighbouring balconies in apartment blocs as an alternative form of group worship rather than congregating in an enclosed space or building. This constitutes a classic case of personal and home borders and the way they have been used to impose order in a localized spatial context.

The ultimate process of bordering was to be encountered at the ancient Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem, a place of mass pilgrimage for Jewish worshippers from throughout the world. Initially, the Wall plaza was shut down altogether, with a single prayer service of ten people taking place (where there might normally be tens of thousands) and broadcast through ZOOM or YouTube to the rest of the world. Following its partial re-opening, the numbers of worshippers was limited, while the plaza has been divided by temporary borders / dividers, enabling the formation of numerous small and separate prayer groups.

Another important land border is that of the Separation Fence / Barrier / Wall separating Israel from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In the case of Gaza, the border has been sealed for a number of years, resulting in a perpetual siege of the Gaza Strip, mostly by Israel, along the east and north borders as well as the Mediterranean Sea to the west, and also by Egypt along the south border. With the exception of missiles, incendiary balloons, controlled movement of goods from Israel into Gaza, and occasional emergency cases requiring medical attention (although far too many have been prevented), almost no movement takes place across this border, a continuation of the existing situation pre-COVID-19.

The West Bank Separation Barrier Border

This is different with respect to the West Bank. Five major border crossing points, increasingly resembling heavily fortified international borders, have been constructed along the length of the Separation Barrier during the past fifteen years. While Israelis have always been free to travel in and out of the West Bank (although the vast majority choose not to, either for fear of their own safety or because they refuse to set foot in Occupied Territories), Palestinian entry into Israel is limited to a relatively small number, approximately 100,000, who have licences to work inside Israel, mostly as the country's cheap and menial labour. Those with licences undergo selective border inspections and interrogations, are only allowed into Israel on foot, where their employers wait for them with buses and vans to ferry them directly to their places of work. Such movement is on a daily basis, entering into Israel early in the morning (around 5-6 AM) and returning to the West Bank between 3-4 in the afternoon. With few exceptions, no overnight stays inside Israel were allowed.

With the outbreak of the virus, Israel initially opted for a policy of cutting down on the numbers of Palestinians working inside Israel—some of which was justified by the slowdown in the economy, but much of which was still required, especially within the construction industry—and allowing a small number to enter Israel and remain there continuously without returning home at night. However, this proved to be almost impossible to implement, as Israeli employers were either unable or unwilling to provide the necessary sleeping and food arrangements for this group of people, and within weeks the policy was cancelled. Security checks, at times raising serious human rights and ethical considerations at border crossings, remain in operation for those who do continue to cross into Israel on a daily basis, but few medical checks, other than a random temperature check with electronic thermometer, are employed to check for infection. Those Israelis who do travel in and out of the West Bank (including the settler population) are not subject to any security checks and are allowed to travel with their vehicles, which can immediately be identified by their licence plates.

Initially, it was widely assumed in Israel that whatever the rates of infection inside the country, these would be far worse in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where social and living conditions were far worse and crowding was much higher with a greater risk of mass infection. This partially explains the attempt to ensure that workers, once inside Israel, would remain there for a few weeks without returning home. In reality, however, the West Bank and Gaza Strip did not experience mass outbreak of the virus and, along with the technical difficulties of implementing the new policy, the Israeli government decided to return to its existing policy of daily crossings in and out of the area, albeit at a reduced number, and highly dependent on the changing requirements of the labour market and the opening / closing of the Israeli economy.

Israel's experience was far worse in Phase 2 than in Phase 1. The number of daily infections increased to around

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1000 per day although there are indications that this began to level out and decrease during the latter part of October, leading to a gradual relaxation of the restrictions, including a gradual opening of the airport to a limited number of international flights. Notwithstanding, two week quarantine periods for those entering the country were expanded to include most travellers, all of whom were Israeli citizens returning to Israel. Entry to the country ceased for all non-citizens.

The rise in infection rates in Phase 2 has largely been attributed to the government decision to open up large parts of the economy and the schooling system (the two are obviously related to each other as working parents require their children to be at school or pre-school frameworks if they are to be able to go out to work), along with the beaches, restaurants, pubs and places of worship. The border restrictions largely remained in place, meaning that while much of the first phase infections were due to incoming travellers, the second phase were almost entirely due to internal mixing and the breaking downs of social restriction barriers, especially at places of large gatherings such as prayer houses, beaches, shopping malls and political demonstrations—which increased during the COVID-19 period. Attempts by the government to ban such demonstrations were overturned by the courts as an infringement of the public right to demonstrate, especially as some other groups had the right to congregate, albeit within smaller numbers.

Notwithstanding, while the initial infections and deaths in Phase 1 had a disproportionate impact on the elderly population, and elderly care homes, the larger number of infections in Phase 2 have impacted a much younger population who have been infected at the beach, in the shopping centres and in the pubs. While the total numbers have risen, the severity of the infection appears to be much weaker amongst the younger groups and has not therefore translated into significant mortality rates, which remain low. This is, as yet, an indefinite conclusion, and the longer term impact of the newly infected remains to be seen. Even so, the numbers are sufficient for the hospitals to be filling up and there is a growing fear that, even with the facilities and equipment which is now in place, they will shortly reach saturation point.

Conclusion

Because of its limited number of border crossing points into the country, Israel has been able to close down the borders with relative ease. The increase in numbers of infections in Phase 2 is more an internal than external problem, resulting from the opening of the economy too soon, not from the number of people entering the country from infected zones, which has anyway almost ceased altogether.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

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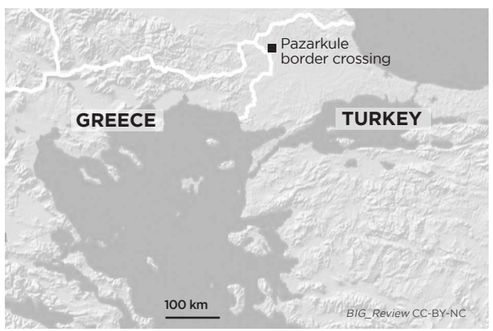
The Turkish–Greek Border Crisis and COVID-19

Lacin Idil Oztig *

This essay examines the emergence and the escalation of a border crisis between Turkey and Greece. On February 27th, Turkey opened its Greek border to asylum seekers and migrants which led to the gathering of thousands of people on the border. The border crisis escalated as Greek forces repelled people who forced their way into Greece. Even though the border crisis deescalated with the COVID-19 pandemic, Turkey's political maneuvering with the European Union (EU) regarding the movement of asylum seekers is not off the table.

Introduction

During the Syrian civil war, Turkey faced massive influx of asylum seekers. It introduced temporary protection regulation in 2014 for Syrians who entered the country either in groups or individually (since signing the 1951 Refugee Convention with a geographical limitation, Turkey grants refugee status only to asylum seekers who come from Europe). The temporary protection regulation encompasses a range of rights that includes access to health, education, social assistance, the labour market and the like. Since 2014, it has been the country that hosts the largest number of asylum seekers in the world (UNHCR 2020a). Having accommodated millions of Syrians without commensurate international support, it has repeatedly called on the international community to share its burden.



In 2016, Turkey and the European Union (EU) signed a burden-sharing deal. Under this deal, Turkey pledged to take necessary measures to prevent irregular migration from its territory to Europe and to accept the return of new irregular migrants from the Greek islands. In return, the EU pledged to allocate 6 billion euros to Turkey to support the needs of asylum seekers and resettle at least one refugee from Turkey through formal channels for each irregular migrant returned from Europe to Turkey. Between 2015 and 2020, Turkey strictly controlled the entry of undocumented people into Europe. During this period, 186,766 asylum seekers and migrants were intercepted by the Turkish coastguard in the Aegean Sea (Human Rights Watch 2020). Interception figures increased considerably in 2019 as compared to 2018 (UNHCR 2020a).

However, as of February 27th, 2020, after heavy military losses in Idlib, Syria, Turkey opened its Greek border to European-bound asylum seekers and migrants, paving the way for a border crisis, escalated by disproportionate force applied by Greek authorities. The gathering of thousands of people on the border was seen as a threat not only by Greece, but also by the EU that sought to avoid a repeat of 2015 refugee crisis. This article sheds light into the emergence a border crisis between Turkey and Greece by paying particular attention to how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the border situation. Rather than laying out a causal relationship, this study is based on a before-and-after case study design. Specifically, it sheds light into the dynamics of the border crisis between Turkey and Greece before and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

* **Lacin Idil Oztig,** Associate Professor at Yildiz Technical University, Turkey. Email: loztig@yildiz.edu.tr
Webpage: https://avesis.yildiz.edu.tr/loztig

BIG_Review journal homepage: https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/bigreview
Borders in Globalization homepage: https://biglobalization.org/

Turkey's Political Maneuver and the Crisis on the Turkish–Greek Border

On February 27, Turkey suffered a huge loss in Idlib with the killing of 33 Turkish soldiers in an airstrike by Syrian regime forces. On the same day, the Turkish government announced that it would no longer prevent asylum seekers and migrants from entering Europe. Turkey justified its position by arguing that the EU had not fulfilled its promises under the 2016 deal and that another wave of asylum seekers was under way due to the escalation of hostilities in Idlib. Turkey's move is also interpreted as a political instrument to pressure the EU to support a ceasefire in Syria (Harris 2020).

Soon after Turkey's border opening announcement, asylum seekers and migrants gathered on the Turkish side of the Turkish–Greek border to reach Europe via Greece. With the arrival of thousands of asylum seekers and migrants, a makeshift camp was established. Some people spent all their money for this journey, even giving up their accommodation (Amnesty International 2020a). Turkey's hospitality towards Syrian asylum seekers notwithstanding, many Syrians live in dire circumstances. Only 1.5% of them have work permits. Their situation is aggravated by economic recession and high unemployment rates (Demirguc-Kunt et al. 2019). The majority of Turkish people believe that Syrians have negative impacts on Turkey's socio-cultural structure and the provision of public services. Furthermore, while Turkey generally adopted an accommodative stance towards Syrians, following the failure in local elections in 2019, the Turkish government switched to a stricter asylum policy (Kinikoglu 2020).

Better living standards in Europe appear to have motivated Syrians to leave Turkey. On the other hand, Russian Reconciliation Center for Syria, which is part of the Russian Armed Forces, noted that Turkey pushed 130,000 people from Syria to Greece (DuvaR English 2020). Some asylum seekers stated that the Turkish police transported them to the Pazarkule border crossing and gave them directions as to how to cross the border (Human Rights Watch 2020). It is also reported that some people were pressured into crossing the border by Turkish police. Turkish authorities also sent additional guards to the border to prevent Greek authorities from forcibly returning them back to Turkey (Stevis-Gridneff and Kingsley 2020). Furthermore, Turkish sources indicated that humanitarian aid was distributed to the makeshift camp and those who were harmed while crossing the border received medical treatment in Turkey (Daily Sabah 2020).

Greece's prime minister, Kiriakos Mitsotakis, evaluating the situation at the border as an immanent threat to the country's national security, firmly stated that the entry of undocumented people into Greece would not be allowed (Evans and Coskun 2020). Greece reacted to the border crisis by suspending asylum applications for a month. It also announced that unauthorized border crossers would be deported without their cases being examined (Amnesty International 2020b). In addition, Greek authorities deployed police, army and special forces to the border (Human Rights Watch 2020). At the request of Greece, Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, sent an additional 100 border guards to the area (Frontex 2020).

The border witnessed an escalation of crisis as Greek police and soldiers used tear gas, water cannons, plastic bullets and live ammunition to push back unauthorized border crossers (Amnesty International 2020a). Asylum seekers and migrants trying to cross the border crossing (which was already protected with barbed wire fences) faced smoke grenades. Some of them attempted to return to Turkey, after being stuck in the no-man's land between the two countries (Evans and Coskun 2020). Some even reported that they were abused by non-Greek forces (who did not speak Greek or wear a Greek uniform) on the Greek side of the border, before being handed over to Greek authorities (Human Rights Watch 2020).

Rather than framing the situation at the border as a migrant or refugee crisis, Greece's Prime Minister, Mitsotakis, framed it as "a conscious attempt by Turkey to use migrants and refugees as geopolitical pawns to promote its own interest" (quoted in Euronews 2020). He justified Greece's actions by referring to the country's right to defend its borders (Euronews 2020). On March 3rd, Ursula von der Leyen, the head of European Commission, visited the Greek side of the border along with European Council chief Charles Michel and European Parliament speaker David Sassoli and expressed the EU's support for Greece: "[o]ur first priority is to ensure order is maintained at the Greek external border, which is also a European border... I am fully committed to mobilising all the necessary operational support to the Greek authorities" (quoted in BBC News 2020). She announced an EU support package to Greece that included 700 million euros in aid for migration management; a Frontex force including vessels, thermal-vision vehicles, helicopters, a plane, 100 extra border guards and civil aid comprising medical equipment and teams, and shelters (BBC News 2020).

On the other hand, Greece's asylum policy was criticized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) (a European network of NGOs in European countries) on the grounds that there was no legal basis for the suspension of asylum applications either in the 1951 Refugee Convention or in EU refugee law (UNHCR 2020b; ECRE 2020). The Council of Europe called on both countries to deescalate the crisis and provide humanitarian assistance to those trapped at the border (Tosidis 2020). ECRE (2020) also criticized both countries, specifically condemning violence against asylum seekers and efforts to expel people.

COVID-19 and the Border Crisis

Turkey took precautionary measures before COVID-19 entered the country. At the beginning of February, it evacuated Turkish citizens from Wuhan province in China and stopped all flights from the country. At the end of the month, it stopped flights to and from Iran, Italy, Iraq and South Korea and closed land border crossings with Iraq and Iran. Turkey closed its borders with Greece and Bulgaria on March 18, after announcing its first COVID-19 case. Yet, despite these preventive measures, COVID-19 cases increased exponentially in Turkey (Worldometer 2020).

The pandemic witnessed an easing of tension along the Turkish–Greek border. With the closure of the border, Turkey had to temporarily retreat from its policy that was characterized as using asylum seekers and migrants for political objectives. On March 27, thousands of asylum seekers and migrants, waiting at the makeshift camp near Pazarkule border crossing, were moved to state guest houses and put in quarantine after which they were sent to reception centers in nine provinces (Fraser 2020). A few days later the makeshift camp was dismantled.

It can be argued that Turkey's retreat from its political maneuver due to the pandemic played into the hands of Greece that had been determined to prevent the influx of asylum seekers since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. Greece framed the retreat of unauthorized border crossers as a success of its own border management, with Prime Minister Mitsotakis boasting that Greece accomplished an important responsibility by efficiently protecting its land and sea borders (Fraser 2020).

Conclusion

This article shed light on the process by which the migratory crisis emerged and eased at the Turkish–Greek border. Turkey made a U-turn from its initial humanitarian approach to Syrian asylum seekers by sending them to Greece for political leverage in the context of military disruptions. The border witnessed humanitarian disaster with Turkey's push of asylum seekers and migrants to the border and Greece's push-back policy. While the border crisis deescalated under the pandemic, tensions again simmered in May when Turkish authorities noted that the border might be again opened to asylum seekers once lockdowns relaxed.

As a precautionary measure, Greek authorities increased the number of police on the border (Aljazeera 2020) and began extending the border fence. Currently, the Turkish–Greek land border is overshadowed by tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean triggered by both countries' gas drilling ambitions. Both countries' overlapping claims in the Eastern Mediterranean not only brought them closer to war, but strained further Turkey–EU relations. As Turkey is a key transit country for asylum seekers and migrants, Turkish–EU cooperation will continue to be essential in mitigating future refugee and migrant crises. Notwithstanding that both parties have failures in the process, Turkey should focus its attention on solving existing crises, rather than creating new ones.

Figure 1. Makeshift camp near Turkey's Pazarkule border crossing. Photo: Aybike Acikel, PhD candidate at Yildiz Technical University.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Portuguese–Spanish Border ... Back Again?!

Iva Pires *

Unexpectedly, over 30 years after the removal of border controls between Portugal and Spain as a result of their joint adhesion to the European Union, border restrictions were reinstated as a preventive measure to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This paper discusses what has changed in the Portuguese–Spanish border as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Introduction

After centuries of disputes, intense negotiations, and a final military conflict in 1801, the Convention on Border Limits (1926) ultimately defined the boundary between Portugal and Spain, despite the fact that a small section of about 54 kilometres in length still remains under dispute. The Portuguese–Spanish border—the only land border Portugal has—is 1,214 kilometres (754 miles) long. The dictatorial regimes that governed both countries until the mid-1970s maintained strict control on border crossings. Following the joint accession in the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1986—renamed the European Union (EU) in the 1990s—the bilateral relations between the two countries were also improved. The Single European Act, signed in 1986, leading to the creation of the 'Single Market' and the 'Schengen' agreements, to which both Iberian countries joined in 1995, allowed for the free flow of trade across EU borders and for people to travel without having their passports checked at the borders. This enhanced Spain and Portugal's political and economic relations. Spain became Portugal's main economic partner, and daily traffic across the border became significant, including the movement of cross-border workers, shopping trips, tourism and freight transportation.

Unexpectedly, over 30 years later, the border was closed again as a preventive measure to contain the spread of COVID-19. The control of land borders with Spain that started at 11 pm on 16 March 2020 and ended on 1 July halted all cross-border movements with only some exceptions.

This resolution, although temporary and justified in public health terms, was not well received by border communities. In a webinar on the closing of the borders Pablo Rivera, secretary general of the Iberian Network of Crossborder Bodies (RIET), commented "The population at the border (Raia Ibérica) is usually very close to each other and this decision ended up separating people and creating distrust in politicians".

* **Iva Pires,** Interdisciplinary Centre of Social Sciences (CICS.NOVA), Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (NOVA.FCSH), Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal. Email: **lm.pires@fcsh.unl.pt**

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The Border After EU Joint Accession

Up until the joint accession to the EEC in 1986, and despite the fact that both countries were governed by similar dictatorships, movement across the border was not substantial. Border crossing required a special authorization and many citizens were not allowed to leave the country. Due to political restrictions many of these were forced to flee the country crossing the border illegally. There was considerable smuggling—in some sectors a relevant source of income and survival for impoverished border communities. The border was known as "the border of underdevelopment" as populations on either side were among the poorest of each country.

The context changed enormously after the joint EU accession, as obstacles to free movement of people and goods were removed and administrative control points decommissioned. Although occurring unequally among border regions, other direct consequences of the de-bordering process were the strengthening of political and economic relations, and an intensification of cross-border investments and trade flows.

Before the pandemic, around 79,000 vehicles crossed the border between Spain and Portugal every day (88% light vehicles). Half of this traffic passed through the Euroregion Galicia–Norte de Portugal, considered a pioneer in promoting cross-border cooperation, and one of the most dynamic in cross-border flows, partly due to cultural and linguistic proximity. Intense traffic movement on the motorways connecting the two regions is part of the Euroregion's daily life—a consequence of strong institutional and economic cooperation. Labor commuting on a daily or weekly basis was also significant. Cross-border flows were also intense in the south part of the border, used by tourists to visit the Algarve and also as a gateway to agricultural products from Andalusia to Portugal.

Although development and flows are unequally distributed along the border, its opening brought benefits and its closure was felt by border communities as a severe penalization to their economies.

What Changed After Borders were Closed?

To protect the health and safety of EU citizens, Member States agreed on a set of priorities to coordinate the EU's response to COVID-19, which included closing schools, shops, restaurants, prohibited public gatherings and more than half have proclaimed a State of Emergency. This State of Emergency allowed for the introduction of border/travel restrictions within EU Member States based on the Free Movement of Persons, Services and Capital Chapter of the Treaty of Lisbon, on grounds of public policy, public security or public health.

France was the first European country to experience the pandemic, with three cases confirmed on 24 January 2020. In Spain the first two cases were detected on 30 January. After those first cases the virus spread quickly, with cases mainly imported from Northern Italy. Portugal's first cases were detected on 2 March, with two Portuguese citizens arriving from Italy. The spread of the virus was very slow until 10 March and then started growing exponentially.

On 16 March, due to the sanitary emergency, Portugal's and Spain's prime ministers held a videoconference to discuss and coordinate health control measures at the common borders (land, air, sea). On 19 March, Portugal declared a State of Emergency, which involved the closure of the border with Spain and confinement measures domestically to 'flatten the curve' of the pandemic's spread.

Portugal and Spain cooperated at the level of Ministers for Home Affairs and for Foreign Affairs in the elaboration of a set of technical notes that allowed the exceptional and temporary reintroduction of passport controls between them and the prohibition of road traffic on border checkpoints. Also flights to and from Spain, inland navigation and railway services were suspended (Council of Ministers' Resolution nº10-B/2020).

Traffic was strictly prohibited at the land border with the exception of nine Authorized Crossing Points (ACP) distributed along the border. Those entering and leaving Portugal and Spain through ACP would undergo health monitoring. On the Portuguese side, the Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) and the National Republican Guard (GNR) were responsible for controlling the border. Infrastructures of Portugal (IP), in collaboration with SEF and GNR, provided teams for the implementation of traffic control and signage, both for ACP as well as closed border crossings.

Circulation was allowed only for international freight operations, cross-border workers and seasonal workers with documents justifying their employment context, emergency and rescue vehicles, citizens and holders of residency permits in their respective countries.

The State of Emergency was decreed for 15 days, starting at 12:00 am on 19 March and ending at 11:59 pm on 2 April, 2020. However, it was renewed twice: between 3 April and 17 April; and a third period between 18 April and 2 May. On 3 May a State of Calamity replaced the State of Emergency allowing for the gradual reopening of the economy.

Nevertheless, both governments agreed on the extension of border controls affecting both land and air travel and the limitation to nine ACP on the land border at least until 15 May. These limitations were further extended until 30 June 2020.

The Reopening of the Borders

A "joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures" was adopted to plan for a safe restart of economic and social activities in the EU. Spain opened its borders earlier than Portugal to EU travelers on 21 June, while the border with Portugal remained closed after the Portuguese Government requested more time to organize the reopening. Finally, on 1 July the Portuguese–Spanish land border was reopened, more than three months after it had been closed due to the outbreak.

Border communities experienced the reopening with mixed feelings. On the one hand, as Spain has been one of Europe's hardest-hit countries in the pandemic, some feared that it may lead to the spreading of the virus and an increase in the number of infected people. On the other hand, cross-border shopping and leisure travel were important activities for border economies and it was seen as an opportunity for business to recover after more than three months of stagnation.

Border regions have actually been working together to accelerate their much-needed economic recovery. In mid-May, when the reopening of the border was once again postponed, the mayors of the seven border Eurocities of Portugal and Spain came together to petition their governments to restart the free movement of people in these regions whose economies were severely affected by the closure. Specifically, they wanted their governments to decree the free movement of citizens within these Eurocities.

On 5 May the Eurocity Chaves-Verín organized a webinar on "Iberian Eurocities against COVID-19 crisis" that was attended by all the Iberian Eurocities. Later on, on 15 May, they released a "Manifesto of the seven Iberian Eurocities" urging restoration of the movement of people between these cities, to discuss a specific protocol for reopening and to promote them as safe regions on gastronomic, cultural, touristic and production levels.

Another example is Euroace, which brings together three regions (Centro and Alentejo on the Portuguese side and Extremadura in Spain), and plans to organize a cross-border promotion strategy directed towards the potential market of 55 million inhabitants of both countries. By presenting itself as a peaceful and safe destination for the first post-COVID-19 holiday destinations they aimed to accelerate the recovery of tourist activity as soon as the mobility between the two countries is restarted.

The reopening was celebrated by special ceremonies that took place in the border towns of Elvas and Badajoz. Spain's King Felipe VI and Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez met with Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa and Prime Minister António Costa in Badajoz on the Spanish side and later in Elvas, Portugal, for lunch.

The desire to maintain a coordinated response during the second outbreak was announced by the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs with his Spanish counterpart during the preparation of the Portuguese–Spanish Summit scheduled for October 2020. At that summit, the reopening of railway communications and a common cross-border strategy to support the recovery of the most affected border economies were to be be discussed, among other topics.

Borders were Closed However...

A peculiar exception to the closing of the border was commonly agreed upon between the Portuguese and the Spanish governments relating to two small villages in the Northern strip, Rio de Onor (Portugal) and Rihonor de Castilha (Spain), separated by a small river. With 14 people living on the Spanish side and 50 on the Portuguese side, the interaction had been so intense inhabitants felt they lived in the same village. Small-scale farming and cattle raising were the most important activities and most inhabitants held properties on both sides of the border. When the closure of the border was decided the population complained that, even in the past, when borders were tightly controlled, their inhabitants had never been prevented from moving between villages, partially due to the isolation and distance to the power centers in Lisbon and Madrid.

While the walking trips between the two villages remained a part of daily life, motor circulation (including agricultural equipment) was forbidden when the borders were closed and the nine ACPs that remained open were not an option as they were too far away. Therefore, both governments agreed on making an exception to the peculiar reality of these villages and permitted farmers to cross the border on Wednesdays and Saturdays for two hours between 9 am and 11 am, to feed their animals and farm their lands.

Conclusion

To contain the spreading of the virus, on 19 March Portugal and Spain agreed to apply an initial 15 days coordinated restriction of non-essential travel at the borders. That period was successively extended and the border only reopened on 1 July.

The measures related to the closure of borders (land, sea and air) were taken in a coordinated manner between the two countries and were globally well received, despite being experienced by border communities as a severe hardship. However, given that Spain was one of the EU countries hardest hit by the new virus health interests prevailed over economic ones. The closing of the borders and the strict limitations to citizen's mobility helped to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and in Portugal the number of cases remained considerably lower than in the neighbouring country. Also the reopening was well coordinated both at state level and at local level with cross-border initiatives.

Despite combating the spread of the virus, the closure of borders was assumed to be exceptional and only temporary as the Portuguese Prime Minister aptly tweeted "The pandemic offered us the vision of a past we don't want to go back to: a continent with closed borders."

This situation also brings to the fore relevant questions in the field of cross-border cooperation, as it is in times of crisis that we notice the underlying attitude between these neighbours: if negotiations since 1986 have always sought the opening of the border, it was the same conciliatory spirit that argued for its closure in this case.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

Brazilian Border Closures in Pandemic Times: A Comparative Approach to Four Regions

Licio Caetano do Rego Monteiro [i]
Luís Paulo Batista da Silva [ii]
Rebeca Steiman [iii]
Leticia Parente Ribeiro [iv]

This paper discusses the context and the effects of border closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic in four border regions between Brazil and its neighbors, namely Venezuela, Colombia, Paraguay, and Argentina, from March to July 2020. The study highlights the low level of coordination among countries, bilateral or regional, in the course of the sanitary emergency. It also analyses the local impacts of the restrictive measures, especially on the twin cities due to their high level of interdependence, in which the inhabitants suffered from the dismantling of supply networks, the precarity of health services, and the economic downturn related to border closures.

Introduction

Border closure has been a standard strategy throughout the world since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The circulation of people was restricted or forbidden not only across terrestrial boundaries, but also at passenger terminals at seaports and airports. Within countries, different types of barriers were put in place by state authorities between provinces, cities, public and private spaces, and by communities that sought self-isolation.

The first cases of the novel coronavirus were reported in Ecuador and Brazil in late February. Argentina, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Paraguay and French Guiana announced their first cases in the beginning of March. When the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11th, 2020, community transmission had already been detected in the subcontinent.

i **Licio Caetano do Rego Monteiro**, PhD, Universidade Federal Fluminense, Brazil. Contact: liciocaetano@id.uff.br
ii **Luís Paulo Batista da Silva**, PhD, Universidade Federal da Bahia, Brazil. Contact: luispbs@ufba.br
iii **Rebeca Steiman**, PhD, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Contact: rsteiman@igeo.ufrj.br
iv **Leticia Parente Ribeiro**, MSc, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Contact: leticiapr@igeo.ufrj.br

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Borders in Globalization homepage: https://biglobalization.org/

On March 16th, official representatives of most countries in the region gathered in a videoconference. The need for restrictive measures, such as the closing of borders, was emphasized. Colombia complied first by closing its borders, followed by Peru, Paraguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. Brazil's absence at the meeting indicated its lack of interest in participating in coordinated regional actions to contain the pandemic.

In this paper, we point out the situation of four border regions between Brazil and its neighbors during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, we analyze the implications of the legal measures implemented by national governments to contain the virus on border areas and their territorial effects, notably on spatial interactions at the twin cities. In this research, access to information was restricted to secondary sources, mainly news and reports, since we are all located outside the border zone. The conceptual framework and the analysis of the regional context result from the experience of more than two decades of research projects and fieldwork carried out in the Brazilian continental border.[1]

Closing the Brazil–Venezuela Border: Political Hostilities and Health Issues

The Brazil–Venezuela border closure occurred in the midst of ongoing hostilities between the two countries in view of the fact that the Brazilian government does not recognize the legitimacy of Nicolás Maduro's presidency. Between February and May 2019, Venezuela closed its borders in response to internal conflicts and alleged interference from the Brazilian government.[2] Despite the difficulties throughout 2019, 129,000 asylum seekers crossed the border from Venezuela into Brazil (Mello 2020). Even when the border was reopened (from May 2019 to March 2020), there were episodes of blockage either by the Brazilian military control operations, in December 2019, or by protests of Brazilian citizens, in February 2020. Under these circumstances, the first cases of COVID-19 in Venezuela and in the state of Roraima, Brazil, were reported in March 2020.

This hostile situation explains why Brazil decreed the closure of the border with Venezuela by a specific ordinance, two days before closing its border with other neighbors. Ordinance 120, issued on March 17th, restricted the Venezuelan border down to Brazilian citizens and foreign residents returning from Venezuela, and to the transit of goods. The intense flow of immigrants and refugees in the past two years strained bilateral relations. It may also have amplified the expectation of an increased influx of Venezuelans in search of medical assistance into Brazil. However, unexpectedly, 1,696 Venezuelans returned to their country of origin in the month following the decree (Mello 2020).

Venezuela had more than 1,000 COVID-19 cases in June, as the contagion accelerated. As of July 20th, the country officially reported over 12,000 cases, 750 of which were in the state of Bolívar, including Santa Elena de Uairén, the twin city of Pacaraima in the Brazilian state of Roraima, the main crossing point between the two countries. The Venezuelan government also decreed partial opening in several states with lower rates of contagion, but maintained its lockdown in Bolívar. On the Brazilian side, until July 19th, the state of Roraima had 25,467 cases and 431 deaths, of which 1,002 cases and 18 deaths were in Pacaraima (Roraima 2020). Due to the fact that Brazil had not yet contained the pandemic in July (Brazil had rates circa 50,000 cases and 1,000 deaths daily then), Venezuela renewed the border closure ordinance.

Concerned about the return of its citizens from Brazil and Colombia along with the entry of citizens from higher-risk countries, the Venezuelan government adopted strict measures, including the imposition of curfews on border municipalities on May 19th and the arrest of Venezuelans who returned to the country illegally without observing quarantine periods in July (Infobae 2020).

Brazil–Colombia: Up the River and into the Forest

Brazil's first confirmed case of COVID-19 occurred two weeks before cases in Colombia and Peru. In the triple border region, the contagion dynamic seems closely related to the diffusion pattern of COVID-19 in Brazil and Peru, from the capital cities towards the interior. According to a transborder network lead by FIOCRUZ[3] that monitored the spread of the virus, three months after the first confirmed case in Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas, Brazil, the novel coronavirus had reached almost all border municipalities in Brazil (60 of 62) and Peru (45 of 51) and 41 percent of them in Colombia (12 of 29) (Carvajal-Cortés et al 2020).

Control measures implemented by mid-March that included restrictions at land border crossings were unable to stop the circulation of people along the river and across the border, especially between the twin cities of Tabatinga, Brazil, and Leticia, Colombia. Those cities are the only significant gateway in this border region, mostly characterized by dense Amazon rainforest, small towns, and a prominent presence of indigenous populations. Distant from the major cities and accessible only by air or river, both Tabatinga and Leticia depend on their mutual supply of goods and services, which they also provide to surrounding localities. Under curfews and quarantine requirements, families, workers, and businesses suffered in these cities from cross-border restrictions and economic downturn (Luján 2020).

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the intensification of the Colombian conflict was accompanied by an increase in the performance and presence of Brazilian Armed Forces in the border region, which nevertheless remained quite active even after the peace agreements between

the Colombian government and the main guerrilla groups in the country (Rego Monteiro 2016). With the outbreak, the enhanced military presence at the border's main crossing, Avenida da Amizade, created an environment conducive to the virus' spread, as it diverted entry routes to places lacking sanitary controls (Zárate Botía 2020, 5).

Dwellers suffer with the health system's cumulative precarity, lacking intensive care facilities and personnel and relying on aerial transfer of the more serious cases to Bogotá and Manaus. As for the indigenous population, inhabiting both urban and rural areas, the first fatality was reported on March 31st. As the authorities underestimated the threat and were reluctant to countenance it fully, the virus then spread among 47 different indigenous peoples inhabiting the tri-border region (Confederação das Organizações Indígenas da Amazônia Brasileira 2020). The Brazilian government's negligence has increased their risk of physical and cultural extinction. The risk is even higher among isolated and non-contacted groups, due to their demographic fragility and the ongoing illegal extractive activities that threaten their territories (Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia 2020).

Brazil–Paraguay: Closing Shops to Control the Virus

The Brazil–Paraguay border region is characterized by intense cross-border interactions, mostly between the twin cities of Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, and Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, South America's prominent trade hub. The Paraguayan Ministry of Health ordered the suspension of large open events, gatherings in closed places, and educational activities in the beginning of March.

As of July 29th Paraguay had 682 cases per million inhabitants, while Brazil and Argentina had respectively 12,016 and 3,958 cases per million (Our World in Data, 2020). Strict border control measures implemented by the Paraguayan government, that included the use of military personnel to prevent the entry of non-residents into Paraguay, fueled up tensions in the twin cities of Foz do Iguaçu and Ciudad del Este, leading Paraguay's president, Mario Abdo Benitez, to state in the beginning of May that "we would not dream of opening the border [to Brazil]".

The re-export trade in Paraguayan border cities is an activity responsible for around 25 percent of national exports and one of the country's largest employment sectors. Since the border closure, Ciudad del Este's re-export trade has seen a 95 percent drop in sales. Even after the quarantine loosening in June and the possibility of reopening commercial establishments, many shopping centers chose not to restart their activities, since Brazilian customers could not cross Ponte da Amizade (Agencia EFE 2020). The same trend has been observed in other twin cities, such as Pedro Juan Caballero, Salto del Guairá and Encarnación, along Paraguay's border where trade is of great economic importance.

A range of measures adopted to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in Brazil and Paraguay strained cross-border relations at the twin cities connected by land boundary crossings. In localities such as Pedro Juan Caballero, Paraguay, and Ponta Porã, Brazil, and Ypejhú, Paraguay, and Paranhos, Brazil, Paraguayan authorities have sought to make land crossings from Brazil more difficult by installing barbed wire on the public road that separates the two countries and excavating a trench with a backhoe (Carmo 2020). The mayor of Ypejhú justified the actions in late March saying that "we are very worried and there are many cases of coronavirus in Brazil. If there is a case here, we won't be able to handle it since we don't have a doctor, nothing. We can just protect ourselves" (Ultima Hora 2020).

Brazil–Argentina: Curtailing MERCOSUR's Main Trade Route

Across the border between Argentina and Brazil, the largest economies in the MERCOSUR economic bloc, the most volume of goods and merchandise between Latin American partners are traded. The closure of this border crossing has had important effects on economic and migratory flux, and on border locations.

The twin cities of Paso de los Libres, Argentina, and Uruguaiana, Brazil, are the main gateway for binational trade. The frequent contact between Argentinian residents and foreign transporters concerned both local and national authorities, since many cargo trucks depart from São Paulo, Brazil, one of the most severely infected places on the continent. Until the beginning of July, there was only one registered case in a resident of Paso de los Libres; however, other cases have been reported in transit people. This has led the city council to install a sanitary checkpoint in the city's junction with the highway that connects it to Buenos Aires (Pereira 2020). Despite the attempt to maintain the flow of binational trade since April, cargo traffic through the Uruguaiana customs post has decreased by approximately half (Marcovici 2020).

Finally, the border closure and the disruption of tourist activities have also impacted the triple border between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, where the Iguazu Falls, an important tourist destination, is located. At the peak of the 2019 tourist season, the Argentinian city of Puerto Iguazu received about 200,000 visitors monthly, which was of great importance to its local economy. Even with the recent partial reopening of trade, local authorities point out that this will not be enough to revive the economy, as the number of tourists is still quite low.

Final Remarks

This brief review of the situation of different regions of the Brazilian continental border during the COVID-19 pandemic has shown an increase in tensions with neighboring countries, due to Brazil's alleged inability to contain the spread of contagion in its territory.

Despite the rather weak regional coordination of actions, there has been a widespread use of "closing borders" to the traffic of foreigners and non-residents while safeguarding free cargo circulation. On the other hand, the intensity of the control measures and the penalties stipulated in cases of non-compliance have varied significantly from country to country. The dominant trend was for neighboring countries to adopt a more rigid position than Brazil in relation to cross-border transit. However, none of the countries analyzed in this report has adopted measures for mass testing or tracing contacts throughout the pandemic, even in places of cross-border transit which, meanwhile, have remained interrupted.

Regarding the territorial effects of the measures implemented to contain the advancement of the new coronavirus, there has been significant disruption in the local cross-border economic circuits, especially in the twin cities, as well as in the access of the inhabitants of the border region to health services and infrastructure.

This analysis points toward the necessity to further investigate the consequences of the militarization of sanitary actions in border regions, in a context in which the health problem is treated as a security issue.

Notes

1 We would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions and comments.

2 In February 2019, the Brazilian government sent trucks with "humanitarian aid" to Venezuela at the same time that self-proclaimed Venezuelan President Guaidó was trying to bring in "humanitarian aid" into the country from Colombia. President Maduro considered the Brazilian action political interference orchestrated with Venezuelan dissidents and ordered the closure of the border between the two countries.

3 See https://amazonia.fiocruz.br/?page_id=31692.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Nepal–India Border and Borderland Communities Under COVID-19

Buddhi N. Shrestha *

There is an open border regime between Nepal and India since centuries. But all the border-crossings have been closed dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic period. The number of Border Observation Posts increased from 120 to 500 to obstruct movement. So the daily activities of borderland communities were affected.

Introduction

The Nepal–India Boundary is 1,880 kilometres long, with an open border regime. It has twenty major border crossing-points. Before the pandemic, Nepalese and Indian inhabitants could cross the porous border from anywhere many times a day without any obstruction or interrogation.

There are more than six million Nepali people working in India in various capacities such as security guards, domestic workers, hotel restaurant waiters, industrial guard, porters, agriculture helpers, etc (Nagarik Daily, 4 August 2014). In the same way, about four million Indians work in various parts of Nepal as school teachers, carpenters, masonry workers, plumbers, electricians, furniture makers, etc (Madhukar Shumsher JBR, FPRC Journal, 2014(3) www.fprc.in). They could come and go from their homes for their livelihoods without any problem. If border police suspected anyone, proof of identity was enough to pass.

It was generally not necessary for Nepali and Indian citizens to show identity proof nor to keep records of the movement of people while crossing the international border before the COVID-19 pandemic. But the border has been closed from both sides since 24 March 2020 when the pandemic started to spread. The border is still formally restricted, even though the lockdown officially ended on 21 July 2020. Nevertheless, the local frontier inhabitants can cross the border on foot. Border police do not stop them. Cargo trucks with foodstuff, fruits, vegetables, and merchandise are permitted to enter from either side. However, passenger vehicles have still been restricted. The number of armed police personnel patrolling has increased to obstruct the movement of "non-essential" borderland inhabitants.

* **Buddhi N. Shrestha**, MA (Geography with Land Surveying), Border Researcher, Border Study Centre; Former Dir. Gen. of Govt. Survey Dept. of Nepal. E-mail: bordernepal@gmail.com Facebook: Border Nepal Buddhi Twitter: @BuddhiNShrestha

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Study Area

My case study area is around the Belhi–Sunauli (Nepal–India) crossing-point. I have been to and from Indian towns many times through this point before COVID-19. This is one of the major crossing gates through which 1.28 million travelers crossed from India to Nepal and 1.36 million people entered into India from Nepal during the year 2018-19, the year before COVID-19 (Immigration Officer Giriraj Khanal and Area Police Inspector Bir Bahadur Thapa, Belhi).

Just three days before the lockdown, 16-to-18 thousand Nepalese, who worked in India, commuted across the border daily through this crossing-point (Kantipur Daily, 22 March 2020). When the lockdown started on 24 March, nearly 335 Nepalese were stranded in the Indian frontier, as the border was closed.

There are police posts, immigration and customs posts, and armed police personnel patrolling along this Belhi-Sunauli border crossing-point. Before the pandemic, Indian frontier inhabitants used to come to Bhairahawa Nepali weekly open market to sell their farm products such as vegetables, fruits, milk, ghee, and other consumable goods at a higher price. Nepalese borderland community people would go to the Indian Sunauli market to buy sugar, salt, spices, daily necessities, and cotton clothes at a cheaper rate in comparison to Nepali market. But these usual activities have been obstructed due to spread of the coronavirus.

Border Filtering Process

Immigration office, customs post, and police check-posts personnel have been stationed in all 20 main border crossing-points along the Nepal–India border. Before COVID-19, Nepalese and Indian nationals could cross the international border without interrogation. They wouldn't have to enter immigration check-points. But third-country nationals had to face the immigration office.

Major Customs Offices were established to check the third-country travelers and to provide visa facilities. Armed police patrolled along the border to deter illegal activities. However, unwanted elements misused the open border. Criminals committed crime in one frontier and could easily hide on the other side. Terrorists used to cross the border in a disguised manner as Nepali/Indian inhabitants, as those who had their attire, posture, food habit, language, as similar to either Indian or Nepali. There were cases of smuggling of goods and electronic materials, trafficking of girls and women, narcotic trafficking, export of fake Indian currency notes brought from third countries to Nepal and then India. These unwanted elements would try to infiltrate the porous border rather than through the main crossing-points. All these happenings were due to less vigilance and low numbers of armed police personnel along the border.

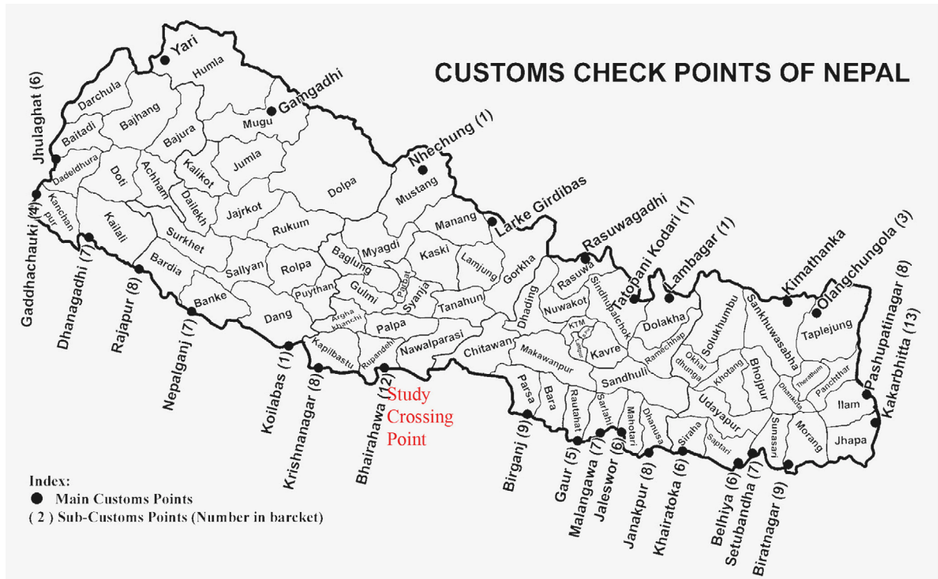

Figure 1. Map of Locations of Customs Offices and Sub-Customs Points (Nepal–India and Nepal–China). Source: the author, from the book *Border Management of Nepal*, 2003, 69.

Border Management System Changed Because of COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic period, the situation of border management system has been changed dramatically. The open and porous border was changed into a completely closed border system on both sides.

Formerly, Nepal had deployed 5,000 Armed Police Force (APF) along the border, establishing 120 Border Observation Posts (BoPs), six-to-ten kilometers apart in the plains and eight-to-fifteen kilometres apart in the hilly region. It had deputed 40 APF personnel in each BoP on average. Whereas India had deployed 45,000 special security bureau (SSB) with 530 BoPs, two-to-four kilometres apart having 85 personnel in each BoP. There were deputed immigration and customs officers, intelligentsia, and security personnel in the border crossing check-points.

After the lockdown was announced on 24 March 2020 by both countries, movement was restricted on both sides. Border-point officials, in a sense, have much less work as the movement of travelers and frontier inhabitants has been restricted. On the other hand, there have not been sufficient numbers of health officers and social workers.

In course of time, there were nearly 500 Nepalese stranded at the Indian frontier, as the border was restricted. They were harassed, because they were under lockdown into the closed door. There was not sufficient food and drink inside. When they tried to go out the door, policemen would strike their heads with wooden batons. However, those who were eligible were permitted to enter the Nepali frontier after general health checks by means of thermal guns, rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs), and polymerase chain reaction (PCRs).

Nepal border security forces expanded to 22,000 personnel from 8,000. It added 320 temporary BoPs to make 500 during the pandemic to obstruct the movement of people from India. A ban on walking across the border was enforced except in emergency situations. However, special passes were provided from the local body and district administration to borderland communities to attend funerals and ritual events.

Management After the Formal End of Lockdown

The lockdown was ended on 21 July 2020 in Nepal, with some restrictions in areas heavily hit by the novel coronavirus and continued suspension of public transport vehicles. However, the Nepal–India border crossing-gates are still closed officially and restricted for the movement of people by land as well as air. The Nepalese government has decided to continue the ban on people's movement across the border with India and China until 15 December 2020 (Himalayan Times Daily, 20 November 2020). Now the number of BoPs has gone down to 175 with 10,000 armed police personnel. Nevertheless, the Nepalese are going to Indian cities for their jobs, as they were out of work in their hometowns and other cities of Nepal. According to border area security personnel, more than 140 Nepalese crossed the Gaddha Chowki border-point on 17 November 2020 to go to their work place in India (Kantipur Daily, 18 November 2020).

The borderland communities are not happy, as the border has been closed for the last eight months. Border closures also affected weddings of borderland inhabitants. For example, twenty-year-old Nepalganj Municipality inhabitant Ali Shaiyad's marriage has been stalled for months. Originally scheduled to tie the knot with a boy across the border in April, the wedding keeps being postponed due to the border closure and pandemic (Himalayan Times Daily, 24 November 2020).

COVID-19 in Nepal

The first COVID-19 affected person in Nepal was detected on 23 January 2020. The first case of death was on 16 May. By 21 July, when the lockdown relaxed, fatalities reached 80 and the infected number increased to 23,948, whereas 16,664 people (75 percent) recovered. From 22 July to 14 August in a three-week period, the death rate increased by nearly 20 percent. Now, the total test (PCR) is 1.67 million, and the identified confirmed cases are 222,288 persons and among them 202,067 have been recovered. The total death through 23 November was 1337 patients. Staffing in hospitals and temporary health centers have been increased tremendously and they are busy many hours a day. In the same way, border security forces and BoPs increased along the border. But the immigration personnel at border check-points have sat idle, with the border formally closed.

Feeling of Borderland Communities During COVID-19

Indian frontier community people have been aggressive during COVID-19, due to barring them from crossing the border for their daily livelihood, such as taking domestic animals to the other frontier for grazing and grass cutting. A group of 40 Indian community inhabitants tried to infiltrate the Nepali frontier from the Malangawa Municipality Bhediyari crossing-point. Armed police BoP personnel stopped them towards Indian frontier. But they were furious and hurled stones and logs at Nepali armed policemen. An Indian national attacked the Nepal Armed Police Force constable who was patrolling the border on 22 April. The policeman was wounded on his head. In the meantime they were driven away with the help of Indian SSB personnel.

On 23 April, eight Nepali nationals returning from India forcefully tried to enter into Belhi, Nepal. Nepal Police took them into custody and they were sent back from where they had entered and ultimately handed over to Indian Police. They were taken to Subash Chandra Junior High School quarantine center at Sunauli No-man's land. They were examined by RDTs, PCRs, and thermal guns. On the other side, a 43-year-old Indian national and another 35 years of age fled from the Nepal Siddharthanagar Municipality-3 quarantine on 23 April.

Conclusion

The Nepal–India border cannot be closed for ever, but neither it should be entirely open. Borderland community inhabitants of both countries have close relationships with each other since historic times in terms of kith and kin, pilgrimage, and social factors. In fact, the border must be regulated during and after COVID-19. There should be designated exit and entry points along the border. ID cards should be introduced while crossing the border. It should establish coronavirus check-up desks with sufficient health workers and necessary materials near border gates. All travelers must be thoroughly examined to determine whether they carry the coronavirus. If virus-infected Nepali passengers have been identified, they should be obstructed and sent to local quarantine camp. If some of them are Indian nationals, they should be handed over to Indian health desk. After rigorous health checking, they should be permitted to enter into the immigration desk.

Now, a new mechanism should be introduced at border crossing-points. In the immigration corridor, digital cameras with a stand should be fitted over desks. Travelers must put their identity cards or citizenship certificates on the desk under the camera. Then they should proceed out of the corridor to cross the international border. At the same time, they should be monitored by CCTV cameras from inside the corridor and digital images should be saved in the monitoring wing. If he/she is suspected as a recorded criminal or red corner noticed terrorist, they must be interrogated. Images of notorious criminals should be displayed on the wall of the immigration corridor. This system/mechanism could check and arrest international criminals and terrorists on the border-point and prevent them from misusing the international border. But it should be managed in a regulated way for the movement of borderland community people to strengthen the people-to-people relations between Nepal and India.

Figure 2. Photo by author.

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Border Control (Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina) and Local Inventiveness in Times of COVID-19

Regina Coeli Machado e Silva [i]
Adriana Dorfman [ii]

Local level effects of closing borders between Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil in order to confront COVID-19 disarticulated modes of existence of border dwellers, generating local protests for reopening, creating "sanitary refugees", deepening the trends of biotechnological controls and sophisticating smuggling. Data for this essay was obtained from local online newspapers and analyzed with help of anthropological and geographical experiences at the border, concentrating on the description of border life and on its changes due to the sudden closure. The essay shows that the complex control structures at these borders gained a centrality whose effects were, besides stifling the pandemic, dismantling and rearticulating border practices, evidently in favor of more control. A disregard of cross-border integration, circulation and communication demonstrates the underlying reification of borders between these three national states.

Introduction

For residents of border cities among Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, governments' decision to blockade passages due to the COVID-19 pandemic was, and still is, an unacceptable policy response. Border dwellers were perplexed to see the abrupt interruption of a routine of incessant traffic. In this essay, we argue that the closure with different levels of border control and integration between these countries, broke a pre-existing transborder territoriality characterized by intense modes of circulation and communication. By submitting the same (border) actors to a closure, the blockade intensified border materialization and triggered a dynamic that put illegality at the forefront, as well as interrupted different types of transit-related activities between borders. The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of these three borders, before and after the blockade motivated by COVID-19.

i **Regina Coeli Machado e Silva**, visiting professor at UNILA (Federal University for Latin American Integration), senior professor at Unioeste (Western Parana State University), researcher at CNPq (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development). https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0874-8086 contact: coeli.machado@yahoo.com.br

ii **Adriana Dorfman**, associate professor at the Department of Geography and tenured professor at the Graduate Program in Geography at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6318-4546 contact: adriana.dorfman@ufrgs.br

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The use of the expression "Triple Border" to describe the urban conglomerate around the Iguazu Waterfalls is subject to discussion. This phrase entered circulation in the beginning of the 1990s. It denotes the securitization of border transits, after terrorist attacks against Jewish targets in Argentina were connected, according to the United States Central Intelligence Agency, to the border region. This connection was never proven (Silva 2008). As observed by Dorfman through content analysis of the bibliography on the region, authors choose to call this region "Triple Border" when discussing violence, sexual exploitation, smuggling, and related themes under scrutiny from third parties. At the same time, works that deal with social dynamics explained from local points of view (in themes such as population mobility, health, education) tend to employ the city names "Ciudad del Este", "Foz do Iguaçu" and "Puerto Iguazu" or simply "border region" (Dorfman 2019). Thus, the choice made in this essay to avoid the securitized caricature of this region implied by the expression Triple Border.

Data for this report was obtained from local newspapers, unstructured ethnographic observations by one of the authors residing on the Brazilian side, and analytical perspectives from previous research in the areas of Geography and Anthropology, though not made explicit.

The essay develops in four sections. Following this introduction, the second section shows levels of integration and control among the three borders. The third section presents effects of the quasi-simultaneous closure among them, and the fourth brings brief final considerations.

Integration, Control, and Circulation Before COVID-19

The territorial delimitation among Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil began in the Spanish and Portuguese colonization period and its recent configuration dates to late the 19th century. Boundary settings between Brazil and Argentina occurred in the contiguous spaces of forested land around the waterfalls of Iguazu River. Between Brazil and Paraguay, governments have built together a huge hydroelectric plant called Itaipu Binacional, damming Paraná River to serve as a potential energy reserve. Energy production, agribusiness (livestock, soybeans and other grains), tourism (Iguazu Falls) and trade (legal and illegal) are activities that characterize the interactions on this border. The economic development attracted many migrants from different parts of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, leading to population growth and to the foundation of several cities during the 20th Century, such as Foz do Iguaçu, Santa Teresinha do Iguaçu, São Miguel do Iguaçu (all in Brazil), Ciudad del Este, Hernandarias and Presidente Franco (in Paraguay) and Puerto Iguazu (in Argentina) (**Figure 1**).

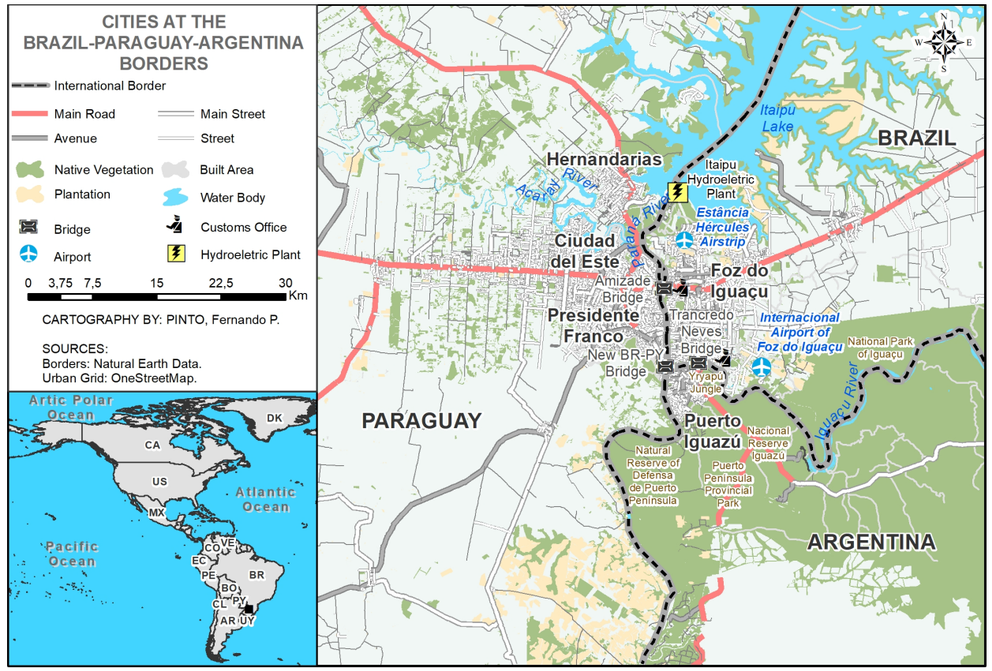

Figure 1. Map of cities at the Brazil–Paraguay–Argentina border.

An ostensive and random control of the cross-border movement of people and goods characterized traffic among the border cities Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil (connected by Amizade [Friendship] bridge) and Puerto Iguazu, Argentina (connected by Tancredo Neves bridge to Foz do Iguaçu, 14 kilometres from Amizade Bridge).

Customs and migration controls differed on each side of the border.[1] From the point of view of the passersby and in relation to the entrance to Argentina, border crossing was under a rigorous control of immigration and customs officials. Entrances and exits were strictly observed. No tourist or dweller could arrive in the Argentine border city Puerto Iguazu without a passport or identity documents. A permit would be issued for the city, and a 90-day visa for other places in Argentina. Vehicles could be subject to baggage inspection at random.

On the crossing to Ciudad del Este (Paraguay) officers carried out sporadic and apparently less rigorous checks on people and vehicles. However, the constant gaze of customs officers meant uninterrupted surveillance without verification of documents and records, intensified by the presence of young army soldiers enacting the country's military power and defence.

Regarding the entrance to Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil) from neighbouring countries, customs officials' control was restricted to providing entry permits to foreigners and tourists, while border dwellers moved freely. In fact, the passers were the ones who addressed border guards and asked for permits, knowing they needed papers to enter the neighbouring country beyond the city limits. By the end of 2019, Brazilian customs authorities installed Fronteira Tech, an 'intelligent' electronic surveillance system based on facial and license-plate recognition that issues alerts and generates data to fight crimes such as smuggling drugs and firearms (Portal da Cidade 2019).

The border with Paraguay is one of the busiest in Brazil. Data from 2017 reported that daily crossing averaged more than 40,000 pedestrians and almost 5000 vehicles (Quadra 2017b). At least 85 percent of that total referred to Brazilians crossing to and from Ciudad del Este to buy cheaper electronics, perfumes, clothes, alcoholic beverages, and other commodities (Meireles 2018).[2] This vigorous trading is eased by porters of large bulks (sometimes above the permitted quota of US$ 500) or of illegal goods (cigarettes, drugs, medicines, etc.). Hundreds of border workers, known as *laranjas* (oranges), or porters, live by these practices. They are not occasional buyers, like most, and are often unaware of who hires them to pass the goods.

Iguazu Falls and commerce in Ciudad del Este make the three borders a lively tourist destination that entails the need for services. Many Brazilians cross the border daily to Ciudad del Este as employees or trade owners. In the opposite direction, many Paraguayans cross over to Foz do Iguaçu, to work in construction, in the urban service sector, or as domestic workers. The transit of students to higher education institutions, especially medical schools (Portal da Cidade 2020a), is also important in Ciudad del Este and Presidente Franco (Paraguay), with students coming from all over Brazil. Many live in Foz do Iguaçu and commute using public transport.

In addition, there is the transportation of cargo such as soybeans, wheat, and rice from Paraguay and Argentina for consumption in Brazil or, in Paraguay's case, for export through Brazilian ports. In the opposite direction, industrialized products are carried to Paraguay for domestic and personal use. The intense traffic of Brazilian and Paraguayan border dwellers to Puerto Iguazu also aims at purchasing Argentine wine and meat.

In the border cities of the three countries, there is an everyday feel of conviviality in streets, shops and restaurants, a hospitality made up of goodwill amid anxieties brought about by differences and border controls.

Ingenuity and Local Rearticulations After COVID-19 Border Closures

In March 2020, national governments enforced abrupt, uncoordinated and unilateral closures, with radical consequences for customs, immigration and sanitary controls. The dormant control architecture was activated and had an impact on residents' daily experiences. The borders between the three countries remain closed at the time of writing this report. Brazil's government has an inarticulate and ineffective policy in the internal control of COVID-19, so border closure seems justified. By interrupting the everyday conviviality and the bustling flow of people, it amplified the constitutive tensions of national borders, shown as follows.

A. Uncompromising border control. The closure of bridges with iron bars blocked the pedestrian crossing, while the traffic remained open for cargo, as seen in the live transmission shared 24/7 through local media (**Figure 2**). Drivers go through immigration, customs and sanitary control.

There was a significant inversion of the movement registered in Brazilian immigration: before the pandemic, the average number of registered tourists, foreigners and nationals coming from Argentina was 3000 per day, now it is reduced to 20 (under special authorization). Coming from Paraguay, the mean number rose from eight or ten to 300 per day, mainly Paraguayans. Noteworthy are the entries of citizens from neighbouring countries into Brazil for humanitarian reasons (often undergoing health treatment in Foz do Iguaçu or other big cities in Brazil). Also, citizens from other countries, being in Paraguay or Argentina, use the Brazilian border to return to their countries through Foz do Iguaçu airport. Requests for these moves are made to the countries' consular services and directly to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brazil, which issues permits to be presented to border immigration officials. Border control between Brazil and Paraguay made by Fronteira Tech has been updated to recognize passersby.

B. New categories for human mobility. Explicit enforcement of legal and political regulations linked to national sovereignty brought into play categories previously unusual in the region. The use of the category "illegal immigrants" by the Brazilian Federal Highway Police for workers who try to cross the border in covert ways can be illustrated by the seizure of a truck, at the sanitary barrier, whose driver and two occupants, Paraguayans, were trying to enter Brazil with goods. They were "deported to Paraguay" and accused in Brazil of violating a sanitary measure (Portal da Cidade, 2020b). Towards Paraguay, border dwellers (Brazilian shop owners in Paraguay) tried to cross the Paraná River on speedboats and were also sued for violating the border-crossing ban (Benetta 2020).

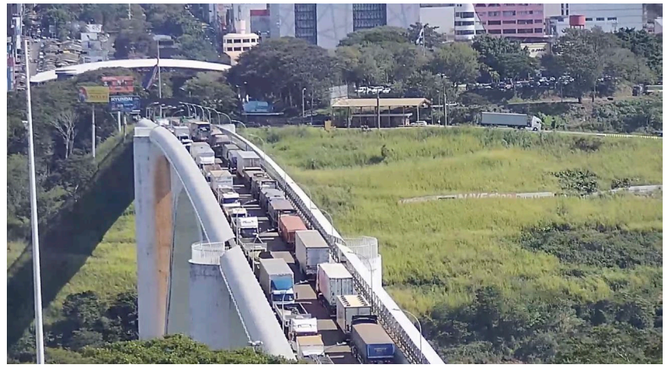

Figure 2. Heavy truck traffic on Amizade Bridge. Screenshot, *Portal da Cidade* broadcast, July 24, 2020. https://foz.portaldacidade.com/cameras-ao-vivo/ponte-da-amizade-sentido-paraguai

Figure 3. Paraguayans trapped on Amizade Bridge. Photo: H2Foz, May 20, 2020.

As Argentina and Paraguay closed borders to their nationals as well, tensions concentrated on the Brazilian side. Unable to return to their countries or to enter Brazil again, Argentines and Paraguayans remained "in between borders" for up to a week-long period. One of the Argentines summed up this situation with astonishment: "we are homelandless" (Rodrigues 2020). Under the title "Exiled by the Pandemic, Paraguayans are Sleeping Rough on the Border" a newspaper piece described a "legion of workers" with their families, who left São Paulo, Brazil, for Foz do Iguaçu, where they would cross the border on foot. After registering their departure from Brazil, they faced bars preventing them from entering their own country. Those who were unable to find shelter waited for days, crammed on the 550-metre-long Amizade Bridge, sleeping rough, without food or healthcare (**Figure 3**). They received "voluntary help from Paraguayan Navy officers responsible for local surveillance, and from groups of Brazilian volunteers" (Paro 2020). The blockade created the figure of "sanitary refugees" (Junqueira 2020), a concept used by Brazilian diplomats to describe this distressing situation of Argentines and Paraguayans temporarily trapped in between borders.

C. Intensification, diversification and new routes for illegal transit of goods. Brazilian Federal Revenue "registered impressive numbers in the first four months of 2020": cigarette smuggling from Paraguay increased by 800 percent when compared to 2019, as did drug trafficking (Calebe 2020a). Seizures of goods, either from smugglers, tourists' shopping or resellers decreased on bridges and increased far from official checkpoints, such as on the Paraná River, on Itaipu Lake, in hiding places and on side roads. Besides cigarettes, large amounts of marijuana and wine (Calebe 2020c)

and cellphones and accessories were seized. Increased smuggling apprehensions, mainly of marijuana, occurred in Argentina and Paraguay (Benetta 2020b). Towards Paraguay, on the Brazilian side, foodstuffs (sugar, eggs, oil and cold cuts) were also seized (Calebe 2020d). Smuggling has also become more sophisticated. Drones and remotely controlled electric boats started crossing Paraná River (Quadra 2020c), occasionally seized by the Brazilian Navy (Calebe 2020e).

D. Protests and border rearrangements. The pandemic has radically altered the lives of people within the cross-border region. About 100,000 workers in all sectors, living on one side of the border and working on the other or in the crossway, have lost their jobs. Neighbouring cities like Ciudad de Este and Foz do Iguaçu have discussed local proposals for the gradual reopening of the Amizade bridge with sanitary measures, such as the creation of a joint health safety protocol and temporary authorization to cross the border using a "health ID". This "ID", valid for four-to-five days, contained test results for COVID-19 and allowed restricted and controlled circulation (Calebe 2020b).

After two months of closure, hundreds of workers and entrepreneurs in tourism, commerce, and cross-border transport in Brazil protested in favor of reopening border bridges. Other demonstrations took place in Ciudad del Este and Puerto Iguazu (Calebe 2020f). In one of them, participants were called "smugglers" by the authorities (Quadra 2017a).

Mayors from four border cities in Paraguay also met, in an unprecedented way, to ask central government to "conscientiously open" borders. Their border economies were based "95% in commercial activity and tourism, and for this reason, the closure of borders and restrictions on free movement break the economic cycle of these municipalities, with immediate effect on businesses, companies and production units, generating closures and massive layoffs and raising unemployment and poverty rates" (Benetta 2020c).

Final Considerations

Changes in border management due to COVID-19 exposed constitutive tensions inherent in the collective experience across borders and caused, in the same movement, complementary reactions. After six months, an important tension is the heavy-handed interruption of normal life in face of the successive and unsuccessful rearrangements attempted by authorities, businesspeople, travel agents, and residents, mainly between Paraguay and Brazil, trying to soften the abrupt closure of borders. At the same time, collective demonstrations took place in the three border cities, demanding national governments' attention to crises generated by the breakdown of territorial and socioeconomic integration. If in previous times there was little immigration control (except for Argentina), since COVID-19, there is extreme state control over the flow of people across borders by means of consular services and diplomatic representations, individualizing permits through procedures on the national level, controlled at physical barriers at border crossing points. As a correlate, new figures emerged in between borders, such as sanitary refugees, and along with new local vocabulary to describe the movement of border dwellers between nation-states as "illegal immigrants". The border closure also increased sophistication of smuggling as circumventing stricter surveillance and control of passage increased illicit profits.

Undoubtedly, the inflexible closure of the passage imposed by the three state governments to control COVID-19 highlighted the separation function of the border. Until then, the border between Foz do Iguaçu, Ciudad del Este and Puerto Iguazu was experienced through the intense transit of people and of material and immaterial goods, made more noticeable due to its recent drastic interruption and to the multiplication of control structures. With separation at center stage, border practices were dismantled and reassembled following local knowledge and needs, under the watchful eyes of the national states, reflected in the introduction of external categories such as "illegal migrants" and "refugees" and in the increase of apprehension of smuggling.[3]

Notes

1 For more details of the institutional structures of control in Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, see Dorfman, França & Felix (forthcoming).

2 This intense trade was induced by the economic cooperation agreement that opened Brazilian ports to Paraguay, signed in 1973, negotiated at the time of the construction of Itaipu hydroelectric plant

3 Essay translated by Walkiria Sidi, PhD in Applied Linguistics at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

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Indian Borders in the Era of COVID-19

Sanjiv Krishan Sood [i]
Dhananjay Tripathi [ii]

After the outbreak of COVID-19, India closed its international borders and at the domestic level restricted intra-state movements. This paper underlines the impacts on Indian border security, management, trade, and life in the borderlands. The paper also discusses how new internal borders were erected during the nationwide lockdown.

Borders Before COVID-19: An overview

India has about 14,945 kilometres of land borders with its seven neighbours, namely Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. The 106-kilometre-long border with Afghanistan is along what is called Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). India's borders also include the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir and also, recently much in the news, the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China. Besides the land borders, India also has 7693 kilometres of coastline. The borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh are guarded by the Border Security Force (BSF). The Borders with Nepal and Bhutan are protected by the *Shashatra Seema Bal* (SSB) (Armed Border Force).

In contrast, the border with China, including the LAC, are guarded by Indo–Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along with the Indian army. Similarly, the LoC in Kashmir is guarded by the army with some units of BSF placed under its Operational Command. The COVID-19 pandemic has put extra pressure on border troops who even otherwise are under a lot of strain due to the manpower-intensive border guarding practices prevalent along Indian borders.

Most of the borders in South Asia were drawn by the British for their political, economic and security considerations (Tripathi and Chaturvedi 2019). These borders ignored socio-cultural realities of South Asia. Even after the departure of the British, independent states (*viz.* India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar) inherited these lines and made little effort to alter them (Tripathi 2015). Borders of India with Pakistan and Bangladesh are highly securitised with a border fence constructed by India to prevent criminals, smugglers, and illegal immigrants crossing over to India. Both these borders have the dubious distinction of being amongst the five most dangerous borders of the world (NewsORB360 2020). However, the India–Nepal and India–Bhutan borders are open borders as a result of treaties between India and Nepal and between India and Bhutan. Articles 6 and 7 of the India–Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship (1950) grants the nationals of one country the same privileges in territories of another on a reciprocal basis. This includes freedom to move from one state to the other without any requirement of a passport or visa. Similar provisions are included in the Treaty of Friendship signed between India and Bhutan (1949).

Thus, India has open borders as well as securitised borders and different security agencies for border management. As one of the most affected nations by COVID-19, several changes in border management are inevitable. The remainder of this essay analyses some of the necessary and expected alterations in border management that we may witness in future.

Post-COVID-19 and India's International Borders

India is one of the worst-hit countries from the novel coronavirus pandemic, just behind the US in terms of total number of cases (the US has the highest number of positive cases in the world). At present India has 7,120,538 confirmed cases and lost 109,150 citizens due to the pandemic (World Health Organization 2020). The first case in India was reported on 3 January 2020, and in March, the cases started rising dramatically. The government of India locked down the country on 25 March. The lockdown continued till 31 May. Thereafter, the government started the unlocking process; still, this long and sudden lockdown adversely impacted the Indian economy. Several related issues require attention. This paper focuses on the impact of COVID-19 on Indian borders.

Aviation industry and airports:

As one of the leading economies of the world, India is well connected internationally through air and freight transportation. In 2019, the Indian aviation industry registered impressive growth with the number of international passengers increasing by 6.9 percent over 2018 (Chandra 2019). The initial spread of the coronavirus pandemic in India came from international air travellers before necessary protocols could be put in place. International travel was suspended on 22 March, 2020. It remains suspended to date except for select flights returning stranded Indian nationals from other countries or sending back foreign nationals to their respective countries. Resultantly, international careers are facing the burden of having to maintain idle assets without any revenue generation. The necessity of imposing protocols to prevent the spread of the virus has also resulted in increased cost of operation of the airports and the border personnel viz. customs and immigration officials. The extra time required for clearance for each passenger also disrupted schedules. The pandemic imposed additional costs on international travel as more facilities had to be created at the airports.

Border trade and movement of people:

As indicated above, India shares land borders with almost all the countries of South Asia. The India–Pakistan and India–Bangladesh borders being heavily securitised, border crossing is possible only through authorised crossing points. These points, called Land Custom Stations (LCSs) and International Check Posts (ICPs), were closed for international traffic during the lockdown. These are now being progressively opened and a certain amount of trade and transit is allowed. Closure of the border crossing points along the India–Bangladesh border created difficulties for Nepal and Bhutan (both being landlocked) as the transit trade through these was heavily affected.

The India–Nepal and India–Bhutan borders were open borders. Crossings could take place anywhere along the border. Borderlanders in these communities routinely crossed the borders for work. According to the estimation of Radhika Halder, 279,000 Nepali migrant labourers worked in India, and also Indian labourers worked in Nepal. The pandemic has caused significant disruption of movement through authorised crossing points. Many of these labourers were stuck and wanted to move back to their respective countries (Halder 2020). Guarding every inch of these open and heavily populated borders is difficult. Nearly 1,500 stranded workers, therefore, resorted to adopting challenging routes to cross (ANI 2020). There were "photos and videos of Nepali nationals swimming across Mahakali river to get home which had gone viral on social media" (Bhattarai 2020). Several Nepali migrant workers unwillingly stayed at Uttarakhand, an Indian state that shares borders with Nepal. Unlike the India–Nepal border, there was not much distress at the India–Bhutan border. This is because not many migrant workers from India go to Bhutan. Those who were stranded in Bhutan were brought back after some time.

The primary cause of disruption at these two borders was the lack of preparedness to deal with the pandemic. There were very few quarantine facilities near these borders and also no specific relief camps. There is no indication when the movement of people will normalise near the India–Nepal and India–Bhutan borders. The closures have adversely affected the income of migrant labourers on both sides and also the movements of merchandise trucks. Things may return to relative normal at the India–Bhutan border soon, but the recent tension along the India–Nepal border may add to the problem and delay normalcy. It is difficult to

i **Sanjiv Krishan Sood**, former Additional Director, Border Security Force, India. Email: sks_2@rediffmail.com
ii **Dhananjay Tripathi**, PhD, Senior Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi, India. Email: dhananjay@sau.ac.in

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predict at this juncture how things will evolve along the India–Nepal border. It appears that security has been tightened in the form of enhanced surveillance and more extensive deployment of troops on the pretext of COVID-19.

Border security and management:

As in other spheres, the coronavirus pandemic has adversely impacted the border guarding and management operations. The manpower-intensive border guarding practices prevalent on the borders of India make the border guards vulnerable to infection. The internal data of BSF reveals that at the start of the last week of July 2020, BSF had a total of 2889 COVID-19-positive cases, *i.e.* about 1.15 percent of the total force of about 250,000, compared to about 0.089 percent of the entire country's population. In other words, the rate of infection in BSF is 12.9 times or 1290 percent higher than the national average. Additional border guarding forces are also more or less in the same situation. The problem has become more severe, and authorities have declared many locations of these forces as containment zones.

The reasons for such high rates of infection are manifold. The living conditions at the Border Out Posts (BOPs) along the international borders and Forward Defended Localities (FDLs) along the LOC and LAC are such that the troops have to live in close proximity to each other in barracks. No separate quarantine facilities being available at the BOPs/FDLs, the troops returning from leave *etc.* also live in the same barrack where other *jawans* (soldiers) are residing. Thus, safe distancing norms are difficult to follow, thereby providing a favourable environment for the virus to spread.

With infected troops as well as those quarantined after returning from leave unavailable for duty, border guarding operations are put under severe constraint. Another effect of the pandemic has been on the availability of funds for various activities. A large portion of the budget has been diverted for procurement of COVID-19 kits, *etc.* leaving little for other activities, thus further hampering logistics on Indian borders.

Borderlands:

Another issue, especially along the Indo–Pakistan and Indo–Bangladesh border is that the farmers have to cross perimeter fences for farming activities. Troops deployed on fence gates for security screening come into regular physical contact with the farmers, increasing exposure to infection. As per border guidelines with Pakistan (not recognised by India after 1971) and with Bangladesh, no defence-related work can be undertaken within 150 yards of the international border. Since both Pakistan and Bangladesh consider the fence to be a defence-related work, it has been constructed at least 150 yards back from the international line, and most of the land between the fence and boundary is farmland, meaning that the farmers require regular access.

The Border Area Development Programme (BADP) undertaken to develop infrastructure at the borders and to generate employment in border areas has also been severely impacted due to the pandemic. Firstly, the allocation of funds for new projects has been put on low priority. Secondly, even the ongoing projects are delayed due to a severe resource crunch. Besides the shortage of funds, labour shortages have arisen with migratory labour having gone away due to uncertainty of the situation and prolonged lockdown. Local labour is not available in adequate numbers. Farming in the border area has taken a hit due to restrictions on movements during the lockdown period.

We thus find that the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on border security and border management as well as life in the borderlands. It is likely to be a long-term problem as the pandemic has yet to peak and resources necessary to properly carry out full-scale activities on the border are unlikely to be available in a short time.

New internal borders in India:

After the outbreak of the pandemic, free movement between different states of India too has been restricted. It is the first time in India that states have closed their borders with each other. Road and rail transport having been stopped, and people were compelled to stay at different locations within the country. The poor sections of society were the most severely affected. Millions of people in India migrate to metro cities in search of livelihoods. After the lockdown of the country, the migrant labourers working mainly as daily wagers in unorganised sectors lost their jobs. As per an official estimation, almost 2.6 million labourers remained stuck in different parts of the country. Many also ended up in temporary relief camps that were set up by the government (Chishti 2020). Unable to afford rent and having no money for even food, many migrant labourers started walking to their homes several hundred kilometres away as all modes of transport were stopped during the nationwide lockdown. Many lost their lives in road accidents. Some also died due to hunger and sheer exhaustion. The pandemic thus created an entirely new and previously unimagined set of borders. The two-month nationwide lockdown was lifted, but the harms have not subsided.

Conclusion

The securitisation of Indian borders varies from country to country depending on the threat perception. In the post-COVID-19 phase, transformation of even open borders is likely, with stricter controls being put in place through enhanced surveillance, thermal screening, and enhanced scrutiny of everyone trying to transit. The pandemic has proved that manpower-intensive border guarding practices in India require a rethink. The Indian aviation sector that had registered an impressive rise in previous years is also facing difficulties due to the pandemic. Airports wear a deserted look because of the restrictions imposed. Lastly, intra-state mobility having been restricted throughout India, the economy has been adversely impacted, and the livelihoods of poor people have been severely impacted. The adverse fallout of the pandemic has been in all spheres of life including, centred on borders, and restoration of normalcy is likely to take a long time.

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The Central U.S.–Mexico Borderlands during the 2020 Pandemic

Kathleen Staudt *

This essay begins by setting the scene of the 2020 novel coronavirus virus (COVID-19) pandemic in the central U.S.–Mexico borderlands. The essay then outlines the pre-pandemic situation, from 2016-2019, one characterized by larger numbers of migrant arrivals from Central America, harsh U.S. anti-refugee and anti-Mexican practices, and hardened border controls. The article then discusses pandemic-linked deaths and closures of the border to all but U.S. citizens and Legal Permanent Residents and to slightly diminished cargo traffic, rising again by July and numbers of COVID-19 deaths declining thereafter. Official U.S. border rhetoric has broadened to strengthen nationalist security rationales around health, while activists push back against harsh policy practices, creating an ongoing, dynamic tension in the borderlands.

Introduction: Flawed Governance

The rising COVID-19 infection and death rates in the cross-border El Paso–Ciudad Juárez metropolitan region of more than two million people peaked in July and August, then by mid-September, decreased to total 464 deaths in (American) El Paso and 813 in (Mexican) Juárez, a city double the size.[1] Governors of both Texas and Chihuahua preside over economies that remained open for "essential" business, gradually opening for others, with the formal border crossing closure initially to end June 22 but delayed every month by month, perhaps to be extended through the end of 2020. One mayor (*presidente municipal*) caught the virus, wears a facemask, and recovered; the other mayor advocated face masks but openly flaunted his disregard for them, pictured at an El Paso country club with un-masked friends sitting close to one another, but served by a face-masked waiter.

State governors in federalism, each elected under populist presidents—one of them right-wing and the other left-wing—took capital-city cues to minimize the urgency of the pandemic in early days and delay policies that could have saved lives. In both countries, it quickly became clear that unprepared quasi-private-public health care systems fell short in the early weeks of the pandemic, depending on the states in which people lived. Medical personnel had few tests at the outset, and it took up to a week to get results. In Texas 97% of tests were administered in the private market health sector, thus costly to all but the privately insured, or aged or impoverished under Medicare and Medicaid. Only in mid-May did free public testing become available in El Paso. In late May, just 3.5% of El Pasoans had been tested, a slightly higher figure than Texas, at 3.4%, but far lower than neighboring state New Mexico at 9.8% (Moore 2020). In Juárez, only hospitals test extremely ill patients, with estimates at .05% of the population. Uneven coordination between health authorities on both sides pose challenges to identify contacts of the infected (Kocherga 2020).

While borders hardened sharply during the pandemic, they had been hardening after the election of President Trump. In justifying extended border closures for the pandemic, Acting U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf said "border security is homeland security" (quoted in Taylor 2020).[2] One might wonder if the U.S. respects national security in other countries, for the U.S.—currently leading in worldwide deaths—deports refugees, including those with infections, by plane to the Global South or to neighboring city Juárez where an estimated 10,000-15,000 languish awaiting hearing dates that have been cancelled.[3] President Trump and U.S. corporate CEOs wrote Mexico's President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) encouraging him to consider production "essential" so that manufacturing supply chains would not be broken in the interdependent economies of North America (Angulo 2020).

Pre-Pandemic Tensions

Prior to the 2020 pandemic, the interdependent economies of the Paso del Norte region showed congested and bustling pedestrian, car, and cargo-truck high-volume traffic in its five regional ports of entry. Business voices bristled at traffic delays, given U.S. strict border controls to ward off terrorism, illegal drugs, and unauthorized immigration. Depending on the time or season, waits at the border could take as long as two-to-three hours. Family members, shoppers, and workers crossed the border with documents as citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, and B1/B2 (so-called "laser") visas for short-visit crossing.

Two turning points occurred in 2016-2017: the election of President Donald Trump, who campaigned on anti-Mexican, anti-immigrant messaging; and the movement of large-scale immigrant caravans from Central America. Trump, perhaps as part of his usual negotiation strategy, threatened to end NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, although a U.S.–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA, which some called NAFTA 2.0, T-MEC in Spanish) was negotiated to achieve three-country ratification by 2020. The images of migrant caravans fed Trump's fear-mongering language of invasion. As a transit country, Mexico and AMLO (elected in late 2018) coped with U.S. pressure to secure their borders at the south.

Through 2017 and 2018, U.S. border agents processed asylum seekers who presented themselves at the border according to U.S. law and international protocols, even as ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) federal agents pushed into homes and workplaces for large-scale deportation in these less visible yet real internal borderlines. El Paso's faith-based community, especially Ruben García at Annunciation House, co-ordinated shelter space at no cost to the federal government while volunteers processed documented asylum seekers for one-to-three days before their journeys, some with ankle bracelets, to relatives elsewhere in the U.S. to await hearings. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents coordinated with García for buses to drop off as many as 1,000 refugees per day at sites, but as Christmas approached in 2018, CBP dumped large numbers of refugees at the downtown Greyhound Bus Station with no food, fresh clothing, place to sleep, money, or linguistic skills to communicate for their bus tickets. The nonprofit community again rose to the challenge to accommodate, feed, and shelter refugees until U.S. policy practice took even harsher turns in 2018: children separated from parents, people caged and sleeping on rough ground under the downtown freeway while border agents processed them for removal, detention centers, and unsanitary conditions inside government processing centers until a congressional delegation visited and exposed the inhumane conditions. All of these stories and images fueled new narratives, both by Trump and human rights organizations.

By early 2019, the U.S. established the perhaps-mis-named Migrant Protection Protocol, also called Remain in Mexico, pushing an estimated 10,000 migrants into Juárez, now approximately 15,000. Asylum seekers could not approach the borderline to make their claim, but rather were "metered" (sometimes on their arms) to await entry while sleeping on the bridge or streets in Juárez. The burdens on Juárez, a city in which nearly half of the population lives below Mexico's poverty line, can scarcely be overstated. Moreover, vulnerable refugees from all over the world—Central and South America, Cuba, and Africa—became targets for organized crime, such as theft, kidnapping for ransom, and rape. Juárez shelters can house approximately 2,000 people, but the rest fend for themselves. Cross-border nonprofit organizations, such as Abara Frontiers, work with the State of Chihuahua government to place people in certified shelters (see text and pictures: https://www.abarafrontiers.org/). Once both governments put the pandemic policies into place, the crowded facilities in both Juárez and the U.S. public and private, for-profit detention facilities raised alarms among many, even as residents and CBP agents became infected with the virus.

The Pandemic Arrives

Both presidents took a casual approach to the pandemic, avoiding social distancing and delaying U.S.–Mexico

* **Kathleen Staudt**, PhD, is Professor Emerita, University of Texas at El Paso, and Film Review Editor for *BIG_Review*.
Contact: kstaudt@utep.edu

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border closure until March 20 to all but "essential" crossers, namely citizens and Legal Permanent Residents, not laser-visa holders, thus decimating retail stores in south El Paso dependent on Mexican shoppers. Mexico declared March 30 and thereafter as a national emergency, issuing an unenforced order to close non-essential businesses. With 500 maquiladora plants in the State of Chihuahua, three-fifths of them in Juárez with over 300,000 workers, only 28 temporarily closed, according to Border Industrial Association president Jerry Pacheco; some workers faced furloughs at 50-65% pay (US$20-30 per week), and others worked in plants that ostensibly took preventive measures. Activist lawyer Susana Prieto Terrazas encouraged workers to take photos inside the plants, then posted many on Facebook that showed, for example, crowded work spaces separated with flimsy plastic and people lined up close together to have temperatures taken (Villagran 2020a).[4] On April 27, then with a third of the plants in operation, workers protested with videos that went viral, "better fired than dead;" Prieto claimed that workers' deaths represented almost half the city's death count of 33 at the time (Villagran and Martínez 2020).

Meanwhile, refugees remain stuck in Juárez, an unsafe city, without adequate shelter. While the faith-based shelters accommodate approximately 2,000, as noted, others sleep in parks, on the streets, or stay in cheap hotels if they have money. El Paso's Anti-Deportation Squad documents flight patterns and plane departures with shackled refugees to Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, reportedly with 50% or more of arrivals infected and facing hostility from nationals in their own countries (Johnston 2020).[5] Brownsville is also home to a "witness" group that protests airport deportations. Activists in King County, WA, have been successful in stopping such flights, though the local government responsible for airport policy faces lawsuits for their response to civic action.

In early-pandemic El Paso *Times* reports on infection numbers and deaths, once reporting daily figures on deaths in both cities, Juárez showed three-to-four times the number of El Paso, despite the city being twice the size of El Paso. Given the low rate of testing, the number of infections is hardly a credible figure to report. Now in mid-September, the El Paso deaths are a little more than half those in its neighbor city.

U.S.–Mexico trade and traffic figures decreased in March and April, with most warehoused inventory already moved northward. Economist Tom Fullerton reported data on northbound crossings to El Paso showing February's 67,300 cargo trucks down to 43,700 in March; car traffic down much more from 891,300 to 340,300, and pedestrian traffic down the most, from 499,300 to 103,900, thus impacting revenue to the city of El Paso from bridge tolls.[6] Lauren Villagran reported figures slightly differently: Northbound traffic to El Paso on one of the heavily trafficked (free) Bridge of the Americas, down to 229,000 vehicles versus 305,000 in March 2019, and pedestrian traffic at the downtown Paso del Norte Bridge down 79% compared to the previous year (Villagran 2020b). Perhaps as a quid pro quo for El Paso's forced fumigation and delousing of Mexican workers from 1917 to decades thereafter, including the millions of *braceros* (temporary Mexican migrant workers) from 1942-1964 sprayed with DDT (Romo 2005),[7] pedestrian crossers into Juárez pass through a short makeshift disinfection tunnel, a practice cited in other southbound crossing communities such as Nogales. The usual truck congestion at ports of entry gave way to desolation. A large Facebook Reporte de Puentes group posted "Zaragoza, 2 ready lanes and 2 regular, 3 minutes to cross. Juárez can't live without El Paso, nor can El Paso without Juárez because we are one heart!" (quoted in Villagran 2020c).

Figure 1. Top left: southbound pedestrain crossing, May 2020 (photo credit: Staudt) Top right: sanitary tunnel, May 2020 (photo credit: Nancy S. Reynolds). Bottom: northbound pedestrian crossing, May 2020 (photo credit: Staudt).

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From the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics for northbound truck crossings all along the U.S.–Mexico border, we can see a gradual rise from May (417,586) to June (531,579), and July (557,267)—the latest figures available as of mid-September (BTS, 2020). Although the pandemic continues to be with us, export-assembly production and northbound supply-chain transportation appear to be getting back to normal. The State of Chihuahua, no longer categorized "orange" by the federal government, now is "yellow," that is, medium risk. Lawyer Susana Prieto was jailed in the State of Matamoros in June during the pandemic on trumped-up charges for her activism to help workers gain higher wages and establish an independent service and industrial union. She was released after three weeks, banished to the State of Chihuahua, and forbidden to leave the state, despite being a dual citizen with a home and family in El Paso. As USMCA went into effect July 1, it became clear that the promise of strengthened labor rights will likely be ignored. No longer will border agents accept claims for asylum, and a few migrants trickle across facing extremely risky journeys. Former Border Patrol chief for the El Paso Sector Victor Manjárrez, Jr. said that the logistics of a sophisticated multi-piece trafficking system "mimic those of a legal global supply chain" (Villagran 2020d).

Looking back over the last six months, it is impossible to know whether the pandemic was contained by selective border closures (recall the slippery treatment of "essential" workers) for either or both sides of the borderline. Given the uncertainty in the beginning months of the pandemic, perhaps closure was warranted. However, the flaws in governance in both countries plus the shoddy roll-out of health recommendations and testing make it impossible to determine which factors have now led to a decline in COVID-19-related deaths. That large-scale maquiladora production and trucking more-or-less continued during the whole pandemic exposes, I believe, the priority of economic health over people's health. Now, in September, the continued closure seems only to confirm the U.S. President's hostile obsessions with both Mexicans and the transnational interaction of people who remain relatives, friends, co-workers, and shoppers. That political reality could change in early 2021 if a different president is elected.

In closing, we see an interdependent Central U.S.–Mexico borderlands binational community hurting from pandemic-related stricter border controls, work stoppages, unemployment, sickness, and death—a hurt that spreads to other parts of the U.S. and Mexico. At the same time, the essential nature of the interdependent regional economies may be more firmly wedded together on the ground and in people's hearts and minds, though we are nowhere near a North American Union, at least in my lifetime.[8]

Notes

1 The methods for this brief essay rely on sources (media and official), on 45 years of living, teaching, and researching in these borderlands (including seven books and edited volumes), and participant observation in nonprofit organizations that serve migrants.

2 A 1944 law which "grants the president broad power to block foreigners from entering the country to prevent the 'serious' threat of a dangerous disease" has been evoked to expel children after reaching the border (Dickerson 2020).

3 The 10,000, later 15,000 figure is widely shared among the faith community activists in El Paso, with whom I am affiliated.

4 I am a member of the Facebook group, ObrerxPower PoderObrerx

5 I participated in the Anti-Deportation Squad, begun in fall, 2019.

6 From an online panel discussion, "COVID 19: El Paso's response to COVID-19 and its economic impacts" by Virtual Research Forum, May 27, 2020. Panelists at a Rice University Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies webinar on May 13, 2020, "The Effect of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the North American Supply Chains," also reported decreased truck traffic.

7 Romo also presented on racialized health practices of the so-called Spanish Flu of 1918 (that originated in the U.S.) at the forum.

8 In our conclusion to *Fronteras no Más: Toward Social Justice at the U.S.-Mexico Border* (2002), Irasema Coronado and I wrote about the limited prospects for a North American Union (NAU) roughly modeled on the European Union.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

The Southern French–Italian Border Before, During, and After COVID-19 Lockdowns

Daniela Trucco *

This essay focuses on the French–Italian border of the Maritime Alps. Grounded on previous research and on more recent data, it examines both "desirable" (cross-border workers and customers) and "undesirable" (illegalized non-European migrants) circulation before, during and after the COVID-19 French and Italian lockdown.

Introduction

This essay is grounded on previous research on the Maritime Alps borderland[1] and on more recent interviews with spokespersons of different social groups: activists and NGOs but also Roya Valley and Ventimiglia inhabitants and cross-border workers. It aims to show the continuity and changes in the border filtering process during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on circulation that is considered both "desirable" and generally legalized (cross-border workers, cross-border customers, tourists) and "undesirable" illegalized mobilities (non-European migrants in transit).

If controls and pushbacks at this border are systemic and have been standard practice since at least the summer of 2015, the way they are applied has not significantly changed since then (first part). The Italian and French anti-pandemic measures represent a state of exception in so far as they were extended to all travelers, thus becoming universal, and not only to non-European-looking persons identified as potential illegal migrants (second part). The removal of the restrictions on movement tied to COVID-19 largely restored the racially profiled character of the border (third part).

The Border Before COVID-19

The southern French–Italian border of the Maritime Alps includes the urbanized Riviera area of Menton, in France, and Ventimiglia, in Italy, and the rural area of the Roya Valley in the hinterland, which is cut in two by the border line. This border region is both a zone of high circulation and exchanges and a reflection of the similar borderization of Europe in other places such as Lampedusa or Calais. Cross-border mobilities are dense. The region lies at the crossroad of different flows of "desirable" mobilities. Some six-to-eight thousand cross-border workers travel on a daily basis

* **Daniela Trucco**, PhD, Université Côte d'Azur, France. Contact: daniela.trucco@gmail.com

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from Ventimiglia, in Italy, to the French district of the Maritime Alps and the principality of Monaco. In the other direction, thousands of customers from France and Monaco travel to the trade town of Ventimiglia to purchase lower-price goods. In both directions, tourists from all over the world cross the border without any inconvenience to visit the French and Italian Riviera. Also, due to the geography of the Roya Valley, both French and Italian inhabitants regularly need to pass through the neighboring country's territory to reach a destination located in their own country of residence: for instance, the main road connecting Breil, in the French Roya Valley, to Nice, on the French Riviera, passes through Ventimiglia, and the latter is connected to the Italian towns of Cuneo and Torino by the same road that crosses the French part of the Roya Valley.

This border region also has a long history of illegal trespassing dating back to its very origin at the end of the 19th century, which has led to the reinforcement of police controls, political attention, and media coverage. Italian peasants, Jews and opponents to fascist regimes in the region took high risks and in some cases lost their lives crossing the sadly known "death step": a dangerous mountain path between Ventimiglia and Menton. Implementation of the Schengen agreements on free movement within Europe did not stop border controls and the pushback of "unwanted" non-European migrants, even if their intensity varied and generally increased throughout the years. Since 2011 and the first Schengen "crisis" coinciding with the arrival of Tunisian and Egyptian citizens, controls have been gradually strengthened to eventually become systemic starting in the spring of 2015. That same year, in November, when France declared a state of emergency, border controls were carried out in derogation of the Schengen agreements.

The filtering process at the border has been described by scholars and activists as racially profiled and as violating international and national rights of asylum in several respects. Controls are carried out by different French law enforcement agencies (border patrol, army, *gendarmerie* agents, and riot and mobile police agents, the *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité*) deployed on all the main roads and railway lines connecting the two sides of the border. When a person is denied entry into French territory, his or her pushback takes place at the Menton main border police station, from where he/she has to walk the nearly 10-kilometre distance back to the Ventimiglia town center and try again. Scholars and activists have baptized this circuit the "border carrousel" (ObsMigAM 2020). In the urban area of Ventimiglia, the presence of pushed-back migrants has been politized as a public problem with humanitarian, security, and image repercussions, since the town's economy is highly dependent on trade and tourism. Squats and informal camps have regularly been set up by both migrants and activists and dismantled by Italian public authorities. These authorities opened up a temporary transit camp in July 2016, run by the Italian Red Cross, but access to it has often been limited over the years, thereby regularly increasing the visible presence of migrants in town and reinforcing the framing of the issue as an "emergency" (Trucco 2018).

Besides this institutional facility, more spontaneous or activist solidarity towards illegalized migrants has been the object of repression and criminalization as shelters and helpdesks have regularly been dismantled (such as the No Border camp, in the summer of 2015, the St Anthony church shelter in 2016 and 2017, and the Eufemia legal helpdesk in 2017-2018) and more than sixty activists have been banned from the territory of Ventimiglia since 2015. Immediately before the COVID-19 measures, three solidarity points remained operational: a solidarity café near the Ventimiglia railway station, the local Caritas humanitarian association, and a permanent presence of activists monitoring the pushbacks in the vicinity of the border police station.

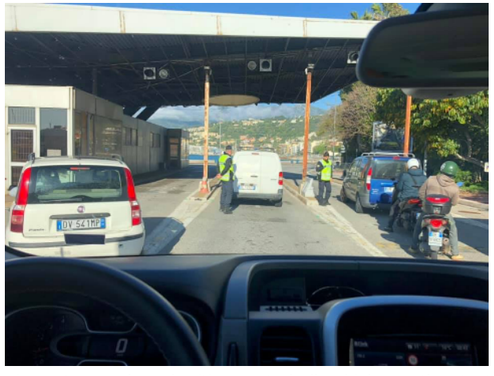

Figure 1. French authorities control all vehicles at the Pont Saint Ludovic border in three lines. Photo © Vincenzo Condina, April 29, 2020.

Figure 2. Cross-border commuters in a traffic jam caused by COVID-19 border controls. Photo © Vincenzo Condina, June 2, 2020.

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Even though the border filtering process had a high impact on "unwanted" and illegalized mobilities and caused no less than thirty fatalities since 2016 (fatal incidents include car and train collisions, electrocutions on and inside trains, drownings, falls from mountain paths: see Anafé 2019), the border remained "open" and largely invisible for other fluxes such as those of cross-border workers and tourists, with some infrequent exceptions (Barabino 2018). Cross-border trade unions had nevertheless denounced some side effects of "anti-migrant" border controls such as traffic jams, highways closed when migrants were seen walking along them, delayed or detained trains, tear gas intoxications inside trains (tear gas is commonly used to smoke migrants out of train toilets or electric cabinets).

The Border During the French and Italian COVID-19 Lockdowns

When Italy (on March 9) and France shortly after (on March 16) introduced national lockdown measures to slow down the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (including the need for a written justification for any travel limited to "urgent" matters within both national territories), controls were extended on all routes. All vehicles in both directions were stopped and checked by Italian and French police on the highway and on the coast road while a second road connecting Menton to Ventimiglia was closed to circulation. Between March 17 and April 17, the French border police controlled 76,000 vehicles, issued 102 entry denials (*refus d'entrée*) to European citizens (mainly Italian), and 107 to non-European citizens, mainly coming from Afghanistan, Iraq and Turkey (France 3 2020)

The number of trains was reduced and controls at the Menton Garavan railway station, which usually focused only on "non-European looking" passengers, were generalized. Cross-border workers had to produce official documents of authorization and were advised on social networks to paste their permit to the car's side back window in order to avoid contact and speed up controls. Worker representatives also complained that controls caused traffic jams and delays. Because of this unusual situation, an international agreement was signed allowing Italian employees of Monaco companies to work from home. This actually met a long-standing demand by cross-border trade unions. As shops and markets were shut down in Italy and

Figure 3 — In a train connecting Ventimiglia to Menton and Montecarlo, cross-border commuters watch as Police officers break open a toilet door in which illegalized migrants have been hiding. Photo © Vincenzo Condina, June 18, 2020.

Figure 4 — At the French border checkpoint in Menton, three pushed-back migrants start the 10-kilometre walk back to Ventimiglia. Photo © Emanuela Zampa, June 2020.

Figure 5 — In Ventimiglia, Sudanese migrants wash their clothes in the river, having arrived in Italy before the lockdown and staying in a facility until they could travel again to the French border. Photo © Emanuela Zampa, June 2020.

circulation limited, customers from France and Monaco no longer shopped in the Italian territory, and this until June 3. The "reopening of the Italian border", which corresponded to the end of the Italian lockdown, was widely covered by French local newspapers and media, with images of French citizens lining up to buy cigarettes and alcohol at the border (Zanichelli 2020), but also stuck in traffic jams as they were returning to France along with cross-border workers (Spagnolo 2020), and had to pass through border controls (C.C. 2020). A diplomatic incident nearly occurred when Italian trade union representatives complained of the annoyance caused by controls to cross-border workers, and the French consul tried to justify the controls by claiming that it prevented illegal immigration. The issue was solved by introducing an employer certificate for Italian cross-border workers.

In the other direction, during the Italian lockdown, French inhabitants of the Roya Valley who had national circulation permits for work or family reasons were denied access to the Italian territory and roads. In order to reach the French Riviera, as their representatives pointed out, they had to take much longer and dangerous roads including two mountains passes to remain within the French territory (Rousselot and Wiélé 2020).

As a consequence of closing the EU external borders and the Italian harbors to all traffic including emergencies, access to the Italian coast and circulation within the Italian territory of non-European illegalized migrants was even more limited than before, as confirmed by the decrease observed during the sanitary crisis in the number of arrivals at the French–Italian border of Ventimiglia–Menton. Nevertheless, controls and pushbacks continued to target migrants, without significant changes in both the composition of the staff (different law enforcement officers and no health operators) or procedures, as observed by activists and scholars at the beginning and at the end of the lockdown thanks to the slight time lag between the Italian and the French lockdown. The presence of migrants in the public space in Ventimiglia that had been previously heavily discouraged became formally illegal as it was no longer allowed to remain outside one's residence without a valid justification. To implement lockdown measures, police presence increased in all Italian and French cities, including in Ventimiglia and in all the border region which was already heavily militarized. After a few weeks of lockdown, the Red Cross transit camp was put under quarantine and access was refused to new entries. The migrants' living conditions in Ventimiglia became even harsher during the lockdown as they were forced to find precarious shelter and were encouraged to hide. On April 30, a migrant who was hiding and probably sleeping in a garbage bin barely escaped being crushed by a trash compactor (F. Q. 2020). During the first semester of 2020 some 760 "migrants in transit" contacted the local Caritas (Caritas Intemelia 2020).

During the lockdown, the work of activists became even more difficult: the last solidarity café in Ventimiglia had to close and the presence of activists at the border checkpoint was considered "unjustified" and was thus prevented. They continued their action in a more discrete and risky way by walking to the railway station looking for migrants or driving to the border checkpoint to see how controls were maintained. It became more difficult to monitor police controls and pushbacks. And yet controls and pushbacks continued. As soon as movement within the French territory was allowed, starting on May 11, activists confirmed the ongoing violation of asylum seekers' rights at the border: the pushback of a young woman and her five-year-old son was denounced by the association on May 15 (Anafé 2020).

The Border After the Lockdown

With the lockdown measures suspended, migrant arrivals and pushbacks in Ventimiglia started to increase. Since the Red Cross transit camp did not reopen and remained closed to new entries, the presence of migrants in town once again became very visible and their conditions precarious generating both calls for solidarity and protests for their eviction: "Migrants are back in town" (Spagnolo 2020b) claimed several local newspapers in June. Activists denounced record numbers of daily pushbacks by French authorities (up to 140 per day in July 2020) and non-compliance with sanitary measures: refused foreigners were still detained for several hours without any possibility of maintaining safe distances and with no regular access to medical staff (Kesha Niya Project 2020). The side effects of immigration controls on commuters and cross-border workers were once again denounced by trade unions and other spokespersons (Spagnolo 2020c), while activists and NGOs demanded that Italian authorities reopen the transit camp (Spagnolo 2020d).

Conclusion

As had occurred during previous periods considered "emergencies" (the "Tunisian emergency" in the aftermath of the Arab spring, the "security emergency" in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in France, and the "migrant emergency" that started in the summer of 2015: see Casella Colombeau 2019), the 2020 sanitary COVID-19 emergency proved once again that much more than causing interruptions or significant changes in the border control regime, the "emergency" only provided new legitimacy to and reinforcement of a well-established filtering process targeting "unwanted" illegalized mobilities while finding legal and practical arrangements to preserve and encourage the more "desirable" cross-border mobilities.

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Notes

1 Namely a four-year ethnographical research including participant observation and in-depth interviews with more than fifty respondents.

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ESSAY
SPECIAL ISSUE

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"Return of Mental Borders": A Diary of COVID-19 Closures between Kehl, Germany, and Strasbourg, France

Birte Wassenberg *

This paper retraces the author's personal experience of the COVID-19 lockdown from March to July 2020 at the Franco-German border from a threefold perspective: that of a cross-border worker living in Kehl, Germany, and working in Strasbourg, France; that of a Franco-German citizen with a family and children of both French and German nationality; and that of a researcher specialized in border studies. The paper deals with national re-bordering policies and their direct personal and psychological consequences for borderlanders, and also questions whether such measures are adequate to contain the pandemic, especially in a context of European Union integration which is based on the principle of a "Europe without borders".

Introduction

The border between Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany, has often been hailed as a best-practice model for the implementation of a "Europe without borders" (Wassenberg and Brunet-Jailly 2020, 24). France and Germany are part of the Schengen Area, which encompasses 26 European countries that mutually eliminated border controls on the movement of people between them beginning in 1995. The cross-border region of Strasbourg–Kehl/Ortenau was designated a Eurodistrict in 2004, one of the first integrated cross-border living spaces with funding and administrative support from the European Union (EU). There are four bridges crossing the Rhine River, which traces the border in this region: one for cars, one for trains, a "friendship bridge" for pedestrians and cyclists, and most recently, a Tramway (Denni 2008).

Free circulation is therefore not only guaranteed for goods but also for citizens, and the border is normally invisible and not an obstacle to mobility in any way. Therefore, a closure of the border and the re-introduction of border controls disrupts the integrated space, creating almost a shock for local populations and raising questions about the ideal of a "Europe without borders" (Wassenberg 2020a, 30).

* **Birte Wassenberg**, PhD, is Professor in Contemporary History at the Institute for Political Studies (Sciences Po), University of Strasbourg, France. Contact: Birte.wassenberg@unistra.fr

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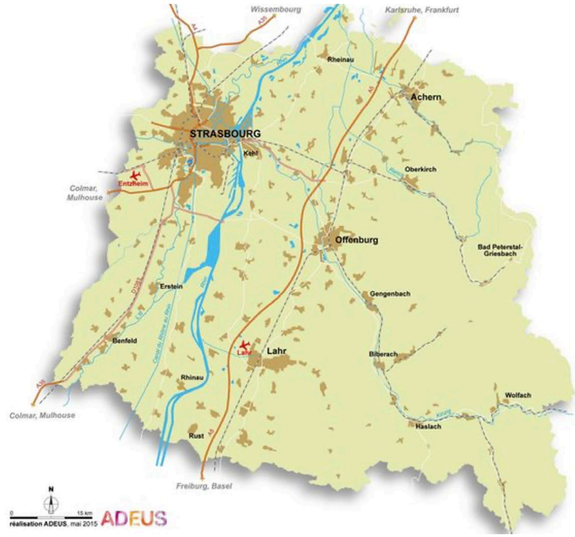

Figure 1. Map: The Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau. Source: Adeus, Landratsamt Ortenau, 2015.

Figure 2. Map: The Garden of the Two Rivers. Source: bwgründe, 2004. The 4th bridge (Tramway) is not shown as it was only finished in 2016.

The COVID-19 crisis in spring 2020 was not the first time this happened. In fact, following the migration crisis of 2015, re-bordering policies were already introduced by many European Union (EU) Member States in order to stop the massive inflow of refugees, not only creating problems for migrants to enter the EU, but also for the internal border flows of cross-border workers, for instance at the Franco-German border. The Westphalian function of the border which seemed to have disappeared between Strasbourg and Kehl suddenly resurfaced (Berrod 2020, 53). During the COVID-19 crisis, this Westphalian re-bordering effect was more severe, as the closure was complete: all four crossings between Strasbourg and Kehl were closed hermetically for the population on each side of the border. This meant that freedom of movement for European citizens was suspended until the border was re-opened progressively in June 2020. In my experience of the crisis, it became clear that, indeed, "the freedom of movement of the European citizen remains defined largely within the conceptual framework of borders" (Bouveresse 2020, 64). When the border closes, mobility ends, and, as a borderlander, my life as a European citizen, navigating daily between France and Germany, also ends.

This personal diary retraces how I experienced the COVID-19 crisis from a threefold perspective: that of a cross-border worker living in Kehl and working as a French civil servant at the University of Strasbourg (Sciences Po); that of a Franco-German citizen with a family and children of both French and German nationality; and that of a researcher specialized in border studies (Wassenberg 2020b).[1] As the diary shows, it was not a slow process and as many other borderlanders, I was unprepared. Each day brought with it new events and new shocks from the arrival of the crisis to the lockdown and even the de-confinement came suddenly, like startling from a nightmare...

I. Mid-March 2020: The Arrival of the Crisis

March 11: My German colleague, Professor Joachim Beck, president of the Hochschule Kehl, calls me from his office in Kehl at 1 pm and informs me that the German Robert Koch Institute—which is the competent national scientific research office in the Federal Republic of Germany concerning the pandemic COVID-19—has classified the French region Alsace, in which Strasbourg is the major urban centre, as a high risk zone. On the French side, nobody knows about it. At Sciences Po, there is business as usual and university courses are being held according to the normal schedule, whereas the Hochschule Kehl is being closed immediately (Beck 2020).

March 12, morning: I arrive at 9 am at the Château Pourtalès to give my course for the Study Abroad CEPA program, and my American students come to see me to announce they cannot attend my class: they are packing to immediately return to the United States on order from their universities. Everybody is in a panic, as American President Donald Trump decided overnight to close US borders for travelers from the EU (BBC News 2020). I can no longer maintain my course; students are running away. That's when I realize something exceptional is happening. It is now certain that I can no longer organize my conference on the border migration crisis, which is supposed to take place on March 16 in the Château Pourtalès, together with my European and American students—what an irony! I have to cancel everything and all I can do at that moment is go home to my house in Kehl by crossing the border as usual, without any border checks...

March 12, evening: at home, my colleague Joachim Beck calls me to tell me that authorities are apparently going to close the border, based on firsthand information from the *Staatsministerium* (State Government) in Baden-Wurttemberg. I realize with shock that my elder daughter and one of my twins are with me at home in Kehl, but that my son and the other twin are on the French side of the border. My colleague reassures me at first, but five minutes later, he calls back to tell me that he changed his mind: "If I were you, I would try to fetch the other twin quickly—you never know what might happen". But this is impossible; it was too late, for she is already on a train heading towards a village in the north of Alsace in order to rejoin a friend of hers. That is when my elder daughter says to me: "Mum, this is just as in August 1961 when they constructed the wall of Berlin, we have half of the family on this side of the border and the other half on the other side of the iron curtain". In the end, that evening, they do not close the border. Maybe my colleague was overreacting, and the borders will stay open?

March 15, evening: French President Emmanuel Macron addresses the French people. During his speech, he repeatedly uses the expression "we are at war!" It is frightening. He announces immediate confinement for the entire French population (Macron 2020).

March 16, morning: Finally, it was the German government who closed the border overnight, without any coordination with its French neighbour. In fact, nobody was informed in the border region (Berrod, Chovet, & Wassenberg 2020). Now, in Kehl, all four bridges are closed. There are no longer any trains, cars, trams, or people crossing the border. It is a saddening and almost spooky experience. I remember that the last time I crossed the border was Friday the 13th, probably a bad sign if I were superstitious ...

March 18: German Chancellor Angela Merkel addresses the German people. She is brief. "This is a historic task—and it can only be mastered if we face it together" is her message. She says she is sorry that now German grandparents can no longer see their grandchildren, as it is too dangerous. She asks Germans to be reasonable and to stay at home. She begs them, but she does not order them (Merkel 2020). The two speeches by the heads of state of France and Germany could hardly have been more different.

March 16-22: Germany imposes a "*Kontaksperre*" (a barrier to contact) but this is not labelled a confinement. Furthermore, every German *Land* (state) adopts different rules. In Bavaria, it is close to total confinement. In North-Rhine Westphalia, there is no restriction to free movement at all. Between these two extremes, anything is possible in the 16 German *Länder* (states): there are interdictions on meeting with as many as two, three, four, or five people, depending on the *Land*, and many people cannot understand what is happening. There is mention of a German federal "*Flickenteppich*" (Patchwork). At least, the federal government finished by deciding after a week that the barrier to contact was to be applied on the whole territory of Germany—but this was the only measure made uniform in the Federal Republic during the pandemic. It seems evident: just as the two addresses to the nation, the measures in Germany and France to combat the pandemic posed a stark contrast as well. Indeed, in centralized France, the general confinement was announced by Macron from 17th of March onwards and stayed in place until 11th of May for all French people, whether they lived in the much affected regions of Alsace or Paris or in the almost completely COVID-19 free regions of Bretagne (Berrod, Chovet, & Wassenberg 2020). The border between France and Germany stays closed and I am trapped on the German side.

II. Mid-March through May: The "Lockdown"

March 16 onwards: In Kehl, the general atmosphere changes completely. No more French cars and no more French people in the streets. Kehl becomes a small German village again.

March 18: Healthcare in Alsace is a disaster: hospitals are at their limits of accepting patients needing ventilators, and patient "triage" has started as not everyone can obtain intensive care. This reminds me of Marcon's war rhetoric. The French government seeks solutions. Opening border crossings to relieve pressure does not seem to be likely. In Mulhouse, the French army starts a complex and costly operation of flying out patients by helicopter to Toulon and Marseille on the French Mediterranean coast (20 minutes 2020).

March 21: There seems to be small hope for cross-border Franco-German cooperation: our *Land* of Baden-Wurttemberg, adjoining Alsace, has started to take on patients from the French border region. In Freiburg, the first French patients arrive (eurojournalist 2020).

March 27: Strikingly, French national logic of dealing with the crisis and assuring health security for the population still seems to outweigh the prospective benefits of cross-border health cooperation: from Strasbourg, a TGV jet transports 48 COVID-19 patients to Marseille which is 1000 kilometres away, whereas in neighboring German communities across the river, there are empty beds in hospitals and German partners willing to welcome French patients... (Le Parisien 2020).

April 21: It is my son's birthday and we have had enough of being separated by the border, so we decide that he will try to cross it. He has in his possession an authorization allowing him free circulation in Strasbourg as a Medical Science Student to present to the border guards on the French side and a German passport to present to the border guards on the German side. We are not sure if the French border guards will accept his exception document to cross, but they do. Interestingly, the paper also serves at the French border as a passport to re-enter Strasbourg from the German side, although borders are not mentioned anywhere in the text. More alarming, neither at the French nor the German border are health protocols employed: there is no check of temperature, no proof of negative COVID-19 tests to be shown. When my son arrives at the German border in Kehl, the magic key to enter was not his medical function nor his true purpose of visiting his mother and sisters, but rather his nationality. Upon "Your ID please!" he showed his proof of German nationality and it opened the way. "Ah you are German! Of course, then you can pass"! the border guard exclaimed. If he had shown his French passport the passage would not likely have been possible. I say to my son, not without irony: "Of course, certainly, the virus must be French!" (Berrod, Chovet, & Wassenberg 2020).

Figure 3. Tram bridge, Strasbourg-Kehl. Photo taken by the author, April 24, 2020, from the German side. The bridge is used for the cross-border tramway and for cyclists and pedestrians; the barriers prevent passage by bike or on foot.

April 24: I no longer cross the border. In fact, I no longer go there at all and have not even seen it. However, once, I do meet a friend at the border who needs to have her car repaired in a garage in Kehl. With an authorization paper from the garage, she is allowed to cross the border and it is easy. Again: no use of any health protocols on either side of the border. But the French father of my twins has no authorization to come to Kehl to visit his daughters. It is not considered a "sufficient reason" to go to the other side. This management of the border appears to me more and more absurd. That day, I see this border, with barriers everywhere, policemen, border guards. I keep my distance. I take photos. I am at the same time scared and sad. This closed border makes me cry. Not only I live in-between two national systems, have two nationalities, and work in France. On top of this, my research on cross-border cooperation and European Integration had always shown this Franco-German space one of contact, exchange and integration. This seems finished and over now. It has become a place of separation and distance.

May 9: On this European Day, in honour of Robert Schuman's 1950 Declaration of Europe's first common market, there are many micro-demonstrations at European borders calling for a de-bordering and the return of the spirit of a Europe without borders. At the border between Strasbourg and Kehl, the French and German border population walk alongside the two riverbanks of the "Garden of the two rivers" and wave umbrellas as a sign of the Franco-German friendship (DNA 2020). The mood starts to change. The border residents show signs of rebellion against closed borders (Dreosto 2020).

May 30: The "rebels" walk from each side of the friendship bridge to meet. They climb over the barriers, despite and against all rules and interdictions. To underline this revolutionary spirit, Kai Littmann, journalist of the *Eurojournalist(e)* later qualified this in one of his articles as the "prise de la passerelle" (the seizure of the passage)—an allusion to the storming of the Bastille (Boucart 2020). Personally, I still keep my distance from the border. It is no longer part of my daily life; I have become a Franco-German captured on the German side of the border.

Figure 4: Car passage, Strasbourg–Kehl. Photo by the author, April 24, 2020, from German side. The bridge is used for car-crossing, the passage restricted to one line, with a new 'halte/police' sign and each car is stopped and checked by police officers. However, the photo shows a German police car driving across to the French side, suggesting the absurdity of suspending all civilian circulation while police cooperation continues, under which police vehicles based within 30 kilometres of the line are authorized to pass to the neighbors' side.

III. Late May to mid-June: The De-confinement

May 23: I start again to cross the border, armed with my authorization as a cross-border worker signed by the president of the university of Strasbourg. But the border guards on the French side seem to not understand anything. They only stop cars with a German matriculation plate, therefore of course also mine. "Do you live in France?" they ask. "No, in Germany", I reply. "But why then do you want to go to France?" is the second question. "I work there at the University" is my second reply. They insist: "But you are German!!" It is almost a reproach. I start to get angry: "Yes and I am also French!" There is a moment of silence, as they have to take this in. They are confused, because they cannot put me in a German or a French box and they don't know what else they can say to harass me. Finally they find how to trap me: "But today it's Saturday, what do you want at the university?" They have no right whatsoever to ask that question, but I am still proud to spontaneously come up with this rather ironic reply: "Monsieur, researchers at the university have no fixed working hours. They in fact work all the time". They are so surprised that they give in: "Okay, you can pass then" (Wassenberg 2020b). The passages at the border are different each time and on each side of the border. On the French side, sometimes I manage to pass without any explanation and without showing any ID, sometimes there is not even a border guard present, but at other times I have to explain lengthily up to a quarter of an hour my precise reasons to cross the border. On the German side, there are also controls, but everything is different and the questions are never the same as on the French side. In my case, the German matriculation plate of my car and especially my German passport are like magic keys: I always pass. Only one time, a young German border guard asks me a lot of questions when I pass for a second time in the same day. I tell her: "But you are still here? You have been working more than 12 hours!" She admits that this is true, that she is working far away from her family, that this is not her usual workplace and they have all had enough of this. "We will be glad when all these controls are over!" is her conclusion. This border crossing is indeed tiring for everyone. In fact, my daily passages during this transition period reveal to me the twofold character of the border: France–Germany on the one hand and Germany–France on the other, for each national public authority applies their own rules and their own management of the border (Wassenberg 2020b).

June 15: It is over. The barriers have been lifted. The border is open (Les Echos 2020). No more border guards. It is like nothing has ever happened, as if one wakes up from a bad dream and realizes that everything is back to normal. There are only the photos from confinement to prove the border was ever closed, so closed that it made me cry.

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Wassenberg, "'Return of Mental Borders': A Diary of COVID-19 Closures..."

Conclusion

The closure of the border was used by the national authorities in France and in Germany as a measure to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. But territorial governance was not considered from a "bottom-up" governance approach. Consulting neither the local nor regional authorities nor the borderlanders, this re-bordering policy was part of the general lockdown implemented more or less stringently from March to June 2020 by the national governments of most EU Member States in order to stop the exponential spread of the virus. Whereas social distancing and reduced movement of people may indeed help to avoid the uncontrolled spread of the pandemic, the border closure was operated with regard to the limits of the nation-state rather than those of areas contaminated by the virus. Nor was there, at least concerning the border between France and Germany, any specific health protocol applied in order to check border-crossers with regard medical criteria, such as measuring temperature or requiring a negative COVID-19 test. This led to the false conclusion that the virus could be associated with a "nationality" and stopped at the national border. What then emerged were new forms of nationalism and so, in Strasbourg and in Kehl, the borderlanders were stuck in the middle of this national re-bordering.

What was most worrying about the lockdown during the COVID-19 crisis was not so much the different approaches to the crisis management by the French and German public authorities, nor their non-coordination of bordering and de-bordering, but rather the psychological consequences of the process of re-bordering on the border population. It led to a return of mental borders long thought forgotten and even overcome which were being drawn along national lines. This could already be observed during the migration crisis in 2015, when the massive inflow of refugees into the EU caused problems of migrant integration and new waves of nationalism and xenophobia, also in France and in Germany (Bartel, Delcroix, & Pape 2020; Beaupré & Fischer 2020). The aggression was then turned against the migrant, whereas during the COVID-19 pandemic, it affected the mutual perception of French and Germans living at the border, recreating mistrust and resentment where the reconciliation process has normally led to understanding and friendship. The crisis finally brought with it to the surface a political discourse reduced to the national border lines without any consideration of a multi-level approach to border identity in Europe which embraces the local, regional, national, and European level. The re-bordering processes were taking place without any consideration of the border people living in these areas which, since the 1950s, have become more and more closely integrated cross-border spaces. The danger of this national rescaling is to recall into question the very founding principles of the European Union which was based on a unification of the European people and not on their national differentiation.

However, during the lockdown, there were also signs of rebellion of the borderlanders against this re-bordering and re-nationalization process: the inhabitants of Strasbourg and Kehl thus called for a reopening of the border which shows that European Integration and Franco-German reconciliation is resilient. And, after the lockdown, when free circulation at the border was re-established, the national authorities in France and Germany seem to have learned a lesson as they started to cooperate in order to determine rules of local or regional containment with regard to health criteria, i.e. the numbers of COVID-19 cases in an area, instead of with regard to national borders. So far, the border between Strasbourg and Kehl has therefore not been closed again.

Note

1 The research methodology of this article combines the author's personal experience of the border closure and reopening between France and Germany during the pandemic between March and June 2020, plus an analysis of French and German local and national press articles during this period, as well as the use of previous research results on European crises and borders, i.e. mainly those of a Jean Monnet network led by the University of Victoria on migration and border policies (2016-2018) and a Jean Monnet project on EU crises and border regions (2018-2021).

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VIDEO FEATURE

SPECIAL ISSUE

Borders in Globalization Review
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Twin Cities Torn Apart: A Story about the U.S–Mexico Border

Bertha Alicia Bermúdez Tapia and Mario Jímenez Díaz

This visual art project captures how the twin cities of Matamoros, Mexico, and Brownsville, Texas, have been torn apart due to COVID-19 and the temporary border closure. Families were separated, physical borders became more prominent, and loved ones were unable to stand with each other, even at six foot apart. This project describes what inhabitants of these twin cities have experienced and how they have supported each other.

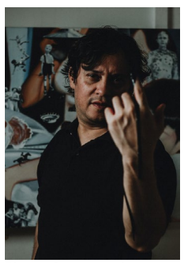
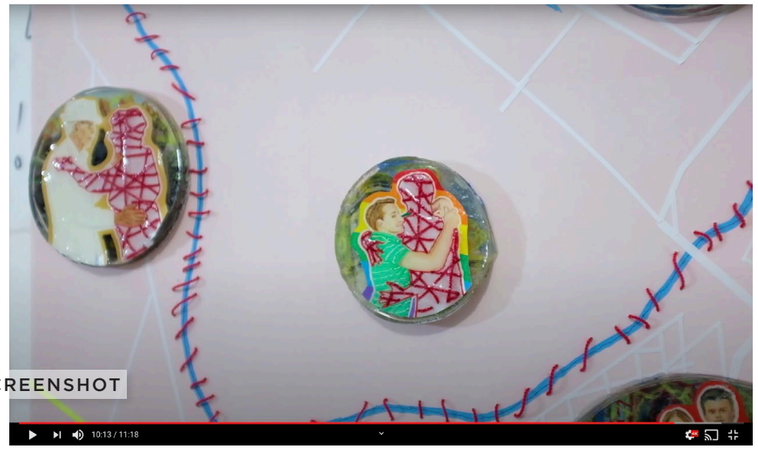


Photo: @mcervantina



SCREENSHOT

Click screenshot or open URL to play video: https://youtu.be/EGam0Q1P5uI

About the authors:

Bertha Alicia Bermúdez Tapia is a PhD candidate in Sociology from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Her research explores the quaitative aspects of the relationship between migration, border lives, and violence. Email: bertha.bermudeztapia@colorado.edu Twitter: @silvercyl

Mario Jímenez Díaz is a visual artist, Master in advanced studies in Art Hstory from the University of Barcelona, Spain. His work specializes in the production of cultural significance to the images of the border. Email: mariojimenez75@outlook.es Instagram: @mariojimenezdiaz_artista

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BIG_R PHOTOGRAPHY
SPECIAL ISSUE

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Closing Time: EU Border Crossings During COVID-19

Marco Kany

There are more than 40 border crossings between the Federal State of Saarland, Lorraine and Luxembourg. In fact, Saarbrücken is the only one of the 16 state capitals of the Federal Republic of Germany on whose territory a state border runs. The urban area of Saarbrücken borders directly on France over a distance of more than 10 km.

I was born in 1971 and grew up in a small village, pretty close to the French border. The border points were always easy to pass, even before the Schengen Agreement came into force. Like anybody, I accepted the rare controls. It was perhaps like accepting an annual cold. "After Schengen" the border disappeared more and more from my (and also the collective) consciousness over the years, a state that I still appreciate very much today. All the more it hit me to be confronted with closure of this border for the first time in my life. The obvious consequence for me was the creation of the photo series with which I wanted to document this unpleasant and hopefully unique state.

All photos were taken between March 27 and April 10, 2020. For the compelte series, see my website.

German-French border, Rilchingen-Hanweiler / Sarreguemines

German-French border, Niedaltdorf / Guerstingen

German-French border, Saarbrücken Goldene Bremm / Spicheren

German-French border, Bisten / Merten

German-French border, Biringen / Waldwisse

German-French border, Blieshaben-Bolchen / Blies-Schweyen

German-French border, Lauterbach / Creutzwald

German-French border, Bisten / Merten

German-French border, Brenschelbach / Schweyen

German-French border, Reinheim / Bliesbruck

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Kany, “Closing Time: EU Border Crossings During COVID-19”

German-Luxembourg border, Nennig / Remich

German-French border, Emmersweiler / Morsbach

German-French border, Perl / Apach

German-French border, Niedaltdorf / Neunkirchen-lès-Bouzonville

German-French border, Großrosseln / Petite-Rosselle

German-French border, Güdingen / Alsting

German-French border, Güdingen / Grosbliederstroff

German-French border, Habkirchen / Frauenberg

German-French border, Auersmacher / Grosbliederstroff

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POETRY
SPECIAL ISSUE

confined body

Natasha Sardzoska

Photo © Irena Mila Jovanovska

I wrote CONFINED BODY during the confinement. I was a prohibited citizen, banned citizen. I had no right to move or to travel. My body has become a frontier. Mobile frontier. The thin and thick membrane barrier between me and the world of contagion. My body was confined. I was observing and watching my body as a fortress and at the same time as an imprisoned organism. Recluded, cut off, isolated, limited, forbidden, confined, in quarantine, in silence, in immobility. I wrote this poem observing my confined body and everything that came out and that I let in inside my body. It was a traumatic experience.

Natasha Sardzoska (1979), poet, writer, essayist, polyglot translator and interpreter was born in Skopje in Macedonia. She holds a PhD in anthropology from the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and University of Bergamo. She has published the poetry books *Blue Room, Skin, He pulled me with invisible string, Living Water, Coccyx,* essays, academic papers and short stories. Her books are published books in the USA and Italy and her selected poems are translated in international literary reviews in more than 20 world languages. Her poem *Doll on Strings* has been published in the International Poetry Anthology against child abuse. She has performed at international poetry festivals among which: *Ars Poetica* in Bratislava; *Words Wide Open* in Genova; *Scream* in Rijeka; in the Revoltella Museum in Trieste; in the Academy of Arts for the *Poetry Festival of Berlin*; at the *Sha'ar International Poetry Festival* performing with sax, contrabass and contemporary dance in the Yaffa Theatre in Tel Aviv as well as at the biggest poetry festival in the world in Medellin in Columbia.

Email: natasha.sar@gmail.com

Twitter: @NSardzoska

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confined body

this body is not my body
other bodies live inside me
bodies that I call mine
because to me they belong
to me they recall

I do have a pact
with all the microorganisms
inhabiting this body
seeking out for me
burning from within
screaming loud

for they want to get
outside of me
but I will never
give them
a cease-fire

*

this body is not my body
this body is every day haunted
by army and odd red guests
they take what they want
they leave what they need
this body is nailed by winds
they leave as fire defeats
from the nostrils
they abandon
this body
empty

*

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Sardzoska, "confined body"

this body is not my body
inside this body there are tenants
inside this body there are hutches

yet: I hide this body there
I help this body to remain silent
while I seek inside the seesaw
the girl made of bones and nerves

yes: this body is not my body
it is made of storm of lava and larva
and swelter and scepter and sceptic
questions which punch me from within
from within my tongue is entangled
welded behind my teeth
convicted by the shooting wall:

they blow away the wheat: then
they leave only the sickle
inside my throat

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ESSAY

The "Frontier" According to Paul de La Pradelle *

Benjamin Perrier **

Essential author on the "frontier", Paul de Geouffre de La Pradelle is known for his original legal theory. The author distinguishes between "delimitation" (which is a boundary-line) and "frontier" (which is a zone of cooperation). He also distinguishes what he calls the "national frontier" ("object of study of domestic public law") and the "international frontier" ("object of study of international public and private law").

Introduction

The term frontier allows verbal articulation of phenomena whose function is to differentiate. In law, in general, the international frontier of a State is understood as a territorial limit with a function of legal differentiation. This brief essay presents a detailed review of the essential ideas of the jurist Paul de La Pradelle on his conception of the frontier in international law. The works of this author are essential for studies on frontiers, international limits and frontier areas. La Pradelle, in fact, produced an original, complete, and rich legal theory on the frontier in his thesis published in 1928 entitled: "The Frontier: Study of International Law".

As he says, his thesis broke with tradition. In the summary of his thesis, the author defended the idea that the frontier, before and after the delimitation, was better conceived as a "zone" and that this zone should not be confused with the concept of "limit". Thus, Paul de La Pradelle clearly distinguished, on a terminological and legal level, the concept of "limit" on the one hand and the concept of "frontier" on the other. Inspired by Friedrich Ratzel, his main idea can be written as follows: the limit is a line; the frontier is a zone. For La Pradelle, if the "frontier" is a "complex territorial area" (1928, 14) or a "complex territorial regime" (ibid.), the "limit" is, and can only be, a "line" (1928, 17). Based on this differentiation, after briefly introducing the author, this essay focuses on the ideas developed in his 1928 thesis and a synthesized article published in 1930 (an article devoted exclusively to the concept of "frontier" in the sense that La Pradelle understood it as an area of cooperation and neighborly relations).

Paul de Geouffre de La Pradelle (1902-1993) is the son of law professor Albert de Geouffre de La Pradelle (1871-1955). Born in Grenoble, Paul de La Pradelle, Doctor of Law and Associate Professor, was Professor of Law and Founder-Director of the Institute of Political Studies in Aix-en-Provence in France (from 1956 to 1974). He inaugurated courses in air law and participated in the first conferences on the law of the sea in Geneva (1958, 1960). He was also elected to the People's Congress in 1977 and was President of the Institute of Global Studies (1978). His 1928 work on "The Frontier" (doctoral thesis) is an institution in legal doctrine, especially because his idea of the frontier as a "zone of cooperation" was contrary to the dominant doctrine of the time which understood the frontier as a line. Finally, international law practice did not accept his definition of the frontier as a zone.

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** **Benjamin Perrier**, Borders in Globalization, University of Victoria, Canada. benjaminperrier@uvic.ca

The 1928 Thesis: The Frontier as a Complex Zone

His 1928 thesis work contains an introduction divided into two chapters (1928, 9-51). The first part of his thesis deals with "Modern International Law and the Limits of States (Delimitation)" (53-222) and the second part with "Modern International Law and the Frontier Regime (The Neighbourliness)" (233-306). The first chapter of the introduction raises the idea that "there is no frontier other than the political frontier" (11). And it also refers to the fact that the historical phenomenon of the frontier "appeared as soon as the social groups were formed" (14). For La Pradelle, the frontier can be found in both domestic public law and public international law. On the one hand, the frontier is provided for by domestic public law, and is thus the "mode of expression of the unity and cohesion of the State" (14). Under this prism, the frontier corresponds to "all institutions created especially in the peripheral zone of the territory for purposes of defense or discipline. It is an area of public services, distinct from the internal services, specialized in frontiers with specific names. The customs frontier, the military frontier, the maritime frontier..." (ibid.).

On the other hand, the frontier is covered by public international law. In this case, the frontier is "an area of contact and contiguous relations between states" (ibid.). It is "a place of relations, a regime of relations between two states in a mixed territory resulting from the meeting of their respective peripheral territorial areas" (ibid.). It also presents there the successive appearance of the different elements of the modern frontier (18). He describes in detail the "limit" (*limes*), the "internal frontier" (*finis*) (20) and the "international frontier" (*confrontatio*) (25). La Pradelle limits his study of the frontier to a double aspect of delimitation and zone (and discards from his analysis the problem of what he calls frontiers in domestic law). For La Pradelle, the problem of "delimitation" answers the question of the location of the boundary-line and the legal and technical procedures by which this boundary-line will be fixed. The problem of the "zone" raises the question for the author "what will be the effects of the delimitation on the regime of the territory?" (17).

La Pradelle's theoretical and legal approach therefore includes the delineation of the territorial boundary and, what interested him most, the branch of cooperation across territorial boundaries. In his theory of the frontier in international law, everything related to the territorial limit corresponds to the branch of law that concerns the processes of delineation, demarcation, and marking, and all the legal acts that come from this act. It is the law of the territorial limits of States. On the other hand, the legal practice of interstate frontier cooperation agreements lays the foundation for its theoretical approach to the international frontier as an area. Therefore, La Pradelle differs from all other legal scholars for three main reasons: first, in that he dissociates the meaning of "territorial limit" from that of "frontier"; second, in that he proposes that the "frontier" is an "area" with an internal aspect and an international aspect; and third, he makes a distinction in his general theory between the "national frontier" and the "international frontier". Everything related to the delimitation aspect is part of the legal regime centered on the concept of "limit" or "boundary-line". Everything related to the aspect of collaboration across the territorial boundary corresponds to the regime of the concept of "frontier".

Part 1: The Delimitation

La Pradelle defines a delimitation as "a form of formal and legal expression of the State" (55). Modern delimitation thus means a "separation of contiguous state powers" (30). It is an "attribute of authority" (56). The limit in turn constitutes a "framework for the exercise of authority" (64). The reasons for the delimitation are due to the "exceptional value that the modern conception of the State attributes to the political soil" (57) and to the "usefulness of a spatial determination of the competence and responsibility of the State" (59). From this, the author identifies three legal and political consequences of delimitation: peace, the affirmation of the independence of a state, and security. He specifies that "essential respect for the limits is only a consequence of respect for the treaties in which these same limits are recorded" (61).

No State may take any direct action beyond its territorial limits. For example, the executive formula of a foreign judgment cannot have effects in the national territory directly. For this to be the case, it must be authorized by the judge of that State in the exequatur proceeding (64). What the territorial limit strictly distinguishes by separating one from the other is only the executive powers. These do not overlap. Thus, La Pradelle specifies that the territorial limit takes its full real value as a limit in terms of an administrative act: "If we abandon the field of law, we consider the administrative field dedicated to the organization and operation of public services; if we move from the domain of legislative norms to that of the administrative act, the limit takes its real value as a limit of executive powers. Only the acts that constitute or guarantee the execution of laws are territorially limited" (ibid.).

To this he added: "As soon as it is no longer a question of issuing an order, but of its execution, the limit is the essential criterion of state competence" (65). The exercise of all forms of coercion beyond territorial limits is prohibited for any State. Acts that are not accompanied by coercive measures may be freely carried out by the foreign State (investigations, expert opinions, etc.) (ibid.). In short, apart from the field of justice, all activities that fall under the authority of State public power stop at the limit of the territory (ibid.). La Pradelle

acknowledges the existence of neighbourly relations between States that are due to the "growing needs of international trade" (65). These neighbourliness relations lead to public service connections that are made possible by mutual concessions and reciprocal delegations of competence. These neighbourliness agreements are "like many exceptions to the fundamental principle of spatial delimitation of enforcement powers" (ibid.). Finally, La Pradelle proposes to analyse the general competence of the State as a "bundle of competences" (ibid.).

La Pradelle draws an interesting parallel with Hans Kelsen's theory of law, allowing Kelsen to place himself in a theoretical approach to the frontier. On the one hand, La Pradelle recalls that from a legal point of view "all state boundaries have the same character. These are dividing lines of absolute competence" (62). Here, he makes his famous distinction between legislative powers (which are interpenetrable) and executive powers (which must remain independent). On the other hand, he pointed out that "the legislative competence of the State, considered as an issuer of norms, is not limited by a line, but rather by the validity of the norm. It was on the basis of this idea that we were able to develop a pure legal conception of the frontier" (ibid.). In fact, this reference to Kelsen's conception of the "validity of the norm" makes La Pradelle say that a frontier could be the object of a "pure legal conception" (ibid.).

The author also specifies the different operations of the delimitation in dozens of pages. "The normal procedure for a major territorial delimitation involves a series of operations that can be grouped into three phases: preparation, decision, execution" (73). He adds that "the execution consists of drawing the line described and adopted on the ground, an operation that bears the name of demarcation" (ibid.). Chapter IV reviews the different types of boundaries (astronomical boundaries; geometric boundaries; orographic boundaries; water boundaries including river, lake, and marine boundaries; reference boundaries) (172 and ff.). In doing so, La Pradelle reminds us that "any limit, geometric line, in the etymological sense of the word, is like any line, a succession of points" and that "any limit so defined is essentially artificial, and can only be conceived of as a creation of the human mind. The line can be a topographical process. It is not a natural truth" (172).

Part 2: The Neighbourliness

On page 226 of his thesis, La Pradelle exposes the heart of his theoretical and legal representation of the meaning of "frontier". "On each side of the intermediate zone, which is a zone of mixed and truly international jurisdiction, that is, in accordance with international law, they are the two extreme zones of territories with exclusive jurisdiction, which we have called 'the frontiers, national zones, and which are governed by domestic law'". As he writes, this juxtaposition of three zones is based on Ratzel's geographic conception that La Pradelle adapts to the legal approach (226). With respect to the intermediate zone, he mentions the idea of a "fusion zone" (ibid.).

La Pradelle recalls the customary origin of the "neighbourliness" (227); he situates the emergence of special institutions directly linked to the neighbouring state that create the frontiers, with the very old example of extradition (230). He also cites in particular the political activity of the kings of Scotland and England with respect to their frontier areas or "marches" (13th-15th centuries). And he also specifically refers to William Nicolson's work "Leges Marchiarum: Or, Border-Laws" (1705) (231), who seems to be the first to discuss these "marches" or intermediate areas. One of the agreements identified by Nicolson described these areas as "debatable ground" (1705, 80). La Pradelle writes that "the neighbourliness, until now a simple custom, appeared to the state as a necessary institution" (232). In the following pages (233-235), he justifies both the boundary-line approach for the States and the frontier collaboration agreement signed by these same neighbouring States. If for the State, the establishment of the boundary must be a line of contention, from the point of view of the individuals, the rigour of the boundary must be relaxed and accompanied by a specific consideration of the situation of contiguity. La Pradelle writes that "the contiguity of two territories necessarily gives rise to a regime of neighbourliness between States" (233).

As the territorial organization of the States improves with public services radiating to the periphery "there is pressure on the frontier of all the living forces of the country, which tends to force the limit and go beyond" (ibid.). Therefore, "the ramifications of state services tend to overlap beyond those of the neighboring state network" (ibid.). Consequently, adjacent governments sign bilateral agreements that establish, on the one hand, the special status of persons "who, descending from the Marcomans, became frontier workers" and, on the other hand, the "regime of collaboration of the various public services on the frontier" (234). With the political and legal organization of this general regime of neighbourliness, the States have organized "the fall of the classic conception of the limit that is insurmountable or difficult to cross" (ibid.). As evidence of this demonstration, he recalls that customs procedures on the periphery of the territory are considered "an obsolete institution" (235). La Pradelle gives the example of the International Convention for the simplification of customs formalities signed in Geneva on 2 November 1923 by 36 States. For La Pradelle, postponing customs operations to the points of departure and arrival within the territory is "the ideal solution" (ibid.).

The following pages focus on the frontier regime (236-264), which deals with the issue of property

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boundaries, land uses, grazing rights (with the example of the Pyrenean pastoral conventions), industries and factories, liberal professions, religious and cultural relations, and the regime of specific facilities and conditions for frontier workers. The end of the book deals with the legal regime of conventional neighbourliness (the frontier, place of collaboration between states) and non-contractual (neighbourliness, creator of rights; and neighbourliness, excuse of obligations). The article published by La Pradelle in 1930 repeats the essence of his thesis, presents in an updated and synthetic way his theory of the frontier and describes the essence of the legal regimes on neighbourliness relations.

The 1930 Article: Frontier Theory

La Pradelle's article in the 1930 Repertory of International Law deals specifically with his "Frontier Theory". This article is structured in four chapters. La Pradelle speaks successively of agreements related to the frontier population (chapter I), agreements related to the collaboration of state services (chapter II), agreements related to the territorial interpenetration of state services (chapter III), and frontier conflicts and their methods of solution (chapter IV). "Contrary to the vocabulary generally adopted by international law theorists, we apply the word 'frontier' exclusively to the representation of a territorial area and contrast it with the term 'limit', capable only of representing the line that, in contemporary territorial practice, separates the 'executive' powers of States" (1930, 488). La Pradelle reminds us that this distinction between limit and frontier is not an innovation and that illustrations of it can be found both during the Roman Empire and in the Middle Ages.

In this article, the author considers that the concept of "frontier" corresponds to a "complex regime, the analysis of which is framed by national and international public law" (488). He therefore recalls that there is a national frontier and an international frontier. After the determination of the territorial limit, "the problem of the frontier is reborn in a static aspect. It consists of eliminating, in a given area, considered as a transition zone, the fundamental rigour of the limit for both the individual and the State" (488). This is "the administrative regime of frontier collaboration" (505).

La Pradelle also examines the legal consequences of the limit for the individual and for the State. In relation to the individual, the political limit is the "material sign of his submission to an administrative order, to a certain power of constraint. By crossing the limit, he escapes this restriction. Therefore, he can only cross it with authorization" (489). In this regard, La Pradelle's writings clearly show the distinction between the principal legal function of "territorial limit" (a limit of political and legal value) and the legal function of "control of respect for this limit" by the State authorities. In relation to the State, "the political limit has in principle the value of absolute separation of administrative and executive powers" (489). It specifies that in the order of jurisdictional relations between States "the legislative powers are interpenetrable" and that "the executive powers must remain independent" (489). The "limit" ensures precisely this independence, and serves as a stopgap for the functioning of public services. In general, "the political limit of the States is a limit of executive competence, not of imperative competence. It is a limit of effectiveness, not of validity of the rule of law" (510). The fact that there is a strict limit contributes to disturbing both the life of individuals and the political life of administrative institutions. The regime of the La Pradelle frontier responds to these disturbances that arise from the delimitation and take the form of bilateral conventions that adjust the life of the frontier residents and the collaboration of the respective public services of the States.

As we said earlier, for La Pradelle, the "frontier" in international law is an area of collaboration that crosses the territorial limit and extends to both sides of it. The legal regime of the frontier takes the form of various collaboration agreements. Thus, first, the author distinguishes agreements related to frontier residents (agreements that deal with the determination of the frontier area, the identification of the frontier status, control measures; and then, with the specific situations of owners, users, and professionals) (489-500). Second, the author considers the conventions related to the collaboration of State services. In this case, for the author, the frontier is a place of collaboration of the police services (criminal, customs, and health police), a place of collaboration of the justice services (direct correspondence between prosecutors and courts), and a place of collaboration between municipal services (communication of civil status files, for example) (501-505).

With respect to the conventions of the frontier population, the author bases the existence and legitimacy of these on the fact that the act of delimitation disturbs the exercise of individual activity. The delimitation itself can effectively eliminate "an environment of a certain economic and social density" and deprive the professions "of the radius of action necessary for their exercise" (489). La Pradelle recalls that state governments decided to "soften the severity of the limit until it was erased" as soon as the first delimitation efforts were made (ibid.). This regime of facilities offered to frontier crossers dates back to the early years of the 19th century. "First it was applied only to landowners, then it was extended to the generality of the frontiers people" (ibid.).

With respect to conventions related to local collaboration of State services (501-504), these serve to counteract the effect of the limit that acts as a line of contention for the operation of public services. This includes customs, police, justice, and marital status services. For example, at the level of collaboration

between police services, let us cite the conventions on the repression of forest, hunting, and fishing crimes. At the customs level, let us cite the negative effects of the territorial and customs boundary that were later corrected by a regulation in the vicinity of the frontier that allows the implementation of the respective territorial powers (surveillance, repression) for the benefit of the neighboring State (applicable but subject to the principle of reciprocity).

With respect to the conventions related to "the territorial interpenetration of State services" (505), La Pradelle states that "the administrative regime of frontier collaboration is only an application of the principle that the political limit is a stop line for the operation of State services. It has no other purpose and no other result than to place the competencies of each of the adjacent States at the service of the local regulation of its neighbor in order to obtain maximum efficiency for it" (ibid.). In fact, the aforementioned frontier collaboration agreements do not authorize the public officials of a State to carry out an administrative act on the other side of the territorial boundary, that is, on foreign territory. La Pradelle then states that several recent agreements illustrate a new type of neighborly relationship that establishes a "localized territorial interpenetration" (ibid.) of the services of neighboring States. Thus, these agreements create an exception to the principle of the limit and the author postulates that it is "the outline of the future international frontier regime" (ibid.).

Conclusion

With his diverse works, Paul de La Pradelle is a key theorist for the investigation of international limits and frontier areas. For this author, the international frontier is an area, a place of collaboration, not opposition between states. According to him, the "frontier" regime, a place of neighbourliness cooperation, is the principle. And the exclusive regime of the "limit" considered as an insurmountable line for public services, as well as for individuals, is the exception.

In the final analysis, La Pradelle's thesis contains a relevant legal definition of the frontier: "The frontier, an expression taken in its legal meaning as a spatial circumscription of exercised rights" (1928, 11). In a historiography of scientific thought on the frontier it has as much value as, for example, the sentence of Georg Simmel "the frontier is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that takes on a spatial form" (1908, 623) or that of Guillaume De Greef, in relation to the new economic forms "that are necessarily destined to transform the territorial and sovereignty frontiers of today and properly speaking into functional frontiers" (1908, 311). In the end, La Pradelle's legal approach of "neighbourliness relations", even if it remains at the interstate level, seems to be very useful for the conceptualization of the transboundary areas that are multiplying in the world, especially in the European continent. In relation to old examples of neighbourliness relations across the territorial limits of the Pyrenees, the author Wentworth Webster spoke of "international municipal conventions" (1892). Several jurists have been able to write about this international neighbourliness (Andrassy 1951; De Visscher 1969; Pop 1980).

But between doctrine and state practice, there is a big gap. The concept proposed and defended by La Pradelle is that the frontier-area will not be held back by subsequent international law practice. In fact, we note that the frontier is legally defined as an international limit of State territories. For example, the International Court of Justice has emphasized that "to establish the boundary or boundaries between neighbouring States, that is to say, to draw the exact line or lines where the extension in space of the sovereign powers and rights of Greece meets those of Turkey" (1978, 35). We also note that the concept of "frontier zone" had been rejected in an arbitration decision: "As for recourse to the notion of the 'boundary zone', it cannot, by the use of a doctrinal vocabulary, add an obligation to those sanctioned by positive law" (1957, 307).

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FILM REVIEW

Tragic Hope in Diop's *Atlantics*

Matthew Pflaum *

Atlantics

(Original French: *Atlantique*)

Directed by Mati Diop

Released November 2019

IMDb

A cohort of young Senegalese men approach the foreman of a Dakar port construction project and a tempestuous argument ensues. Their faces contort with the anguish of poverty, injustice, and exploitation. Voices are raised; supplications are brandished. Then come the inevitable excuses. The penurious workers are fed the dependable subterfuge of the managers, CEOs, and owners since time immemorial: "It isn't our fault". In a way, he is right. The foreman is merely a pawn in the complex dynamics of inequality, development, and corruption. And, in their desperation, the laborers can do nothing more than beg and beseech. "Keep your money, but remember we have families", says one of the provoked youths to the insouciant foreman, appealing to the man's humanity. It does not work. The youths disperse, and moments later they are packed in the cargo bed of a truck singing loudly. It is as if they know there is nothing to be done. They are on the wrong side of the socioeconomic border in Senegal's rapid but unequal development.

This "nothing to be done" is the central motif in Mati Diop's 2019 *Atlantics*. Perhaps that partially explains the choice of adopting the supernatural over the course of the film. Souleiman, one of the protagonist pair in the film, is among the outraged faces in the scene. He is also the singular figure not joining the jaunty singing: his pained heart and his outrage are both visibly apparent on his face. While most viewers and critics may pounce on the candid theme of poverty and corruption in the film, I was also struck by its attention to more internal, even existential, dilemmas: fitting into society, competition, prejudice, social norms and pressure, love, exile, and loyalty. Souleiman and his secret girlfriend, Ada, seem to be the only ones who are permanently recalcitrant to their fates and refuse to accept them.

* **Matthew Pflaum**, PhD student, Geography, University of Florida. Email: mpflaum@ufl.edu Twitter: @PflaumMatthew
Homepage: https://sites.google.com/view/matthewpflaumsahel

BIG_Review journal homepage: https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/bigreview
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In them, the viewer sees the tragic hope of pursuing a different life. The film is essentially a depiction of the borderlands between the often-difficult reality of life and the illusion of a better life.

The viewer may already know what comes next: the inevitable desperate sojourn into the ocean. Souleiman does not sing because he has reached the Rubicon for migrants, the point of no return for Senegalese who have made their intractable decision to exile by ocean. His decision has already been solidified, tempered by the despondence of yet another exploited and invisible worker. In Senegal, 46% of respondents say they would move to another country if they had the means, and 44% say they plan to move to another country in the next five years (Pew Research 2018).

The final leg of the journey for much of the illegal migration between Senegal and the (now heavily securitized) borders of Europe is the central route between Libya and Italy, a principal passage for Sub-Saharan migrants and the deadliest route for migrants anywhere on Earth. In 2006, half of the 30,000 illegal migrants arriving in the Canary Islands were Senegalese, while 1,000 of the 7,000 migrants who died during ocean crossings to Europe were Senegalese (Mbaye 2014). Senegal is one of the most developed and stable nations in Africa, with political stability, strong economic growth, and a good education system, yet almost 47% of the country lives in poverty (Searcey & Barry 2017). Perhaps this explains why Diop's *Atlantics* can feel so jarring and manic to watch: a series of vacillations between comfort, agony, hope, despair, wealth, poverty, beauty, calm, injustice, and love.

So, Souleiman disappears into the azure sea toward Spain. Europe is never shown in the film. It remains a specter in the far distance, a siren luring youths to drown on its treacherous sojourn. Ada, meanwhile, struggles with similar dilemmas: an arranged marriage without love or familiarity that will satisfy her family (and her friends) and bring them comfort, or alienate her family and society by running away with Souleiman, who is poor but loves her—another transgression of the borders between society's acceptable and the anathema behavior. Ada must furtively visit Souleiman. Pleasure, free will, and contentment, according the film, are all tantalizing sentiments that do not persist or come easily. When Suleiman vanishes, Ada's family further coerces her into the marriage, finally setting and coordinating a date. Her fate is sealed. The evening consummation is disrupted by a "supernatural" disaster, and that is when the supernatural takes over. Corrupt and greedy managers will be haunted as people seek justice for the abuses against them.

Mere mortals have no recourse against these many injustices and can do nothing to oppose the corrupt elites who exploit them. The movie suggests that those who haunt the rich developer who cheated the laborers, Mr. Ndiaye, have more scruples than he does. They threaten him and demand the salary which they are rightfully owed. They do not harm him, the way he and other corrupt officials and executives have harmed and oppressed the poor and workers they exploit. For those who flee into the unknown of a different life in Europe, the sea awaits. Their memories haunt us all.

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BOOK REVIEW

Reading Borders: Review of Anna Casaglia's *Nicosia Beyond Partition*

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly *

Nicosia Beyond Partition:
Complex Geographies of the Divided City

Anna Casaglia

194 pages

€ 17.00

Edizioni Unicopli, March 2020

http://edizioniunicopli.it/nicosia-oltre-la-partizione/

Nicosia Beyond Partition is a book about power and the politics of divided urban regions, and more specifically about the famously divided Cyprus city of Nicosia, which Greece and Turkey partitioned in August 1974. The introductory section is followed by two well balanced sections focusing first on *living in a divided city* and then more analytically on *power and the politics of space of divided cities*. The text is organised towards a balanced argument that takes stock of those three parts. For scholars of borderland studies the first section will be a solid review of the literature which provides a framework for the study of Nicosia. The current dominant literatures suggest that giving methodological primacy to those living in the borderlands and their perspectives provides new insights. In this sense, this book is at the forefront of the research in the broader area of border studies that sets its interest on understanding borders from the multilevel and complex perspectives of 'the borderscapes, from the viewpoint of agents.' Indeed, the ultimate focus is people; it is '*the interconnection of diverse agents at different scales in the definition of the situation*' (p.9) that is at the core of the book. It is a methodological choice and research strategy that is prominent today in cultural geography. It is an interesting approach as it anchors extremely well the section on the politics of space of the divided city, a b-ordered space of inclusion and exclusion where human agency reflects plural-territoriality as well as symbolic, cultural and political orders.

* **Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly**, PhD, is Chief Editor of *Borders in Globalization Review* and Professor of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, Canada. Email: ebrunetj@uvic.ca Twitter: @ebrunetj

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Borders in Globalization homepage: https://biglobalization.org/

The city of Nicosia is one of the last formally and physically divided capital cities of Europe. There are other similarly sad examples both in recent history and resulting from an enduring history (Berlin, Belfast) of borders being perceived by Europeans as 'cleavers' as suggested by Francois Mitterrand on the 21st of November 1990 in his closing speech of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Nicosia, indeed, is particularly interesting because it is inside and outside the European Union and Greece, and inside and outside a neighborhood state of the Union as well, Turkey, a state that has been a candidate to the European Union since 1987, and signed a customs agreement with the Union in 1995. But since then, Turkey has lost interest in accession. Indeed, since the late 1990s, these efforts to enhance trade and peace have served their purpose to pacify the famously called Green Line, but are now stalling. Today, Nicosia symbolizes the partitioning of '*two urban areas, two parts of Cyprus and two benchmark "homelands" Greece and Turkey … [and an] anomalous European border*' (p.15). Casaglia's intent is to show that the division also points to divided '*symbols*' and '*competing groups and identities, [which in turn] disclose the artificial nature of identities based on place affiliation and [thus point to] the multidimensional nature of border*' (p.18). This is where her work is particularly interesting to Cultural Geographers.

The first part of this book organises the literature review in four subsections on (1) cities and segregation, (2) productive and produced spaces, (3) linking space and society, and, concludes with (4) classifications and suggestions. The literature review reminds the reader that cities are spaces of inclusion and exclusion, and that from inclusion, social cohesion and bonds emerge, whereas exclusion, such as ghettos, nourishes deep social divisions such as living outside city walls and concurrent identity formations. The literature also points to the spatiality of certain social phenomena. The *spatial socialization of countries* is then an extension when applied to borderlands and has led to concepts such as territoriality, whereby the borderland become a discursive landscape and a place of choice for social scientists interested in boundary construction/de-construction/re-construction and impacts on human societies and life. Developing a model of divided cities informs the debate by focusing on partitions versus division and thus on partial partitions and in particular the spatial or the social forms and the analysis resulting from in-depth case studies of '*place specific processes [of] social transformations*' (p.44).

The second part consists of an in-depth well documented case study, a description and analysis of interviews of the resulting situation of the Nicosia cross-border urban region. Casaglia's narrative details four areas: Nicosia's (1) scattered development, (2) institutional challenges, (3) costs, and (4) difficult symbolisms and cross-border interactions when straddling a disputed boundary. Casaglia's field work contributes to her argument that '*space influence narratives and enforces identity patterns*' (p.71). The author concludes with Foucault's idea of the 'heterotopias' that bodies exist in spaces, submit to spaces of authority, and can also manifest within spaces of resistance; Casaglia suggests the buffer zone should be re-invested with new meaning. The city is made up of two municipalities along with the United Nations monitoring the region; a triumvirate that institutionalises an ongoing cleavage. These findings, however, do not contribute to stopping trade. Indeed, possibly because of the regional cross-border complexity, the border is also a resource to traders. In conclusion, cross-border interactions, although real and resulting from local civil society organisation and bi-municipal groups, remain difficult and when they take place meet in the buffer zone.

The third section on politics and space focuses on identities, narrative and the recent history of cohabitation when facing rising nationalism: what it is to be Greek, Turkish, Cypriot on occupied Cyprus, and, how 'un/lucky' this is. The last section concerns Nicosia's urban spatiality as one would read a book focusing on the landscapes of the border, the conflict, the institution and the culture. Indeed, like Henri Lefebvre, Casaglia reminds the reader that any urban space should be looked at like a book because its planning and organisation speak to a specific spatial history and specific eras in the history of any city. Also, for Lefebvre the city is a place where much symbolism is at stake: the symbolism of the city itself, but also of society, the state, the world and cosmos. Hence, Casaglia's findings make sense: the symbolism of conflicts, partition, memory and collective memory are making their imprint on the urban space. Cross-border co-habitation is frustrated further by the rise of new nationalisms whereby being Greek Cypriot, Turkish Cypriot and simply Cypriot is difficult and deemed 'unlucky' because of Turkish Cypriots' dependence on Turkey and because of multilevel cleavages weighing on the region. It is not just about Greece and Turkey, but also the European Union and Turkey, and also about the Union and the historical remains of the former Ottoman Empire of the Eastern Mediterranean. This all comes together in this last section of this small and dense text; the cleaved urban space, with Lefebvre in mind, reads like a text and reveals a deeply partitioned urban landscape of profound and institutionalised ethnic conflicts.

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of Christian Wille's and Birte Nienaber's Edited Volume *Border Experiences in Europe*

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly *

Border Experiences in Europe: Everyday Life – Working Life – Communication – Languages

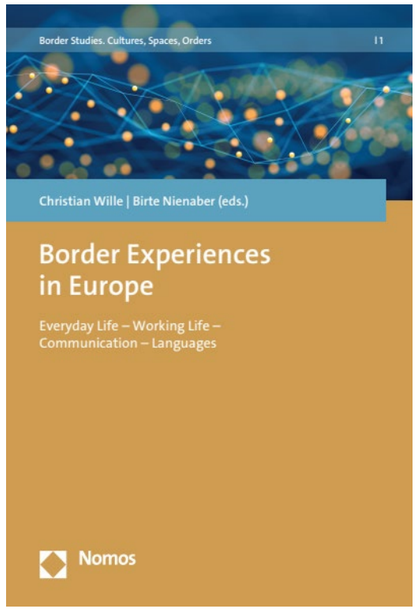
Edited by Christian Wille & Birte Nienaber

261 pages

Open Access (BY-NC-ND)

Nomos, 2020

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845295671



This edited volume on life in borderlands consists of ten chapters organised in two parts: the first six chapters concern *everyday life and work* of borderlanders; the next four chapters explore *communication and languages* across borderlands.

The first part of the book is about living and speaking in borderlands. In other words, it contributes to a relatively recent trend in the field of cultural geography whereby the focus is on individuals' ordinary everyday lives and familiar experiences of the border and borderlands. This focus on the everyday evokes at some level the work of prominent writers such as Alice Munro, Carol Shield, and Rachel Cusk, who explore the lives of women in patriarchy. These eminent writers have been inspired by everyday lives, yet often excruciatingly difficult, of women in the last part of last century, a period of supposed 'liberation'. What is praise-worthy in this volume is that Wille and Nienaber also focus on the ordinary lives of everyday individuals in contemporary borderlands through themes that are also found in the literary world such as what is '*done somewhere by someone against some others*' (Tyerman 2019, p.2) or the '*everyday cultural realities*' (p.7), and '*the everyday realities of life*'.

Clearly Wille and Nienaber ground their work in the research of colleagues such as Brambilla (2015) on '*humanizing the border*' or Rumford '*seeing like a border*' (2012), and prominently by Considère and Perrin (2017) on '*perceptions, [and] everyday practices …*'

* **Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly**, PhD, is Chief Editor of *Borders in Globalization Review* and Professor of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, Canada. Email: ebrunetj@uvic.ca Twitter: @ebrunetj

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thus exploring multiple positionalities either gendered, ethnic, or of relative power, marginalised or privileged, that lead to different emotions, experiences, meanings, memories of the borderlands. Ultimately questioning whether borders '*acquire existences through border experiences or become (are made)*' (p.11). Thus, the editors raise three questions: (1) are borders produced through practices, discourses or objects? (2) what social logics lead such processes, and (3) which (dis) continuities emerge from the border?

Each one of the ten chapters addresses in part those subtle questions: in Chapter One Carsten Yndigegn brilliantly suggests that in the European Union nationalism and populism trends are variations of persistent national rights regimes that prevent '*the idea of a European identity [being] a reliable alternative*' (p.31), an idea he anchors in Kant's and Khan's (2014) suggestion that cosmopolitan law should extend citizens' rights to non-citizens.

In Chapter Two, Ignacy Jozwiak, offers an ethnography of borderlanders' lives spanning the boundary lines of Transcarpathia in south-east Ukraine, nudged against Poland in the North, and Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. The author details how the border never seems to be experienced the same way by two individuals, and the multiple ways individuals cross the line: to give a phone-call, to learn from and watch news, acquire citizenship or register a car, always across the boundary line in one of the four contiguous countries, and in doing so are stitching lives spanning the boundary line itself; each experience being unique each time, and thus puncturing, subverting the border, forming '*gaps in Fortress Europe*' or a '*blurred boundary*' (p.57).

In Chapter Three, Ariela House takes the reader back to the oldest boundary line of Europe, that of France and Spain in the 1960s and 70s, a period of hardening of the border coinciding with when passports became required again by Spain (in 1966). For European nationals, in particular the neighboring French, routine arrests were testimonies of the disarray of this region, and a long period of uncertainty. When Spain lifted the passport requirement in 1978, then all EU nationals and Spanish citizens regained the right to cross the boundary line with their identity cards only.

In Chapter Four, Isabelle Pigeron-Piroth and Rachid Belkacem explore the border as a resource for workers; unemployment on one side has demographic effects on the borderland. Their focus is on the borderline of France and Luxembourg. Nearly 90,000 French workers cross daily (p.88); and 50 to 83 percent of the population of bordering municipalities live in France and work across the line (p.90). Being employed in Luxembourg and crossing the border daily is an important economic competitive advantage. But those populations also experience differences in laws, prices, wages, and labor markets that impact the regions' economic well-being, along with 'brain drain' and ongoing regional rivalries for a limited mobile work force; hence suggesting that mobility is a resource for both individuals and territories (p.98).

Chapter Five is the English translation of a paper published in 2018, which focused on the networked social relations of cross-border workers as well, but here they are studied as either commuters or residents in Luxembourg. The detailed data set shows networks spanning the borderland, as well as a reality of bedroom communities that contribute to the fragmentation of the sub-urbanized borderlands.

Chapter Six, by Elisabeth Boesen, thanks to a series of ethnographic interviews discusses *home-making* in the border regions. This is an exploration of migration and memories in the process whereby '*neighborly contact and linguistic interactions' matters because it 'gives shape*' to the new place of belonging of recent migrants (p.139). The findings suggest that early memories are foundational and inform the long-term.

Dominilk Gerst in Chapter Seven explores the role of border *knowledge* as it influences border experiences and security but also more precisely, how each understanding of what a border is influences each individual experience and sense of security. This is interesting conceptually because it expands on previous works on '*borderwork*' (Rumford 2008), '*border practices*' (Parker and Adler-Nissen 2014), and also '*border-textures*' (Weier et al 2018). In other words, the chapter is a conceptual discussion on thinking 'of' and 'within' borders i.e. concurrently suggesting that a geopolitic of knowledge may be necessary. This is one of two chapters (Chapters One and Seven) that make the book an especially necessary read, but also a bit too ambitious. As a reader, I would have liked two additional chapters: one on the geopolitics of border knowledge and one on how knowledge and borders interact in creating—or not—a sense of security. The second idea is more fully developed thanks to a textual analysis of a conference debate: it is very interesting because it suggests with Foucault that borders create '*knowledge-related space of possibilities*' (p.162).

In Chapter Eight, Corinne Martin studies the digital borders and digital media practices of French cross-border commuters. The research findings point to three categories of users: those in a '*tunnel*' (p.179) who border their private and working lives – they work in Luxembourg and have no social life on that side of the border nor any virtual social life there. The second group called '*ambivalent*' (p.185) are mostly residents of Luxembourg, and have, in a limited way, some form of social life spanning the boundary line. The third group has no specific name; they use of the whole greater region of Luxembourg and spread their social networks largely across the Dutchy and beyond its boundary lines. In the end a very interesting study, however, limited to 20 interviews.

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Brunet-Jailly, "Review of Christian Wille's and Birte Nienaber's Edited Volume *Border Experiences in Europe*"

Chapter Nine is about in-betweenness and questions about the emergence of a liminal space at the borderland. The core issue is whether form of in-betweenness and liminality lead to a new border. The objects of study are marketing messages and resulting perceptions of new products, and languages provide the liminality of various perceptions. The findings are fascinating: only multi-lingual individuals are able to bridge those linguistic liminal spaces; the in-betweenness and their liminal meanings. Indeed, more of this grounded research is needed. In Chapter Nine, Erika Kalocsanyiova's ethnographic work looks at forced migrants' encounters with new languages, and particularly, how languages are bordering. The Luxembourgish 'Nationality Act' has a language test which 'thickens' access to citizenship and narrows respondents' sense of belonging.

The last chapter of this book by Xose-Afonso Alvarez Perez reports on the *Frontespo* research program looking at the Portuguese–Spanish linguistic borderland. An extensive study of 287 informants across 64 towns on each side of the boundary. The program has detailed culture and experiences of the border-regions to suggest that cultural and linguistic porosity characterises the '*transcendable*', '*permeable*', and '*ambivalence*' of the border—a feast. All in all, like few edited collections this book provides the reader with powerful and substantiated ideas and excellent cases studies while opening new venues in cultural border studies.

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About the Journal

Focus and Scope

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. These developments impact culture and politics, including understandings and contestations of identity, citizenship, law, nationalism, gender, and Indigeneity.

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 visibalize, 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.

The journal also advances original artwork related to borders. Borders capture the popular imagination and inspire creative works. Artwork reflects and influences the cultures that shape borders. Sometimes artwork is subversive of borders. *BIG_Review* connects artists to audiences around the world through wide distribution networks and open-access electronic editions. Our art pages showcase individual works as well as portfolios, including photos, paintings, poems, short stories, fiction reviews, and more. All art is published at no cost to the artists.

Peer Review

Each academic article and essay considered for publication in *BIG_Review* undergoes at least two double-blind peer reviews from our international Editorial Board (board members are listed at the front of this issue and on our journal home page). In the event of a split recommendation, a third (and sometimes a fourth) review may be obtained. Publication decisions are based on these reviews.

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Bound and printed editions (full colour, 8.5"x11", soft cover) are available from University of Victoria Printing Services for 35 Canadian dollars each (or $60 Cdn for two) plus shipping, while supplies last (pricing subject to change).

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Borders in Globalization Books (BIG_Books) shares an editorial board with *BIG_Review*. The focus and scope of the books are the same as the journal, except the books publish only academic content, not artistic or fictional. Learn more at BIG_Books.

History

In 2018, Borders in Globalization, a Research Lab of the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, established *Borders in Globalization Review* (*BIGR/BIG_Review*) and the Borders in Globalization Book Series (BIGB/BIG_Books). Both publish online, open access, double-blind peer-reviewed manuscripts about the borders of globalization.

Funding and Support

BIG_Review is funded and supported by the Borders in Globalization research program (BIG). BIG received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Grant (Grant no: 895-2012-1022), and from the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (the European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein).

In order to continue publishing high-quality and open-access work in the absence of secure, long-term funding, *BIG_Review* aims to become self-sustainable through publication fees for academic submissions and advertising revenue.

The Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria provides office space and support. The journal is hosted online by University of Victoria Libraries.

Publicity and Advertising

BIG_Review reserves space for paid promotional content in the social sciences, humanities, and fine arts, including advertisements for new books and other publications, special events, calls for papers, courses and programs, and more. Full and partial page insets will be made available on the inside of the front and back covers, as well as the first and last pages of the journal.

Inside front cover: full page = $1,000 (Cdn); half page = $500; quarter page = $250

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Ad proposals should be submitted as PDFs directly to our Chief Editor. All inquiries welcome. *BIG_Review* reserves the right to reject ad proposals on any grounds.

Publication Frequency

BIG_Review is published twice annually:
In spring/summer and fall/winter.

Editorial Notes

BIG_Review is produced on Adobe InDesign.

All hyperlinks in *BIG_Review* are last accessed within two weeks prior to publication.

The map series for Issue 2(1) were designed using National Geographic Mapmaker Interactive, Google Maps, Abobe Photoshop and InDesign.

The original publication of 10.18357/bigr11201919259 from Issue 1(1) was subsequently modified: a map that had been improperly reproduced was replaced.

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For Contributors

Academic & Artistic Guidelines

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).

Scholarly submissions should engage with the research literature on borders, including, for example, borderlands, borderscapes, and bordering processes. We are 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.

BIG_Review also promotes **artistic submissions** pertaining to borders (borders understood broadly: political, social, cultural, metaphoric, personal). Borders can capture the popular imagination and inspire creative works. Artwork can reflect and influence the cultures that shape borders. We promote small portfolios and individual works, including original poems, photos, paintings, short stories, creative essays, film and literature reviews, artistic commentaries, and other forms of art. Artists retain copyright of their work and benefit from increased exposure at no cost to them.

For technical submission requirements, see below.

Peer Review Process

Each academic manuscript considered for publication in *BIG_Review* is submitted to at least two members of the Editorial Board (or other qualified scholars) for double blind review. In the event of a "split" recommendation, a third (and sometimes a fourth) review may be obtained. Publication decisions are based on these reviews.

The editors notify authors as early as possible as to whether their paper has been accepted for publication. Selected manuscripts are assigned a member of the editorial team, who will work with the author to address any outstanding issues concerning style or substantive content prior to publication. Papers that do not abide by the publication's style guide may not be accepted. Once revisions have been completed, copyediting and production are provided by *BIG_Review*.

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Academic Submission Requirements

Articles (social science and humanities papers that advance academic disciplines through research, data, and theory) should be between 7000 and 10,000 words in length.

Essays (including literature reviews, persuasive writing, opinion pieces) should be between 1000 and 4000 words, using few references (fewer than a dozen, except for literature reviews, which may include more).

Research notes (engaging with single concepts, terms, or debates pertaining to border studies) should be between 750-1200 words, using few references (no more than five).

Book reviews (summarizing and analysing academic monographs relating to borders) should be between 500 and 1000 words.

Film reviews (summarizing and analysing film and television relating to borders) should be between 500 and 1000 words.

Submissions must be written in English (although we also consider French and Spanish submissions).

Citation style should adhere to Chicago "author-date" manual of style. This means all citations are contained inside parentheses within the text, listing author(s) last name, and the year of publication (and pagination when appropriate, especially following quotations). Complete bibliographic details of all references are contained in Works Cited at the end of the manuscript, listed alphabetically by author last name, with year of publication preceding work title.

All references to academic journal articles must include **DOI weblinks or stable URLs** at the end of the entry. This increases the exposure of your work.

All academic articles and essays must include an **abstract** (75-200 words) that summarizes the paper, including the main argument or findings, the disciplinary background or approach, and any research literatures or theories substantially utilized.

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Borders in Globalization Review
Volume 2, Issue 1 (Fall/Winter 2020): 147-148

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The new **Borders in Globalization Books** series (**BIG_Books**) provides a forum for in-depth scholarly explorations of borders in the 21st century. We publish high-quality academic works in the humanities and social sciences that explores various aspects of borders in an increasingly globalized world.

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BIG_Books welcomes proposals, samples, and complete manuscripts from all disciplines and academic backgrounds. Submissions should engage with the 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 and bordering processes 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, 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.

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The text must be double-spaced with 12-point font and employ italics rather than underlining (except with URL addresses). Only one space between sentences (do not add a second space between sentences).

All illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end (or markers are used within the text to indicate placement).

Submission files must be Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) file format.

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PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR
ON LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITÉ DE MONRTÉAL
2019 PIERRE ELLIOT TRUDEAU FELLOW

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- *Environmental and social policy, and ecological governance with a strong emphasis on water*
- *Indigeneity and reconciliation from global and local perspectives*
- *Social justice and participatroy democracy*
- *Governance as an integrated process at and across scales*

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Centre for Global Studies
Sedgewick Building C173
University of Victoria
3800 Finnerty Road
Victoria, British Columbia

Facebook: CentreForGlobal Studies
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Website: www.globalcentres.org

Phone: (250) 472-4990

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RESEARCH FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE WORLD

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BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

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SPECIAL ISSUE: BORDERLANDS in the ERA of COVID-19

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"Bordering the World in Response to Emerging Infectious Disease: The Case of SARS-CoV-2"
— Adrien Delmas and David Goeury

ESSAYS

On borderlands around the world under lockdown, by scholars:

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Videography by Bertha Alicia Bermudez Tapia and Mario Jímenez Díaz: "Twin Cities Torn Apart: A Story about the U.S-Mexico Border"

Poetry by Natasha Sardzoska: "confined body"

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Film review by Matthew Pflaum: *Atlantics*

Book reviews by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly: *Nicosia Beyond Partition* and *Border Experiences in Europe*

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