



**BORDERS IN  
GLOBALIZATION  
REVIEW**

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Volume 2, Issue 2  
Spring/Summer 2021

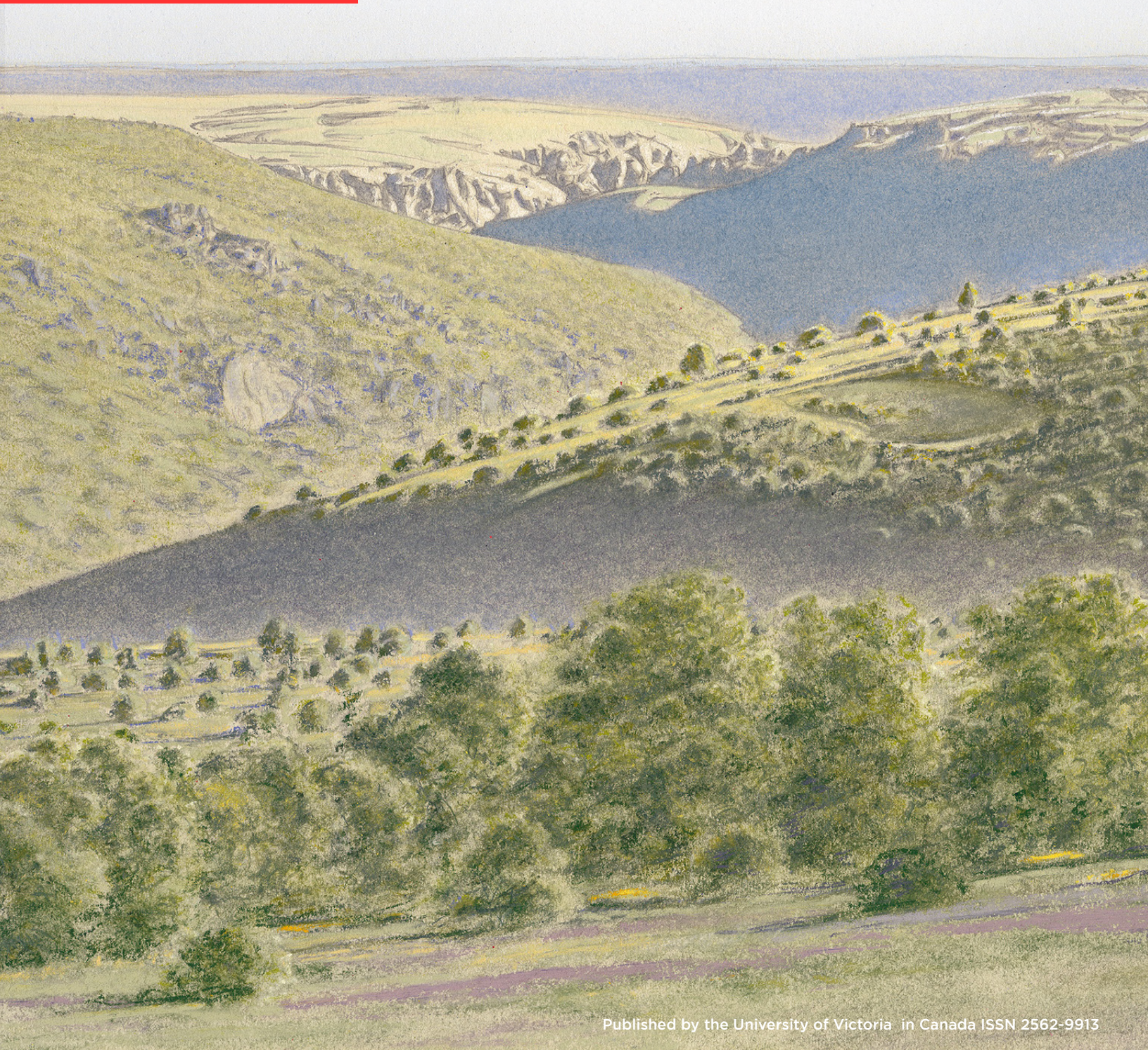
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Academic and artistic  
explorations of borders  
in the 21st century

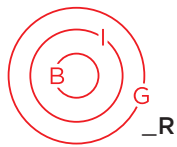
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Cover: "Bucolic Borders"  
By François Cayol  
(portfolio enclosed)

FEATURING:  
SPECIAL POETRY SECTION  
**A WORLD ANTHOLOGY  
OF BORDER POETRY:**  
BLURRED AND POLITICAL







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## BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW



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*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.

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## *Borders and Bordering in Atlantic Canada*

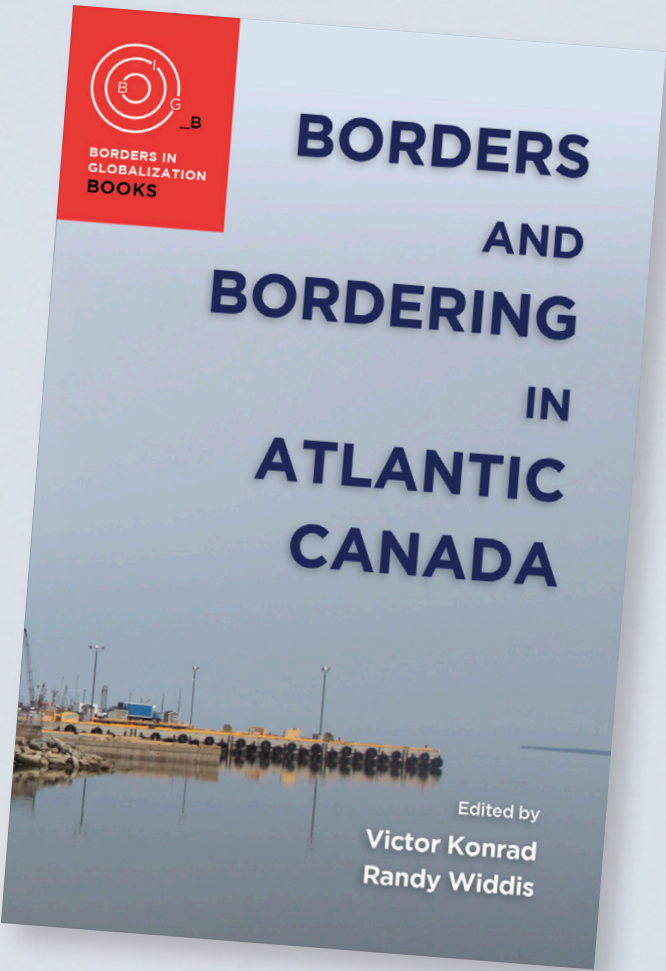
Edited by **Victor Konrad**  
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Borders and borderlands are the results of bordering, a process that produces both integration and differentiation and convergence and divergence among territories and peoples. The chapters in this collection present selective interpretations of borders, bordering and borderlands that focus on Atlantic Canada. Collectively, these essays offer some regional fundamentals—ports, governance, historical constructs, trade patterns—as well as some innovative studies on bordering in the region. As such, the book addresses the underlying themes of Borders in Globalization: culture, flows, governance, history, security and sustainability

### *About the Editors*

**Victor Konrad** is an Adjunct Research Professor for the Department of Geography at Carleton University. He was Section Lead for the Culture Theme of the Borders in Globalization project.

**Randy W. Widdis**, a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Regina, served as lead for the Historical Theme section of the Borders in Globalization Project.



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*This issue is dedicated to the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, as self-determining nations and communities as well as survivors of Western settler colonialism and ongoing settler violence and encroachment onto Indigenous lands and waters.*

*More and more, the rest of us are learning what we should have known all along, if we had listened. European colonization was genocidal for millions of Indigenous peoples.*

*Canada, where our journal is based, is guilty of crimes against humanity, a legacy that is not past but still present.*

*We will strive to learn from more Indigenous voices and to publish more works by Indigenous scholars and artists.*

— The BIG Team, Coast Salish Territory (on Vancouver Island)

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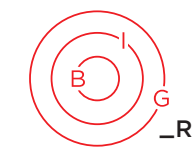
# BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION

## REVIEW

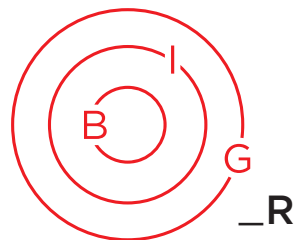
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## Letter of Introduction

### Dear Readers,

The Editors of *Borders in Globalization Review* are pleased to share and celebrate this, our fourth biannual publication (Volume 2, Issue 2).

In this issue, you will find a special section on the poetry of borders, as well as new articles, essays, art portfolios and features, plus film reviews and book reviews. Most prominently, and breaking ground in border studies, our Chief Editor Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and our Poetry Editor Natasha Sardzoska collaborated to produce a collection of contemporary border poetry, **A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred and Political**, with a co-authored introduction. The collection itself features poems by 29 poets from diverse backgrounds. As the editors write, “Poetry blurs paradigms of borders, raises boundaries and destroys them at the same time”. The poetry section is bookended by academic work and visual art. First, five research **articles** include: an exploration of “the local” in borderland studies through comparative analysis of cases drawn from the Indian state of West Bengal (by Shibashis Chatterjee, Surya Sankar Sen, and Mayuri Banerjee); an urgent analysis of international climate policy in the context of border studies and popular discourse (by Simon Dalby); a case study of the unusual international ‘exclave’ of Point Roberts, an American town completely disconnected from the rest of US soil and territorially adjoining Canada (by Pierre-Alexandre Beylier); a normative pedagogical argument about teaching borders, drawing on the case of geography curriculums in Israeli middle and high schools (by Tal Yaar-Waisel); and finally, in French, an exploration of the COVID-19 lockdowns on the Spanish-Moroccan border (by Saida Latmani). After the articles and the poetry collection, readers will find our **lead portfolio**, featured on

the cover, which unfolds in a series of drawings made by artist Francois Cayol over more than 15 years, capturing the landscapes of borders spanning the Mediterranean region to Central Asia. The images are accompanied by short first-person narratives of the artist that bely the bucolic scenery and reinsert stubborn politics, culture, and history. Next, readers can enjoy a wonderful photography **portfolio** featuring the borderlands and borderlanders of Lebanon, by photographer Hussein Baydoun and researcher Daniel Meier, captioned by the words and experiences of those in the photographs. Then, in an **Art Feature**, Elisa Ganivet (who will be serving as our Visual Art Editor starting this fall) interviews Emeric Lhuisset, a war photographer, about the concept of borders in his work. We’ve also included an **essay** on the 2020 experience of the Dutch-German border, one of the few borders in the world to stay open throughout the onset and course of the pandemic. And finally, the issue is rounded out by film and book reviews. Thanks to our Film Review Editor, Kathleen Staudt, we present a distinct pair of **film reviews** on two very different cinematographic works yet both futuristic border dystopias: one a Brazilian film (Bacurau, 2020), the other an Indian series on Netflix (Leila, 2020). Last but not least, readers will find two **book reviews**, one by Simon Dalby and one by Daniel Meier, on recent publications in border studies.

On behalf of the entire BIG team, our networks and friends, we would like to conclude this introductory letter by acknowledging the great work of our Editorial Board and other colleagues who have provided double-blind expert peer reviews to our articles and essays. The following specialists have each helped us maintain and strengthen the quality of our academic content, and for that, we thank them:

Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhary, Nicole Bates-Eamer, Claude Beaupre, Frédérique Berrod, Pierre-Alexandre Beylier, Małgorzata Biełkowska, Edward Boyle, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, Michael Carpenter, Anna Casaglia, Jaume Castan Pinos, Kimberly Collins, Irasema Coronado, Simon Dalby, Willie Eselebor, Aileen A. Espíritu, Elisa Ganivet, Sarah Green, Anna Grichting Solder, Walid Habbas, Katy Hayward, Federica Infantino, Edith Kauffer, Martin Klatt, Victor Konrad, Fabienne Leloup, Virginie Mamadouh, Lucile Medina, Daniel Meier, David Newman, Heather Nicol, Lacin Idil Oztig, Benjamin Perrier, Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman, Kathrine Richardson, Tatiana Shaban, Katarzyna Stoklosa, Dhananjay Tripathi, Martin van der Velde, Machteld Venken, and Birte Wassenberg. If any reviewers are omitted from this list, the oversight is unintentional.

Looking beyond this milestone of four issues and two years, what can readers expect from *BIG\_Review* going forward? In addition to building on our foundations, watch for more content in diverse languages and for additional multimedia formats such as video and podcast. We’ve also launched our **BIG\_Book series** and have begun collaborating with the **BIG Dyads Database**. We

are especially excited to be part of a new BIG research project: exploring contemporary border issues in collaboration with Indigenous scholars (stay tuned!).

*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). We would also like to thank Inba Kehoe and colleagues at the University of Victoria Libraries for hosting the journal online, as well as to the Centre for Global Studies for hosting our offices and providing invaluable support.

*Sincerely,*

Michael J. Carpenter, Managing Editor  
*Borders in Globalization Review*

On behalf of Chief Editor, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly,  
And the BIG team







# Borders, Citizenship, and the Local: Everyday Life in Three Districts of West Bengal

Shibashis Chatterjee<sup>i</sup>  
Surya Sankar Sen<sup>ii</sup>  
Mayuri Banerjee<sup>iii</sup>

*Borders have been considered essential to understanding the self and the other, with identities on either side established through functions of exclusion and inclusion. These processes, initially considered to be the preserve of the state as exercised through its policies of border management, also exist in tandem or in an asynchronous manner at the local level. Constituted of processes of identification and networks of interdependences, localized construals of the borderland and subsequently positioned engagements, comes to shape notions of accessibility and restriction as well as perceptions of the “other”. These engagements are not always reflective of statist positions on the border which are often uniform in the conceptualization of its capacity to contain. They subsequently come to reflect the variations of divergent historical and locational realities. There is a need to further extend the analysis of borderlands beyond statist framings as passive recipients of policy as well as recognize the critical positioning of local adaptive processes as antithetical to state demarcations of territoriality and sovereign authority. Based on a survey of three districts in the state of West Bengal, India, this study posits an analysis of the multiple perceptions both within and outside of statist framings of borderland identity and territoriality, which color its inhabitants’ understanding of the border and perceptions surrounding and interactions with the communities that lie beyond it.*

## Introduction

The article argues that for long, studies on borders and borderland issues have prioritized a statist perspective where “local”<sup>1</sup> perception and narratives of borders and borderlands have been relegated to footnotes of analysis. Such an exercise which prioritizes a statist perspective is incomplete as a purely nationalist outlook fails to account for the lived experiences of the local people at the border and the local actions and interests that shape borders and borderland practices.

In the case of South Asia, reorientating academic attention towards local perspectives is important for two reasons. First, the artificial demarcations and categories that were superimposed on the region suspended fluid boundaries, multiple identities and easy transborder movements, and established the state as central to all socio-cultural, economic and political exchanges (Uddin 2019; Canefe 2019). Now as every transborder interaction has come to be moderated through the state, it is important to understand how the

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local responds and negotiates with the state’s schema of citizenship and territoriality in its regular cross-border socio-cultural, economic and political interactions. Second, to assume the “local” as passive recipients of state policies is a serious misjudgment (Chaturvedi 2000). While the state has established itself as the primary source of community identification and affiliation, there operates informally at the local level various other forms of belonging which predate the establishment of international borders and also circumvent the rigid norms of inclusion and exclusion instituted by the state. Therefore, in a way the local through its own adaptation and modification of legal conditionalities not only strives to assert its agency vis-à-vis the state but also acts as an important stakeholder in the state’s territorializing projects.

It is in this context that this article seeks to enunciate how the ideas about border and borderland issues take shape in the imaginations of the “local” and how these relate to the quotidian references of the nation-state. To that end, a study was conducted to record local perception in the Indian state of West Bengal. Considering the enormity of the task involved and the authors’ familiarity with vernacular audiences, the study presented in the following section will be focused on three districts of the province of West Bengal—Bankura, Darjeeling and Murshidabad.

The study employs a mixed-method approach, with data collected through a survey on participants’ perceptions, presented alongside a contextual engagement with field narratives derived from focused group discussions and individual interactions with local inhabitants from the specified field sites.<sup>2</sup> The study aims to understand the local meanings of the terms border, citizenship, alien and the nation-state in three different settings, among people who are not part of the regular discourse on foreign policy or national and international security issues. Our premise is that the statist perspective on borders and its associated processes and dynamics which shape the state’s securitizing ideologies do not take into consideration local aspirations and concerns. However, these notions impact the daily life activities and livelihood prospects of the local in a way that national elites are hardly able to perceive. Does this therefore mean that these people hold on to some alternative spatial imagination as suggested by much of the critical scholarship in IR (Ruggie 1993; Agnew 2005; Kratochwil 2011; Sassen 2015)? Or, are they routinely socialized into the ideas imposed by the policy elites as the mainstream discourses, particularly the realist ones, claim? We argue that these answers have been predominantly sought deductively by offering broad generalizations and moving from there towards engagements with particular cases through these pre-formed interpretive leitmotifs. In contrast, we prefer the inductive route of moving from the cases to arrive at generalizations, if any.

The article is divided into three sections. The first section lays out the conceptual framework of the study rooted in the idea of borders and borderlands as representative of multiple ideas and meanings that simultaneously co-exist

and compete with each other to shape life in these liminal zones of existence. Accordingly, a singular understanding of these spaces inhibits a responsive approach towards borders and borderland issues. This line of thought is continued in the second section that presents the survey data collected from the three districts of West Bengal. Here, through tabular representation of the opinions voiced in the interviews we put together an analysis of the diversity of the local perception encountered. In the final section, we discuss how far the insights derived from the study confirm our initial hypothesis.

## Borders, State and the Local

The relevance of borders in contemporary times has come to be defined by notions of access and restrictions against mobility, which in turn subsequently define ideas of belonging and alienation. At the state level, such exclusions are further reinforced by the presence and operation of laws and regulations which define the conditions of belongingness, affiliation and participation. The heightened sense of security that prevails in the borders is often the outcome of the state’s processes of securitizing the same against incursions. These barriers, manifesting in the form of physical impediments and identificatory requirements, are often impediments upon the mutuality and interdependence upon which the constitutive dynamics and processes of the borderland are situated. More often than not, these interactions are beyond the containment of the state’s rendering of spatiality and its scope of permissible interactions and mobilities (Chatterjee & Sen 2019).

Similarly, the measures undertaken towards the management of borders are predicated on the centrality of the state as the foremost organizer of social, political and economic relations. Such interpretations often fail to account for local dynamics of interactions and identifications as they often do not exist in a manner that is commensurate with statist conceptualizations of territoriality or its constituent relationships. However, the dichotomies that exist between the rigid territorialization of the border and its regulation by the state on one hand and the ever-changing demands for mobility and transactions of people on the other have often manifested in reconfigurations of local perceptions surrounding the state as well as changes in their interactions with its various institutions and processes. These local adaptations in responding to the exigencies of their own geographical context vis-à-vis the state’s immiscible categories of identity and permissible mobilities are representative of the mutability of the border—a reality often obscured in statist frameworks whereby the position of borderland inhabitants in responding to these changes is subordinated to the state’s priority of security and regulation.

The borderland, therefore, becomes an important site for studying the interactions between the state and the local, as opposed to unqualified acceptance within statist discourses of the borderland as the territorialized limits of state powers.





The dynamics of interactions and contestations underlining the continuum of state-local engagements at the border are revealing of the perpetuity of such processes (Grassiani & Swinkels 2014). The spatial variegations underlying such processes also become a relevant point of engagement in understanding the different ways in which the state's power as manifested in the borders competes with, as well as accommodates, more localized processes operational at disaggregated levels of the local. These processes, comprised of both cooperative and conflictual interrelations amongst state and non-state actors, representing a struggle between change and constancy, constitute an integral constituent of the spatial category of the modern borderland (Chatterjee & Sen 2019).

However, the representation of borders as limits of state power inextricably links it to understandings of state territoriality. By viewing borders as limits established by modern state-making practices there is a risk of obscuring the divergent socialities these sites contain for the subsuming category of the borderland. The seeming immutability of state borders often presuppose their correspondence with historical and social boundaries that pre-date its existence, thereby precluding the possibility of its denial by those who engage with the tangible and intangible impacts of its materiality. Therefore, it would be prudent in this context to view borders as dynamic spaces tied to particular locales and characterized by varying interpretations of the miscibility of different cross-border spatialities and identities. A relevant point of corroboration of this perspective would be David Newman's argument about how territory and borders travel together in different planes and scales (2011).<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to position the border as the marker of territoriality often detaches analyses from localized framings of the border through uniform and eternalized conceptualization of the same that do not account for the polyvalent nature of these lines.

Agnew (1994, 1998, 2008) posited that the border must be understood from a dual perspective. First, it must be considered from the perspective of its physical reality in regulating the movements of people and commodities; and second, as a notional category that prompts societal or inter-personal engagement along territorial terms in conditioning "the exercise of intellect, imagination, and political will" (Agnew 2008, 176). Therefore, in order to understand the functions of the physical border, or the state's qualificatory schemes of belonging, one must account for the impacts of the same on our interactions and perceptions with the different categories of territory and citizenship established as such. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to consider borders not only as material realities constituted of differential accesses and recognitions but also the impacts of bordering, ordering and othering, which often manifest themselves in interactions and contestations between categories of the naturalized insider and the alien outsider. The existences of such meanings are variable across different borderland locales, as mentioned previously, as are the extents of the limitations they embody. However, the border in its

etymological and experiential forms exists as limits; what we need to acknowledge are the varying intensities of the constraints they exercise across different subjects. The variability of the impacts of its existence is itself an outcome and a contributor to its polyvalent nature. This is observable in the border's existence as a source of security for some, whereby for others its existence may constitute an adverse threat to their material or cultural interests. It is, therefore, futile to view borders as set functions; instead, it is important to analyze their inherent fluidity and variability as essential to the functions they perform.

At this point it becomes necessary to acknowledge this disjuncture between state borders and the borders in our minds. The different originations of these two variants often manifest as distinctive, unrelated and conflicting existences. Often, these two borders come together and interact at the local level, manifesting in its own unique replications of limitations or qualifications for collaboration and participations. In certain cases, territorial reconfigurations by the state may not result in a corresponding shift in the borders of our mind at all. The salience of the border in statist perspectives in this regard presents itself as a fundamentally normative and political question. Its prioritization of a geopolitical interpretation over the many other readings of borders and territoriality privileges state centrality in the construction of regional territorial history, disregarding more localized anthropological, historical and cultural discernments of the borderland. Agnew, in this regard, posited the relevant distinction between borders as national spaces and as sites of dwelling which constituted the cornerstone of the normative presuppositions underlying critical geopolitical thinking which seeks to go beyond given borders in the interest of creating a more democratic and humane world.<sup>4</sup>

Additionally, the meaning of borders varies according to the subjects constituting the space. Considerations underlying the engagement of specific collectives with the border are determined by their own position within the state's structuration of its territory. Statist proclivities towards the management of its territories are often founded upon principles of regulations and checks, manifesting in policies of security and surveillance and more tangibly in the form of border fences, check-posts and other security installations. In contrast to this, borderland inhabitants view these spaces as permeable and negotiable, as is evident from the presence of illicit cross-border economies, border crossings prompted by economic considerations or even for the sustenance of kinship ties.

Similarly, there exist other categories which fit in between the two aforementioned perspectives. It is not that they dispute the lines, but they do not necessarily give in to the bordering processes of the state and negotiate with the geopolitical meaning privileged by the state. The transborder economies of trade and tourism are relevant examples of this particular positionality. Even states are not always universally committed towards viewing borders in rigid geopolitical framings. European borders in the era of

the European Union were after all the natural laboratories of border studies that sought to highlight the multiple meanings of borders and their consequences. However, postcolonial states have leaned towards a higher sensitivity towards political borders in their attempts to establish a territorialized identity that is distinctive from a somewhat shared, colonial past. This has also helped establish limits against conflicting claims over regional territory. Similar patterns have been resurgent in developed parts of the world as well, whereby in recent years waves of migration have posed major challenges to their underlying demographic contours, resulting in a resurgence of issues of border regulation in politics (Balibar 1998, 1999; Bauder 2011; Carens 1987; Kearney 1991; Eder 2006). Similar dynamics can be observed with regard to the US-Mexico border. Its existence as a conduit for unregulated flows of both people and commodities which have impacted the local economies and socialities of proximate American states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California has positioned it as a site of inquiry for studying the intertwining of all these aforementioned perspectives (Nevins 2000; Andreas 1998, 1999; Andreas & Biersteker 2003; Jones 2012).

Scholars have countered the prioritization of national security readings of borders through the introduction of anthropological and living accounts of flows, dreams, passions and livelihoods, as a contrapuntal plane of engagement that goes beyond the statist cast iron frames (Das 2003, 2004; Samaddar 1998, 2002; van Schendel 2005; Banerjee 2010). These marginalized metrics and histories of belonging point towards the polysemic and heterogeneous nature of borders as elucidated by the work of Balibar in situating the many affinities and divergences of the national and social connotations underlying these lines of separation. Critical scholarship on borderland process, therefore, positions borderlands not as passive margins but receptacles of social and cultural space constituting a no-man's land between and among national, local and international boundaries (Banerjee 2010, xiv-xvi).

Globalization prompted a shift in scholarship on borders, harping upon their recession and porosity in responding to the growing quantum of tangible and intangible cross-border flows. These shifts coincided succinctly with the rise of poststructural and postmodern perspectives on identities whereby new definitions of the political privileged identities and mobilities, which existed in opposition to the perceived centrality of the state as the sole order-producing institution of life. While scholars have differed on the scope of the impact of globalizing processes on borders and territoriality, there are broadly two perspectives that may be gleaned from such engagements. The first is perhaps most astutely represented by Claude Raffestin, who problematizes the notion of space as an absolute unit in conventional geography. He alternatively posits a conceptualization of space that is deeply embedded in human subjectivity.<sup>5</sup> The translation of abstract notions of belonging into the materiality of territorialization through the projection of human labour qua energy and information therefore becomes relevant towards understanding the

position of the identities of inhabitant, encroacher, alien and resident in transforming, conserving and maintaining this complex latticework of interactions and interdependences that stand altered by globalization (Raffestin 2012, 139).

However, even within such new categorizations of border transcendence, the role of the state in conditioning the same appears as significant. The institutional crumbling of borders and the subsequent compaction of cross-border relationships and growing interdependences across borders prompted a shift in perspective on borders, whereby scholars attempted to look beyond categorizations of separation to that of connections (Paasi 2003, 480). However, it did not result in corresponding shifts in scalar representations of identity and citizenship which remain anchored in notions of state territoriality, national space and national identity and therefore continue to remain exclusive of the impacts of such growing interdependences in both theoretical and popular renderings (Laine 2016, 468). This positions the work of scholars like Paasi and Laine, among others, at a significant juncture of criticality. Instead of expediting a perspectival shift from the state to the local in the referent of understanding itself, it situates borders as "complex, multiscalar, multidimensional" spaces; their adaptability and existence in both "symbolic and material forms" are determined by the interactions of both the state and local actors at these sites (Laine 2016, 468-9).

Scholarship that positions itself within the paradigm of critical geopolitics (Ó Tuathail & Dalby 1998) has drawn upon poststructuralist thinking in order to bring about a perspectival shift in "boundary-producing practices rather than to borders per se" (Paasi 2013).<sup>6</sup> Their work extended the scope of a territorialized conceptualization of the border by engaging with the impacts of its existence on proximate socialities, and how it was itself transformed through such interactions. The precepts of identity and perception assumed primacy with explorations into how borderland communities perceived the state and responded to its measures in compelling them to recognize and accept limitations to their mobilities and livelihoods that did not exist in the past. In equipping us with a framework of analysis that is discerning of specificities of experience and interpretation, critical geopolitics has given us new tools to interrogate borders, boundaries, orders and identities. Scholarship under its banner has grown in an organic manner whereby they are not bounded by considerations of disciplinary limitations. This growing interdisciplinary repository of border studies draws upon the works of anthropologists, geographers, international relations experts, historians and practitioners of humanities. In doing so, it bridges the anthropological, multi-scalar symbolic and cultural meanings of borders (Wilson & Donnan 1998) with its political readings. These explorations were pivotal in bridging these two divergent approaches which proved instrumental in explaining the cultural permeability of borders—the way people living at borders adjusted to the narratives of political differences that political borders create, and the rigidity of some states to resist, if not prevent, the processes that sought to escape



these lines, often through novel, discursive methodologies and sources that were overlooked in statist considerations of hard politics at its borders (Dittmer & Gray 2010).

In responding to the complexification and diffusion of borders at different scales, the need to traverse its conventional territorialist epistemology has become imperative (Brambilla 2015, 16). These shifts are reflected in the incorporation of varied perspectives and alternative points of reference in understanding the processes and relationships that the existence of these spaces entail, contain and also originate. At this juncture, the concept of the borderscape assumes significance, in defining the space in a manner that not only transcends statist territorial epistemologies and processual renderings in understanding borders as sites where alternative comprehensions of identity, citizenship and otherness are effected through processes of localized reconfigurations in response to the state's presence. In this context, the idea of the local, not only at the borders, but at different existences of spatial disaggregation becomes a relevant point of engagement (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr 2007, x).

The local can therefore be understood as an alternative spatial category that exists within a continuum of adaptation, accommodation and contestation with statist, geopolitical control over space, not only at the borders. In the context of this enquiry, it would be helpful to view the 'local' as a spatially contained cultural and social category which encompasses similar roles and performances to that of the state, but whose existence and functioning are attuned to the specific requirements of a particular sociality which are in constant interaction with existent statist frameworks and categorisations of space, identity and permissible actions and mobilities. In introducing the local as a referent for engagement in analysis of borderland perceptions, it positions the spatial and social category as one that is not static, but determined by the subjectivities underlying the varying degrees and natures of quotidian engagement with the space and the various epistemic systems which undergird its construction. In adopting this framework, the local retains its inherent mutability as represented in a multitude of actorial strategies of those seeking to navigate through its consequent economic, social and political circumstances (Brambilla 2015, 26).

### On the Local Sites of Enquiry and their Mutable Realities in the Contemporary Political Frame

In the South Asian context, the significance of borders, in terms of the regulatory and delimiting functions they perform, has been the preserve of their modern, postcolonial variance. Prior to that, borders then were not material realities as they are today. Instead they existed either through the territorialized segregation of communities based upon the socio-cultural mores of its dwellers (Ludden 2003, 50) or as recognition of occupation validated through religious customs and sacrifices. Borders in South Asia therefore emerged as the

adapted remnants of colonisation, reconfigured amongst the newly independent states through varying degrees and forms of interaction ranging from regional conflicts over disputed territories as well as bilateral agreements towards the settlement of outstanding border issues. For the most part, the modern history of the subcontinent's borders has been shaped by the state's response to the crises and opportunities presenting themselves at its limits. The border's functions as gateways may be viewed as either exclusionary or inclusionary depending on the positionality of the subject under consideration. For those residing in the borderlands, as represented in critical explications of the border's function, the border is often viewed as an impediment to the subject's social choices and economic pursuits. The new reality of regulations and impeded mobilities goes on to affect the local imagination as well as the socio-cultural practices and norms which can create a sense of belonging for some and a feeling of alienation for others. A subject's position and identity within the state's framework of belonging also determines the extent of admissible political participation whether locally or through formal channels of participation. As a result, the provision of housing and access to education, healthcare, and judicial protection significantly varies between citizens and immigrants. In the case of India's eastern borders with Bangladesh, these identifications continue to persist across generations and gain added weightage under changing political circumstances that seek to base citizenship upon socially ascribed identifications. For instance, Bangladeshi immigrants who had crossed the border during West Pakistani rule during the mid-1960s and settled in parts of West Bengal and Assam still encounter problems that come with the associative identities of the 'Bangladeshi other' in these Indian states. As a result, they are subjected to an ethos of exclusion that is based on their identification under otherized categories such as the 'Muslims immigrants and encroacher'. The ascription of such exclusionary labels are carried out without any consideration of these individuals' ethnic or religious identities or even the circumstances under which they relocated, or even the duration of their stay (Gillian 2002). Therefore, the border also exists as a space of exclusion based upon the operation of discriminatory cultural tropes and malapropisms surrounding cross-border identities. The identity, which the state seeks to insulate against extraneous influences, therefore comes to be defined singularly as a counterpoise to multiple identities of the *other* which are often reduced to particularistic typecasts, the assigning of which are determined by the planes of contention amongst states sharing a border. This effectively reifies this sense of otherness in the local imagination, on the basis of an essentialized and reductionist representation of what constitutes the *other*.

The resultant territorialisation of state authority, along with the identity of its citizens came to inform the nature of dissonances as well as interactions between states and people separated by borders (Hardwick & Mansfield 2009, 387). These rigid conceptualisations of

the border fail to recognize how the 'local' adapts and reacts to these changing conditions. The disjuncture between the state's conceptualisation of territory and the space as constituted through quotidian interactions of its inhabitants often manifests in various forms; ranging from revisionist assertions for secession and autonomy, to more everyday circumventions in collaboration with other local and cross border actors; as well as state actors at lower levels of disaggregation (Jones 2012, 144). To extend the understanding of the border beyond statist apperceptions require it to be viewed as a dynamic space, textured by interactions between the state and the inhabitants of these spaces. The component of the local, encompassing the relationships and perceptions of its actors therefore becomes a necessary inclusion in analyses of spatiality.

The study bases its understanding of the borderland "local" on an analysis of the mechanisms and processes underlying its constitution. It considers the prevalence of security frameworks in statist borderland discourses which overrides local spatialities and interactions in its approximations in lieu of a regulatory stance towards its management (Banerjee 2001). Therefore, to bridge this gap in situating local history within state borderland historiography, this study will extend its analyses towards understanding the changes in local adaptations towards modern statist categorizations of the borderland in order to situate the entry of the state as a phase in local history, which predates the history of the state or the borders they established. Such an analysis views the "local" not only as the object of state action, but as an ever-changing category constituted of individuals and processes borne out of reiterated practices, adapting to the changing circumstances brought forth by the state's interpolation.

The first aspect that the survey explores is "local" perceptions of what constitutes the national, international and the state. The second aspect that the survey explores is the impact of varied geographies and locational circumstance on producing possible differences or convergences in local perceptions.

The first participant group comprised hinterland residents of the district of Bankura. Situated far away from any border, their ontological horizons have been shaped accordingly by this distance away from the primary referents of this particular inquiry. This area is more or less a geographically enclosed space, with little to no dialogue and exchange with the "outside" or "outsiders". The rationale behind this selection was to account for perceptions of the border in local spatialities that do not necessarily interact with the frontier or any of its associated epistemic systems that define appellations of the self and other, which also delimits the permissibility of select mobilities and life processes. Therefore, it can be assumed that ideas regarding the state, the national and the international held by the inhabitants do not converse with regulatory frameworks of the state operational at its borders, and public engagement has for the most part remained confined to local issues.

The second group consisted of participants from the hilly regions of Naxalbari and Kharibari under the Siliguri subdivision, located within the district of Darjeeling in north Bengal. The proximity of these areas to the states of Nepal and Bhutan is often reflected in similarities in their demographic composition and sociocultural milieu reflected



**Figure 1. District Map of West Bengal State, India, highlighting districts of Darjeeling, Murshidabad, and Bankura.** Source: Antorjal at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 2.5, via Wikimedia Commons, modified (red ellipses added).



in ethnic, cultural and linguistic similarities, manifesting in interactions and exchanges in shared spaces of economic and cultural significance such as border markets and sites of worship. The topography of the district flows between small towns and sparsely inhabited stretches of mountainous grasslands. Located on the Eastern Himalayan region, the district lies in close proximity with neighboring hamlets of Nepal which are often connected through linkages straddling economies of tourism and social capital networks of familial ties traversing state borders.

The third constituency consisted of settlers from borderlands of Charaundaynagar, Charparashpara and Pharajipara, under Jalangi police station of Murshidabad, whose political economy of daily existence interrogates borders and territoriality all the time. This site has been a conduit for illegal migration and trade through villages proximate to its borders with Bangladesh. These attempts to evade economic barriers instituted by the states are further expedited by local demands to bypass the inadequacies of public distribution systems at the states' periphery. The site has been a frequent stage of confrontation between the state and livelihoods and life processes that exist in contradistinction with its ambit of permissible mobilities and legitimized identities.

As is evident from their relative distances away from the border, these areas represent three distinct configurations of localized perceptions and practices that have emerged in consonance with the same. These interactions have experienced fluctuations in response to historical, cultural and political transformations, whereby actors and groups negotiating the border in the pursuit of livelihood practices and the maintenance of kinship ties have had to navigate its subsequent impacts on the larger borderscape. Often, these changes have spawned corresponding and conflicting emplacements and temporalities at the local level, in response to statist framings of these limits (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr 2007, xxx). The processes that such changes have given rise to have allowed for these lines to be both reinforced and traversed, thereby establishing a more contextual and fluid rendering of these limits textured by local interactions and experiences. Similarly it has spawned a process of contextual appellations of the self and other as well.

The dichotomies present between the rigid legalistic frameworks for regulation of the state and the ever-changing demands for mobility and transactions of people on either side of the border, and the manner in which the same have been reconfigured in the context of the changing times is a testament to the adaptability of the borderland in the face of the resilience of state power. Similarly, perceptions of the borderland held by groupings that are situated at a distance from these sites also become relevant in understanding the proliferation of statist configurations of spatiality and identity, which constitutes the grounds for its operationalization beyond the formal implementation processes of the state. Given the position of the border as a space that has held relevance in understandings of the

ideas of the self and the nation, these proliferations dictate the manner in which issues and identities emanating from these spaces are perceived and engaged with. Whether it is in determining who constitutes the other, or what is considered legal, explorations into the same must consider the existence of localized replications and enforcements of these processes that are often not confined by the accountability extendable by the state. The tendency that becomes evident from these contestations is that the universalist pretenses of citizenship that underlie constitutionally mandated projects of governance are often overshadowed by populist, majoritarian construals in political discourses on belonging (Yuval-Davis et al 2019, 163). This always leaves open the possibility of violence, oppression and otherization in localized processes as well as collaborative adaptations that do not account for the intricacies of such formal exclusions.

Everyday bordering practices have integrated within forms of governance that manifest in processes and discourses, both formal and social, aimed at controlling diversity and establishing hierarchies of exclusion and exploitation within populations. The proliferation of such processes and perceptions affects migrants and racialized minorities; not only those who are crossing borders through legitimate channels but also for those residing in these border spaces. (Yuval-Davis et al 2019, 162). The creation of these new discourses has impacted upon prevalent social and communal solidarities in India as well.

These processes may be viewed as a reaction towards the states' exclusive control over immigration and integration, which are the lynchpins of its policies on citizenship. In India, the idea of who is a citizen has witnessed transformations in recent years. The term has come to be defined along lines of a shared cultural telos of the demographic majority, the Hindus, which has been bulwarked in ambiguous categorizations of a national community based on the ideals of a 'Hindu Rashtra' (Hindu State) as enunciated by state political projects. The politico-legal expressions of citizenship have also undergone transformations to encompass its applications to particular cultural and religious communities that are separated by borders (Hämäläinen & Truett 2011, 348), even at the cost of alienating those who have resided within state borders since their establishment. The proposed nationwide implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in tandem with the National Register of Citizens (2019) which seeks to enumerate qualifications for citizenship on the basis of an individual's time of entry into the Indian state with added safeguards and relaxations for those who are Hindus has resulted in the spread of anxiety of uprooting and violence in the West Bengal borderlands whose history has been shaped by different waves of migration since 1947. These changes have been exacerbated by the proliferation of a political ideology of exceptionalism based upon religious identities. This has resulted in localized reversals of inter-dependences that pre-date the border, which originate from a shared history that was fractured upon the establishment of the state border and its epistemic systems

of authoritative regulations and control. The following study was conducted in 2016; however inklings of such changing perceptions and shifts in older patterns of appellations were already noted during the surveys. These changes in the context of the selected borderscapes, subsequent to the ratification of these policies and their impacts upon local perceptions demand a further exploration which the authors seek to conduct subsequent to the normalisation of extenuating circumstances of travel restrictions since 2020.

### Explorations into Local Perceptions of the Borderland

The first question (Table 1) of the study focused on local perceptions of the international border. The majority of the participants across the three districts defined the international border as a line separating two states. As an outcome of Murshidabad's proximity to the international border separating India and Bangladesh, all participants from the site compared the international border to a line separating two states, with one respondent likening the international border to an *aal*, that is a bund or raised pathways enclosing individual agricultural landholdings that are often used as signifiers of the limits of individual possessions over land at the local level. Respondents from Darjeeling evinced similar perceptions of territorial demarcation. However, 65 percent of them described the international border in terms of natural and man-made features which either demarcated the limits of state territoriality such as border pillars, wire-fences or noticeboards stating jurisdictional limits, or acted as natural barriers against local, cross-border mobilities such as rivers or forests. The perceptions of the international border for a significant portion of the respondents from the interiors of the Bankura district were confined to its existence as a line separating two states, commonly alluding in their responses to the international borders separating India and Pakistan or India and China.

While the broader imagination of the international border remained relatively similar, the particularities of localized perceptions as stated above is indicative of the different ways in which the subaltern experiences the frontier and the spatialities it originates. For instance, perceptions of the

border held by respondents from Bankura mirrored their distance from them. Their mentions of the international borders between India and its neighbors, primarily those with which it shares a history of conflict, indicate that in absence of direct access to borders, their perceptions have largely been textured by prevalent political narratives on border conflicts and regional bilateralism accessed through news media. In contrast, the general perceptions of the border drawn from participants from Darjeeling and Murshidabad demonstrate that physical objects located at the borderline become central to their experience of its materiality.

The proliferation of statist, security-centric perspectives on the border were discernible in a majority of responses drawn from the sites of study. The impacts of the territorialization of South Asian identities by its many partitions have left an indelible impact on Indian politics and statecraft. The necessity of regulation and control of movements and identifications have for long been the mainstay of Indian parliamentary politics and correspondingly reflected in the state's securitization of its frontiers. This idea of regulation and control of state frontiers has had a considerable impact upon local interactions with the border and how border residents view the issue.

In the context of this survey, the respondents were asked about their opinions regarding the regulation of international borders shared with neighboring states, and a majority of responses across all three study sites were in support of such a regulation, stating it as a necessity to ensure their protection from 'external threats' (Table 2). However, the percentage of interviewees acknowledging the necessity for border control measures fluctuated from Bankura (53 percent) to Darjeeling (40 percent) and Murshidabad (97 percent). The responses created a recurring participant narrative articulating the need to secure national territories against any form of intrusion or circumvention. A majority of respondents associated socially disruptive or illegal activities with the border space, and sometimes such perceptions were extended in their otherization of those who resided on the other side. These localized perceptions ranged from generalized associations of border spaces with cross-border tensions, illicit economies and by extension considering the external other as terrorists, infiltrators or thieves.

However, underlying the assumptions of national security, unease over adverse impacts of border control was also reflected in the responses of the participants. In fact, every respondent who took part in the study agreed that the state's surveilling and regulatory mechanisms were anathema to borderland residents and that the human costs of border control have disproportionately affected their livelihoods and life processes. Around 37 percent of the total respondents from Bankura and 60

Table 1. "What does the international boundary represent?"

Responses Districts	Border between states	Line separating two states	Boundary as denoted by objects	No idea	Total
Bankura	18 (60%)	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	5 (17%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	0	12 (32%)	24 (65%)	1 (3%)	37 (100)
Murshidabad	0	70 (100%)	0	0	70 (100)
Total	18	85	28	6	137



percent from Darjeeling were of the opinion that stringent border controls have negatively impacted cross-border interactions, communications as well as economic exchanges that its residents have been reliant on. For instance, respondents from Darjeeling stated that the state's control over borders have impacted and to an extent limited familial networks and cultural bonds between communities that came to be separated and bounded by the modern state. This has similarly impacted networks of dependence, both social and economic that have historically undergirded borderland relationships and their quotidian interactions.

The respondents from the study site in Murshidabad were more vociferous about the human costs of border control and recounted personal experiences and local accounts of harassment, punishment and even loss of life often justified as necessary by assigned authorities in preserving the sanctity of state limits. These perceptions are indicative of their own personal and shared anxieties in having to regularly encounter situations whereby their identities and intentions are often scrutinized by the state as a consequence of the liminality of their socio-spatial existence. Respondents from this site of study recognized the need for a heightened state presence at the border given its significance as one of the primary referents of national security. But they considered the burden of repeated validation of identity equally problematic. Responses across all districts were, however, restricted with regard to explorations of possible reformations and relaxations in border control that could balance statist considerations of security with individual desires for privacy. In the few responses that explored possible changes, the articulation of grievances appears to be framed along lines of localized practicalities that prompted engagement with issues or conflicts of the local borderland based on their quotidian demands of existence, which often came across as obvious adaptations that hardly warrant any conscious articulation.

Interactions and opportunities assume centrality in understandings of borderland dynamics. The state's borders are often the facilitator and equal parts disruptor of institutions and practices that shape interactions between spaces on either side. The study explored notions and practices of dependence existent at the study sites with regard to their perceptions regarding borders and their interactions with the other side (Table 3). The participants were asked whether their neighboring countries impacted their daily lives in any way. Similar to the pattern of the previous response, the survey recorded a greater number of respondents who answered in the affirmative as one

Table 2. "Is regulation of the international border important?"

Responses	Essential	Necessary but should not be stringent	No Idea	Total
Districts				
Bankura	16 (53%)	11 (37%)	3 (10%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	15 (40%)	22 (60%)	0	37 (100)
Murshidabad	68 (97%)	2 (3%)	0	70 (100)
Total	99	35	3	137

Table 3. "Do neighboring countries impact upon quotidian life cycles?"

Responses	Plays an important role	Does not play any role	Not Sure/ Maybe	No idea	Total
Districts					
Bankura	8 (27%)	17 (57%)	4 (13%)	1 (3%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	20 (54%)	17 (46%)	0	0	37 (100)
Murshidabad	53 (76%)	17 (24%)	0	0	70 (100)
Total	81	34	21	1	137

moves closer to the borders. The percentage of positive responses increased from 27 percent in Bankura to over 54 percent in Darjeeling, reaching the highest (76 percent) in Murshidabad.

It was noteworthy that respondents from all three districts who answered in the affirmative articulated interactions that were confined mostly to the economic role of the neighboring state and international markets, which locally manifests in the form of trade and import of inexpensive foreign goods. However, the variations of such affirmations were revealing of the differential impacts of proximity on respondents' perceptions of the border and its associated processes. Respondents from Bankura remained vague in their articulations of the perceivable economic impacts of the neighboring state. However, responses registered from Darjeeling and Murshidabad were revealing of a more layered apperception of the same. For instance, respondents from Darjeeling referred to the economic impacts of their proximity to the border, presenting itself in the form of local border markets and also their shared cultural and linguistic affinities with Nepal. Similarly, respondents from Murshidabad identified Bangladeshi markets as cheap sources of raw materials and agricultural labour accessible through land entry points lining the border between the two countries. The responses gathered from Darjeeling and Murshidabad on the influence of neighboring states on their immediate local socialities and economies interestingly stated that its derivative benefits were an outcome of a secure border and not its absence.

As stated earlier, the border both permits and restricts certain mobilities and interactions. Understanding cross-border dependencies in the light of their subversion of the state's regulatory and qualificatory frameworks also runs the risk of obscuring an analysis of their adaptations to these changes as well. The study explored the localized perceptions of the economic benefits of a borderless existence (Table 4). The survey questioned whether the border had been a facilitator or an inhibitor to local economic processes and access to cross-border economic prospects. The responses on this particular aspect of the study revealed that some respondents across the three districts viewed the international border as a necessary buffer against the uncertainties of the market, depending on their relation to the border. Respondents from both Bankura and Darjeeling (50 percent and 54 percent respectively) were in support of a secure and sanitized border as a mitigating measure against the unregulated movement of illegal commodities, inequality of trade, human trafficking and border violence that bear a direct impact upon the mobilities and interactions their livelihoods depend upon. A majority of the respondents from Murshidabad (60 percent) stated that the absence or presence of international border would have no impact on their income or livelihood in any way whatsoever. The apperceptions of the respondents in regard to this part of the survey were measured largely upon pecuniary considerations and therefore these figures cannot be extended to an argument for the presence of a moral economy of cross-border dependences.

Nevertheless, two important narratives emerged from the survey. First, the prospects of a borderless economy were

not necessarily welcome as respondents were unable to calculate gains or losses in concrete terms. Similarly, in Murshidabad, where a majority of the respondents claimed they would be unaffected by the presence or absence of a border, they found it difficult to state the configurations of a balance that would be equitable to prospects of both economic and border security. The nature of responses brings under scrutiny the uniformity of the impacts of globalization on the recession of borders. These local narratives are revealing of the state's continuing regulatory presence as the sole organizer of economic and social relations. Its recession has, therefore, remained obscured from these spaces, as the absence of the state remains an unthinkable condition, whether in terms of the cognizable implications of the same on local security or in terms of an alternative schema of socioeconomic organization at the local level.

Opinions on the neighboring country varied across the different study sites (Table 5). The survey's explorations into local opinions of people from their neighboring countries show that 37 percent of the respondents from Bankura and 54 percent from Darjeeling specified that they perceived people from the neighboring state as friendly if they were culturally congruent whether through shared beliefs or languages. In contrast, all the interviewees from Murshidabad articulated their differentiation along state identifications of legal and illegal immigrants in the context of this question. They stated that while legal immigrants were socially acceptable, illegal immigrants if encountered were to be shunned for their likely involvement in anti-social activities

Table 4. "Does the international border impact upon economic pursuits?"

Responses	Earn Profit	Incur Loss	Both Profit and Loss	Would not affect	Don't know	Total
Districts						
Bankura	6 (20%)	15 (50%)	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	0	20 (54%)	17 (46%)	0	0	37 (100)
Murshidabad	28 (40%)	0	0	42 (60%)	0	70 (100)
Total	34	35	20	46	2	137

Table 5. "How is the identity of the cross-border inhabitant perceived?"

Responses	Friendly	Non-Friendly	Not Sure	No Idea	Total
Districts					
Bankura	11 (37%)	2 (6%)	6 (20%)	11 (37%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	20 (54%)	17 (46%)	0	0	37 (100)
Murshidabad	0	0	70 (100)	0	70 (100)
Total	101	19	6	11	137

The perception of the outsider as a threat was found to be expressed commonly in responses from all the three districts surveyed (similar to the perception encountered in the first question). Although cultural assimilation and legal identity were acknowledged as prerequisites for the extension of local acceptance, their perceptions of immigrants in general remained underlined by notions of distrust and suspicion. In Bankura and Darjeeling, a margin of 5 percent and 10 percent respectively was recorded in responses varying between conditional acceptance and absolute rejection of the presence of immigrants in their immediate locale. And as stated above, respondents from Murshidabad consistently rejected illegal immigrants and considered them a threat to national security.

Elaborating on the response patterns elicited by the survey, it may be argued that these local



perspectives in some aspects confirm the impact of international boundaries in defining identities. However, the magnitude of such impacts on the perceptions of the border is dependent upon proximity to the border itself. As the findings of this study have shown, in areas categorized as 'borderlands', the international boundary determines upon the validity of identities central to residence and livelihood practices of its local inhabitants. However, in spaces situated at a distance away from the border these identifications serve as the foundations of socio-cultural differentiations between residents and outsiders, citizens and encroachers, etc. Borders, therefore, invariably impact notions of citizenship.

The opinions the survey gathered can be summed up into a list of attributes of citizenship as expressed by interviewees. While respondents from Bankura specified permanent residence and the ability to vote as characteristic features of citizenship, those from Darjeeling and Murshidabad districts considered a sense of patriotism, alongside the possession of necessary documentation, citizenship by birth, long-term residence and participation in law and administration as important qualifiers for identity as a citizen of the country. Quite different from the traditional definition that sees citizenship as a congregation of status and role in society, a legal and formal understanding of citizenship seems to have taken root among the respondents across three districts as most participants described citizenship in terms of legal identity validated by the state's provision of certain documents. And within this broader category of responses the emphasis of local narratives on possession of legal documents came across as a fundamental requirement. Since possession of voter identity cards or ration cards formed the standard identification mark of citizenship in most responses, it was not difficult to ascertain the significance of the possession of these documents for the local populations in securing accesses to rights and privileges accruing to citizenship.

On whether the status of citizenship required explicit differentiation from the status of alien, a striking uniformity of opinion was noted across three districts (Table 6). A substantial proportion of the respondents rather than making any differentiation between the terms "citizenship" and "citizen" went on to define the word

**Table 6. "How significant is citizenship?"**

Responses Districts	Very Important	Not Important	No Idea	Total
Bankura	21 (70%)	5 (17%)	4 (13%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	37 (100%)	0	0	37 (100)
Murshidabad	70 (100%)	0	0	70 (100)
Total	128	5	4	137

"alien" in terms of the absence of their state's recognition. In Murshidabad, where the highest number of responses was recorded, the participants frequently stated that they considered people from India as citizens while people from other countries were aliens. Some even clarified that anyone who was located outside national borders ought to be considered an alien. However, variations also need to be noted. It was surprising to see that in Bankura where many had earlier said that they considered permanent residence to be the prime marker of citizenship, a small percentage reflected these aforementioned trends in responses from Murshidabad. Similarly, in Darjeeling, the participants stated that it was difficult to distinguish between citizens and aliens because of the relatively frequent cross-border travel to neighboring countries of Nepal and Bhutan as well as their cultural and linguistic similarities which often obscure such territorialized differentiations of identity.

The larger picture that came to fore was that for these respondents living on the edges of society or community, differentiation from the alien was not merely an intuitive differentiation but existed as a practical tool of legitimation of their demands on the state. References to permanent residence or preferential treatment of citizens in allocation of privileges and benefits allude to the fact that their access to rights and protection from the state is highly conditional upon their recognition as full members of society and even that recognition has to be secured through constant negotiations with the state as well as one's immediate locale. As mentioned in the preceding section, the relative ease of cross-border travel in areas within the district of Darjeeling, owing to vast stretches of high altitude, forested and ungarded sectors of its borders with Nepal and Bhutan complicated the demarcation between citizen and alien, indicating that they tend to take international boundary and place of residence as central to determination of identity as citizen or alien.

The study in its attempts to map the significance of citizenship in determining the outcome of their lives asked its participants about its impacts on their lived experiences and interactions with state. A majority of the respondents from Bankura (70 percent) and all respondents from Darjeeling (100 percent) and Murshidabad (100 percent) claimed citizenship to be a significant facet of their lives, primarily alluding to the accesses to institutions, benefits and rights it allows them to secure from the state. The interviewees from Murshidabad and Darjeeling added that citizenship was of utmost importance because of the identification documents required during cross-border travel to Nepal and Bangladesh respectively whether as a part of their livelihood practices or for the maintenance of kinship ties across the border. Also, for respondents from Murshidabad, proof of citizenship constituted a significant aspect of their lives whereby they were insulated from the state's regulatory mechanisms as well as local processes of othering.

For the interviewees from Bankura and Murshidabad district, the legal identity of citizenship was important for securing state welfare as a majority of the respondents were dependent upon state rations and other benefits (most of them were dependent on state facilities). Additionally, the right to vote was often employed as a bargaining chip in interactions with elected representatives of the state in securing employment, monetary rewards and other fringe benefits. Citizens who were dependent on regular border crossings as a part of their livelihoods stated the significance of having state identification in legalizing their identity while traversing borders, thereby limiting the possibilities of any form of injury or persecution.

The final inquiries of the study were centered on people's perceptions of the state, that is, how the state is viewed in popular renderings drawn forth through experiences of their interactions with the same in both direct and indirect manner (Table 7). In the study's preceding inquiries the respondents had indirectly referred to the state as a provider of security, protection, welfare benefits and other services. These inquiries also identified points of friction, especially in activities involving permissible cross-border travel, cross-border economic exchanges or even encounters with bureaucratic hurdles in the procurement of official documents necessary for securing basic securities and welfare from the state.

Therefore, when respondents were asked their opinion in this regard, two contrasting perspectives emerged. Across the districts of Bankura (67 percent) and Darjeeling (43 percent) the state was viewed as a corrupt establishment

**Table 7. "How do you view the state?"**

Responses Districts	Positive	Negative	No Idea	Total
Bankura	6 (20%)	20 (67%)	4 (13%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	16 (43%)	16 (43%)	5 (14%)	37 (100)
Murshidabad	63 (90%)	7 (10%)	0	70 (100)
Total	85	43	9	137

**Table 8. "What is the state's role in the construction of identity?"**

Responses Districts	Important role	No role	No Idea	Total
Bankura	13 (43%)	7 (23%)	10 (34%)	30 (100)
Darjeeling	22 (59%)	14 (38%)	1 (3%)	37 (100)
Murshidabad	60 (86%)	10 (14%)	0	70 (100)
Total	95	31	11	137

and as an instrument of coercion characterized by a structural apathy towards the economically marginalized in their functioning. In addition, only 10 percent of the total respondents from Murshidabad mentioned political corruption as one of the defining characteristics of the state. The remaining majority viewed the state in a positive light, with 90 percent of the total respondents claiming that they viewed the state as a benevolent institution. Only 43 percent and 20 percent of the total respondents from Darjeeling and Bankura respectively viewed the state as a 'useful' institution.

This deep divide in perception of the state can be attributed to the impacts of geographical variation and subsequently divergent experiences in interactions with the state, factors which have figured in previous responses as well. While in interiors of Bankura, local grievances were directed at the state's unequal distribution schemes and the high-handedness of government officials, grievances of local respondents from Darjeeling appeared to be centered on the prevalence of intrusive border patrolling methods which have disrupted familial ties as well as informal cross-border economies that a significant proportion of the local populace depends upon. At the same time, respondents from the same district who viewed the state as a useful establishment referred to a more utilitarian understanding of the state in its performance of certain integral security, economic and social functions. On the other hand, given that respondents from Murshidabad reside in a space which has been frequently reported as a conduit for illegal entry into the state, it must be considered that their expressed opinions are to an extent impressed upon by an underlying fear of being reported to the local administration.

The final point of inquiry of the study was to engage with the role of the state in the construction of self-identity (Table 8). A majority of respondents from Murshidabad (86 percent) claimed that the state played an important role in shaping their identities. On the contrary, only 59 percent of the respondents from Darjeeling and 43 percent from Bankura acknowledged the state's role in constructing their identities.

These contrasting views across three districts on the state's perceived role in the construction of the identity of its inhabitants was interesting to note, especially in the context of the previously explored local articulations of what constituted citizenship. In the borderland areas of Murshidabad, identity documents issued by the state were necessary for availing of legal and administrative facilities and protection against local persecution. Whereas for respondents from Darjeeling, the denial of certain services for many employed in foreign countries like Nepal strengthened previously held perceptions of their own identities in line with the state's ascription of citizenship, which was a shift from localized identifications and appellations



based on a shared cultural or linguistic identity. In Bankura, a majority of the respondents identified the provision of government services and jobs as the most common way in which the state shaped their identity as citizens.

The emphasis that local articulations of belonging are based on legal categorizations of state citizenship was discernible in the responses gathered across the three districts. Respondents often stated that accesses to government welfare and to legal, administrative and financial institutions were benefits reserved only for citizens. In their responses, respondents viewed access to the same, which often falters at the borders, as a decisive factor between those who belong and those who do not.

These local perceptions of the border are borne out of quotidian necessities of its inhabitants to navigate through the changing conditions of life, brought forth by the state's implementation of new policies and categorizations towards the management of such liminal zones. The lives of its inhabitants and their perceptions of the spatial limits of their mobilities, interactions and relationships across the border are continually reconfigured in the state's attempts in ironing out the historicity of their interactions and inter-dependences with communities across the frontier under the neat re-conceptualisations of national territory.

## Conclusion

As is evident from the results of this study, this disjuncture between the state's conceptualisation of territory and the space as constituted through quotidian interactions of its inhabitants often manifests in various forms. It is contingent upon their geographical location as well as how their material circumstances condition their understanding and interactions with both local and state categories of belonging. Therefore, there arises a necessity to view the relationality between statist conceptualizations and localized framings of border spatiality and identities as one that undergoes frequent reconfigurations depending on the location of the respondents. The balance between these two dissonant frameworks is one that is continually renegotiated through interactions between the state and the inhabitants of these spaces. The interactions of these two dissonant framings of spaces are not always defined by the power differential that rests in advantage with the state, but also in the local's ability to negotiate these modulations to the circumstances and necessities underlying its existence.

The study shows how ordinary citizens constitute their own imaginations of the social categories that make their lives intelligible. One crucial objective was to understand how individuals and communities proximate to the border engage with these identifications; and how those distant from it form their perceptions of these existences. In fact, the study found neither a wholesale questioning of the realist ontology nor an intrinsic rejection of national

security in local narratives drawn from the survey. However, unlike the state's rigid formulations of the doxa and coda of national security, people were often circumstantially compelled to attend to their own compulsions and anxieties. If there is enough evidence of the need to live orderly lives, there is also the acknowledgement of risk, since the perspective of the state and the people would not necessarily coincide.

Even those who live on borders both accept and transgress the line. The border has become a part of their sociality and an unmistakable element of their collective identity. Is there any principled position to define identity and relate to others across borders? Again, there is no abiding evidence to substantiate an argument with any compulsive move to define identity in relations to the other across the border and no specific conclusion can be drawn in this regard. The "other" is not a fixed category. It varies across space and time. With some, ties of ethnicity or kinship take precedence, whereas for others the exigencies of economic competition underwrite considerations for interactions or otherization. The 'other' can be as much a political construct as social and popular perceptions emanating from the respondents in West Bengal betray no principled consistency in their understanding. In such a complex situation, should a pattern guide us in our efforts to map attitudes on the meanings of the international and the national? We are making the argument that for this present study at least, a deductive theorization is unhelpful.

The 'local', which is constituted of interactive and interpretative frameworks that affect the actions and choices of its constituent actors, is often overlooked as a key element in the states' rendering of the border. The state tends to view the space and all policies towards it through considerations reducible to certain qualifiers contributing to the establishment and determining the preservation of its own authority. In its engagements with the borderland local, the state dissociates local narratives and intentionality of the actors shaping the borderland narrative. The histories of India's Western and Eastern borderscapes have been one mired in narratives of violence and displacements, often interpreted as the natural outcome of the territorial demarcation of cultural borders that the partitions of 1947 and 1971 brought about. The exercise of unqualified authority with regard to the maintenance and regulation of the border and its associated issues or conflicts have been widely accepted as practical corollaries of the state. Such a perspective neglects the existence of the 'local' as an active category in itself, organized out of the experiences and perceptions of its constitutive actors. This obfuscation of local perception in mainstream discourses related to borders and borderlands and possible steps towards initiating a discussion about the same independent of statist considerations are two issues that the study has to address. This study offers limited knowledge about local perspective due to geographical and language constraints. However, two concluding observations can be made with regard to the questions raised at the outset of the study.

First, there is no straight answer as to whether the 'local' holds an alternative spatial imagination as claimed by critical IR scholars. The study did not provide any concrete evidence of valourization of a transborder community or any desire for borderless existence. Instead, there were many interviewees who spoke of the usefulness of the border to their livelihoods, made a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants and demanded preferential treatment over non-citizens.

Similarly, there also exists a considerable disjuncture between the nationalist conceptualization of borders, territory and security and its more localized framings, which range from an elementary understanding of borders to resenting stringent border controls or enlisting cross-border terrorism, illegal immigration, theft and trafficking as foremost security concerns. Also, the local itself is not a homogenous category and their perceptions are molded by geographical realities and professional interests. For instance, while respondents from Darjeeling and Murshidabad (both border regions) differed on the stringency of the border controls largely due to its differential impact on their livelihood practices, both agreed on the acute importance of citizenship and state in their daily lives as opposed to respondents from Bankura. It was also interesting to note that respondents from interiors of Bankura were more articulate with their views of legal and illegal immigrants than respondents from Murshidabad who encounter the border on a daily basis and accord a high importance to their legal identity.

Therefore, it can be argued that unlike national construals, narratives at the local level derived from the lived experiences of its inhabitants are more representative of ground realities. These narratives are a product of local patterns of interactions and exchanges within a conflict environment. Contrasting national construals which are primarily constructed in order to justify policies and validate state intervention, local narratives underlying prevalent issues are neither static nor uniform and keep developing over different time periods. Following on from above, it also needs to be noted that the local is an active and diverse category organized out of the experiences, interactions and perceptions of its constitutive actors and any discussion about local perspectives should acknowledge and attend to the diversity underlying the category.

On the second question of whether locals are routinely socialized into the ideas imposed by policy elites, the study indicated towards an adaptive capacity of the local to state policies and practices. Coercive state policies, intrusive surveillance mechanisms, repeated questioning of identity, combined with deprivation and unequal distribution of rights and privileges, have reinforced the pre-existing sense of other created by sociocultural, economic differences and geographical conditions. The "local" across the three districts pointed out the adverse impact of the above factors on their social and economic life. However, no one sought radical reorganization of the state and on the

contrary appeared to adapt to the state-imposed realities by embracing their identity as citizens. Their assertion of legal identity as Indian citizens appeared to be an effective tool to both negotiate and/or evade conditions of dispossession and marginalization. And although the politics of citizenship was not registered in their understanding, differentiating themselves from "aliens" on the basis of residence enabled them to legitimize their claims on the state's valid members of the community.

These findings are representative of the adaptability of the borderland. However, it extends this understanding to not only include conventional framings of the same in terms of subversion of state regulations and physical boundaries but also in terms of acceptance of the state in certain contexts as a necessity even when it stands in negation to their historical and cultural moorings that are beyond the purview of the control of state regulation. The liminality of these zones is, therefore, harnessed by both the state and local borderland actors in their attempts to achieve often antithetical objectives. However, their interactions and perceptions of the other remain rooted within categorizations and modes of action and interaction, informed by their own specific positionality vis-à-vis the border. In most instances, as elucidated in the study above, the state's efforts continue to be motivated by inductive rationalizations of action and intervention, often justified on grounds of development and security. Similarly, the local inhabitants continue to find new ways to navigate through these new limitations or conditions which are enacted by the state on their lives. Often, these framings intersect, leading to conflict or stricter containment, whereas most of the time, they continue to operate on parallel tracks, continually reconfiguring their interactions and perceptions in response to the impositions and changes in the state's qualificatory schematic as a means to sustain this delicately balanced and proximate separation.

## Additional Information

This article is based on a study titled 'Subalternity', 'Nation' and the 'International': Ethnographic Evidence from West Bengal as part of an ICSSR Project titled "Reworking the Knowledge Structures in IR: Some Indian Contributions". We are thankful to the ICSSR for the financial support and to the chief investigator of the Project, Prof. Navnita Behera, for her support.

## Notes:

1. We consider the local not only as a spatially defined demographic category, but also as a set of processes and perceptions constituting a miscible category straddling the social, economic and political paradigms of exchanges and interactions, both within the group and beyond it with other entities, more notably in the context of this study, the state and the border.



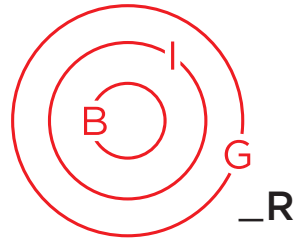
2. The respondents were all inhabitants of the localities surveyed and belonged to mostly lower middle to lower income groups. The educational qualifications of the respondents were not taken as a requirement guiding selection for interview, but income was selected as the prime indicator. The survey elicited a sex ratio of sixty males for every forty female respondents interviewed across the three chosen districts. Male respondents were mostly agriculturalists, small traders, mill workers; whereas the women were primarily engaged in the upkeep of the household. All interviews were in either Bengali or Hindi in the districts of Murshidabad and Bankura. In Darjeeling, Nepali and Hindi were the languages of communication. All interviewers were locals and the interpretation of the transcriptions of narratives was conducted in consultation with their understanding of the implications of localized usages. There were interactions whereby the participants refused to consent to the survey due to apprehensions surrounding the recording of their opinions despite the pledged confidentiality of the exercise. Despite such hesitations participants engaged in conversation which flowed unimpeded and constitutes a supplementary source of information for this study.
3. Newman defines borders as "the process of bounding, drawing lines around spaces and groups, is a dynamic phenomenon, of which the boundary line is, more often than not, simply the tangible and visible feature which represents the course and intensity of the bounding process at any particular point in time and space. A deeper understanding of the bounding process requires an integration of the different types and scales of boundaries into a hierarchical system in which the relative impact of these lines on the people, groups and nations can be conceptualized as a single process" (Newman 2003: 134).
4. A similar view comes from Nimmi Kurian. In her words, "A geopolitics of knowledge has closely accompanied the geopolitics of borders, often mimicking reasons of the state. For from offering alternative imaginaries, mainstream IR has largely tended to faithfully mirror the 'cartographic anxiety' of the state. The mimetic nature of formal research has meant that many of these questions have been studied in fractured frames, with scholarship often taking the cue from statist frames. It has been disinterested in the everyday struggles and contestations of the borderlanders, preferring instead the esoteric diversions of systemic battles that structuralism wages. A politicomilitary reading of border landscapes is conspicuous by what it leaves out of its research remit; that there is alongside an anthropology, a history and a sociology of borders to negotiate" (Nimmi Kurian 2014, 146).
5. Raffestin says that the construction of territory is the outcome of territoriality. He defines territoriality as "the ensemble of relations that a society maintains with exteriority and alterity for the satisfaction of its needs, towards the end of attaining the greatest possible autonomy compatible with resources of the system" (Raffestin 2012, 121).
6. Critical geopolitics and border studies have spawned an astonishingly large literature. The works of Agnew, David Newman, Dalby, Toal, Spark, Sassen, Rumford, Paasi and Chaturvedi, among several others, stand out. For further readings, refer to Secor et al (2015); Agnew et al (2007); Sharpe et al (2013).

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## ARTICLE

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# Unsustainable Borders: Globalization in a Climate-Disrupted World

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Climate change and the responses to it reveal starkly different assumptions about borders, security and the ethical communities for whom politicians and activists speak. Starting with the contrasting perspectives of international activist Greta Thunberg and United States President Donald Trump on climate change this essay highlights the diverse political assumptions implicit in debates about contemporary globalization. Rapidly rising greenhouse gas emissions and increasingly severe climate change impacts and accelerating extinctions are the new context for scholarly work in the Anthropocene. Incorporating insights from earth system sciences and the emerging perspectives of planetary politics suggests a novel contextualization for contemporary social science which now needs to take non-stationarity and mobility as the appropriate context for investigating contemporary transformations. The challenge for social scientists and borders scholars is to think through how to link politics, ethics and bordering practices in ways that facilitate sustainability, while taking seriously the urgency of dealing with the rapidly changing material context that globalization has wrought.

*People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!*

—Greta Thunberg, address to the United Nations, September 23, 2019

*The future does not belong to globalists, the future belongs to patriots.*

—Donald Trump, address to the United Nations, September 24, 2019

## Borders, Boundaries and Planetary Politics

The contrast between the passionate plea for serious action on climate change and extinction by Swedish and international activist Greta Thunberg and United States President Donald Trump's insistence that the world is a matter of discrete states is stark. The implicit geographies are so very different; the boundaries that matter to Thunberg are those of the earth system; those of Trump are traditional invocations of separate states, of territorial borders and the identities that they supposedly contain. Their respective contextualizations implicitly demand very different modes of conduct; one a matter of acting

quickly to head off global scale disruptions, the other to insist that nothing has changed and that traditional stories of nations and rivalries are the appropriate framing for statecraft.

Time matters greatly here and is related to implicit theories of change; Thunberg had been reading the earth system science, and the 2018 IPCC report on limiting global warming to less than 1.5 degrees; clearly Donald Trump had not. Thunberg understands the urgency of acting to prevent rapid destabilizing climate change,

apparently Trump supporters do not; their preoccupations with national rivalries implicitly assume relatively stable environmental conditions into the future, or at best minor inconveniences as climatic zones slowly move, hence not a matter for policy priority or serious engagement.

This politics mirrors the division of labour in the contemporary academy where so much of social science simply assumes a relatively stable climate and an abundant supply of energy to power contemporary economies; modernity requires as a premise a quiescent earth (Clark & Szerszynski 2021). Much of the economic analysis of probable future climate change likewise assumes relatively simple and gradual geographical relocation of climate zones (Keen 2020), not the destabilization of the climate system and the potential for rapid shifts and major discontinuities that earth system science indicates are likely in the short-term future (Steffen et al 2018), if greenhouse gas levels and other environmental disruptions continue to increase as they have done over the last few decades.

Crucially, much of the discussion in the social sciences concerning climate, growth, progress and related matters implicitly assumes that the future will be more or less a continuation of the recent past; "continuationism" is its dominant mode of thought (Albert 2020). But the new formulations of planetary politics and the discussion of the Anthropocene make it clear that this is a very dubious assumption. Much of the discussion of globalization has been about social and political integrations and differentiations, about novel topologies as the links between places and products generate ever more complicated supply chains. What has not been integrated into the discussion frequently, even in the field of international relations (Burke et al 2016, Simangan 2020), is the simple but profound fact that all these processes of globalization, the extraction of resources, the building of trading systems and the extension of mass consumption, involve dramatic material transformations of the planet. These transformations are destabilizing the climate system and introducing increasingly severe perturbations in how numerous ecological systems function, while dramatically enhancing the risks to these new global economic activities and the humans dependent on them for subsistence (Simpson et al 2021). This new contextualization reveals numerous contradictions in terms of how borders and boundaries now function and, highlighted by the urgency of dealing with both climate change and the accelerating extinction crisis, requires a reconsideration of borders and bordering practices in light of the novel material circumstances that globalization has made (Dalby 2020). This essay does just that.

The recent re-articulation of national territories and the related presupposition of the inevitability of state rivalries in a competitive arena are in many ways a "return of geopolitics" and a rejection of the earlier promises of globalization (Bergeson & Suter 2018). But, that said, the United Nations action summit on climate in September 2019 where Greta Thunberg vehemently admonished national

leaders for their failures to act in the face of accelerating ecological disruption, focused once again on promised contributions by particular states to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As in the Paris Agreement of 2015 (Falkner 2016), the role of sovereign territorial states is reasserted as the mode of governance to tackle an issue that plainly has little to do with national borders. This is also consistent with the standard practice of considering adaptation to climate change as a matter of mostly national adaptation rather than global initiatives (Benzie & Persson 2019).

The contradictions between global change and national jurisdictions, a long-term theme in environmental politics, keep piling up, and now earth system science has made it clear that the global economy is endangering a number of key aspects of the earth system, and unless course changes are initiated soon, potentially disastrous disruptions will result (Rockstrom and Gaffney 2021). As Greta Thunberg (2019) and her friends in the Extinction Rebellion (2019) movement recognize all too clearly, time has run out for dealing with climate change and the ecological havoc that is being unleashed by fossil fuel combustion. While President Trump reasserted the importance of territorial borders, both in his rhetorical excesses and in practical matters by imposing tariffs on numerous international trading relationships, Thunberg and friends understand that what is much more important is that the "planetary boundaries" that approximately demarcate a safe operating space for a complex human civilization, are being breached or soon will be by current economic patterns (Steffen et al 2018).

Invoking national sovereignty and attempting to reassert control by using border crossings as a prominent mode of rule allowed Donald Trump to deny any responsibility for the fate of Swedish teenagers; and to simultaneously ignore the insistence, by President Xi Jinping of China and numerous other leaders, that the states that have historically done most to cause climate change should be those who lead in dealing with the problem. With the accession of the Biden administration in 2021 American policy has shifted, and the urgency of dealing with climate change has been accepted as at least the rhetorical premise for re-engaging with international efforts to deal with climate. Domestically this framing was used in the US in 2021 to push some innovations forward, but the questions of how to do this continue to run into jurisdictional boundaries many of which are premised on assumptions of a stable earth and fixed geographies.

Thinking through these issues, invoking globalization, ecology and other modes of framing in an attempt to get some purchase for governance on the issue, in contrast to the persistence of territorial modes of jurisdiction, emphasizes the incommensurability between topographical modes of reasoning in terms of jurisdiction, and topological modes of activity where long-distance connections and indirect consequences are what matter. All of which is now dramatically heightened by the need to act quickly on greenhouse gas emission reductions. The

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numerous online [Gloabaia.org](https://www.gloabaia.org) images of the Anthropocene are about connections between distant places, not about matters of territorial delimitation. They reiterate the much earlier renditions of earth as a blue marble without territorial divisions, the emblematic images from the NASA astronauts' photographic activities half a century ago.

While all this is a very old argument in terms of environment—of the earth as one but the world as many—and of ecological phenomena being mostly oblivious to national borders (Christoff and Eckersley 2013), the urgency of both the extinction crisis and accelerating climate change make these issues especially pressing (Pattberg & Zelli 2016). In Merje Kuus' (2020, 1189) apt phrasing: "The guiding question in political geography is not as much about what boundaries are or ought to be but how particular imaginaries and practices of bounding shape political practice in a concrete everyday way". These bounding practices shape contemporary framings of global politics, suggesting that, in the novel contextualization of the Anthropocene, there are three overarching representations, those of an "endangered world", an "entangled world" and an "extractivist world" (Lovbrand et al 2020). Roughly speaking Greta Thunberg is concerned about the first two and horrified by the third, whereas Donald Trump ignores the first two and celebrates the third.

The contrast between Trump's and Thunberg's political claims are very much about different geographical framings and about the role of boundaries, and which ones matter most and to whom. Crucially the two figures also have very different implicit assumptions about time. For Trump what matters is the nation and those defined by citizenship in a particular place through time. For Thunberg this is no basis of any ethical claim on politics; the people that matter in her formulation are her generation and those yet unborn, for whom a very different set of boundaries, those of a functional earth system, are what matter. Time is of the essence in dealing with climate because greenhouse gases are rapidly accumulating in the atmosphere. For Trump time in this sense is irrelevant, the stage for international rivalries is pretty much stable, and all that matters is how effectively the game is played. For Thunberg what is most worrisome is whether there is going to be a recognizable stage at all by mid-century if fossil fuel use is not rapidly constrained. It is why she insists politicians pay attention to the scientists; globalization scholars, this essay contends, need to do likewise for the same reason.

To elaborate on the implications of the contrasting invocations of bounding practices in these political discourses the rest of this essay first turns to a discussion of boundaries and borders, emphasizing that there are numerous implicit spatial assumptions in many of the discussions of sustainability, and that globalization now requires an explicit engagement with the importance of long-distance and sometimes indirect tele-connections in the rapidly changing earth system. Because of this

"fortress conservation" models and territorial strategies for dealing with ecology are often counterproductive (Duffy 2014), and this is increasingly important in a world facing accelerating ecological disruption. The subsequent section then focuses on issues of change and mobility and the key point about the novel conditions of non-stationarity, where environmental change means that the past is no longer an accurate indication of the range of likely future conditions. Thinking in these terms requires recognising that in some crucial senses both borders and people are mobile (Konrad 2015). Thus boundaries have to be thought of as mobile and flexible, not linear and fixed. All this requires efforts on the part of border scholars to think about large scale ecological change as part of how boundaries are enmeshed in larger transformations, as discussed by way of conclusion below in terms of Eckersley's (2017) formulation of geopolitican democracy. This is but one attempt to engage with the crucial political implications of understanding societies as part of a dynamic earth, rather than a superficial matter on a relatively stable substrate that can be taken for granted. Time is of the essence if globalization is to be understood, as science now suggests it has to be, as a process of dramatic material transformation of the planetary system.

### Territories, Jurisdictions, Sovereignties

The politics of the Anthropocene, where all sorts of innovations are needed (Biermann & Lovbrand 2019), is still frequently caught in territorial traps where the geographical imagination is of separate spaces rather than of areal differentiation in an inter-connected system (Agnew 2003). The former set of assumptions feeds into limited claims to responsibility, ones bounded by state borders. But scaling this matter of responsibility up to a matter of a global polity raises the key questions of whence the source of legitimate authority in the face of the depredations of "globalization" (Shah 2012). The indirect and distant consequences, in terms of climate disruptions and ecological impacts, adds pressing urgency to these discussions; clearly security in any meaningful sense for most of the world's peoples is not what borders can provide. The fantasies of using territorial strategies to control change persist nonetheless, as populist politicians in many places, and the Brexit campaigners in Britain in particular, understand all too well (Agnew 2020).

Whether "globalism" as a reinvented cosmopolitanism is either possible, or might be efficacious in the face of the reactionary politics epitomised in Donald Trump's dismissal of globalists, is a key question for our times (Deudney 2018). To think in these terms requires reimagining the planet as a single place in which actions are interconnected and consequences cannot be evaded by the invocation of geographical separation. It also requires understanding that the functions of borders frequently happen far from frontiers; and border controls instigated by the United States in particular now operate on many borders, not just those of the state ostensibly

in question (Miller 2019). But, given the rapid ecological changes now underway, borders too are not as stable as the traditional notions of territorial jurisdiction at least implicitly assume.

Not least they fail to provide security precisely because of the invocation of national prerogatives over any larger obligations. The Westphalia system of separate and frequently rivalrous states might be an effective solution to some questions of political identity, but it provides a major obstacle to tackling climate change when thought of in terms of territorial sovereignty and exclusive jurisdictions (Harris 2013). Borders also operate to invent fictitious sovereignties for financial matters as frequently as they stipulate who or what can cross borders (Bullough 2019). Migration controls are a matter of policing not only at the frontier, but in airports and on the streets of many cities where migrants move. Bordering things turns out to be a matter of governance practices that frequently do not appear at the geographical border but effectively operate as bordering practices far from geographical frontiers. Preclearance arrangements for many traded items are situated far from frontiers to ensure the continuous circulation of key commodities in the global economy (Cowen 2014).

Technical criteria for trade are embedded in packing plants, food storage arrangements, and electronic codes in the internet. The rules and procedures that govern numerous technical practices, and the agencies that oversee them, have given rise to a partly autonomous processes now simply called global governance (Zurn 2018). These processes in terms of climate have produced numerous efforts at market "solutions" and the commercialization of "ecosystem services" in the form of carbon sequestering "offsets" and numerous projects linked to green development funds and "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation" (REDD+) programs (McCall 2016). These require global arrangements to link emissions in one place with efforts to "sink" them elsewhere, and in the process involve complex modes of trading, certification and jurisdictional demarcation related to ecological function within bordered spaces (O'Lear 2016). While climate needs urgent attention the modes of governance that are invoked are still based on territorial demarcations, whether in terms of national determined contributions under the Paris Agreement (Falkner 2016), or those smaller scale designations of areas providing ecosystem services in REDD+, or the numerous attempts to re-engineer spaces under the rubrics of climate adaptation (Sovacool & Linner 2016).

As ecological change accelerates in the next few decades, rapid adaptations to new circumstances have to be part of the planning for transitions to more sustainable modes of life. This is the case even if serious efforts are made to rapidly reduce carbon dioxide emissions; there are already enough greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to ensure further warming and substantial disruptions in terms of more extreme weather. While conservation

practices have frequently involved in situ protections of specific ecosystems, or such things as the management of resources in terms of harvesting regulations, the new understandings of earth systems require that these processes be scaled up to deal with global interconnections (Dauvergne 2016). This insight is key to the logic of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity as well as numerous attempts to manage toxic substances and ozone depleting materials. But clearly the use of resource extraction as a mode of economic development has long won out over larger claims to sustainability, environmental management efforts notwithstanding.

This is not surprising. As Ken Conca (2015) notes, after independence from European empires post-colonial state leaders clearly understood the importance of natural resources in the global economy. What they lacked was any clear understanding of the global environment, nor the limitations it might place on various modes of economy in the long-term future. Invoking sovereignty and insisting that resources were a matter of national jurisdiction, not something to be controlled by international agencies, was an entirely sensible policy to attempt to resist the re-imposition of neo-colonial control from abroad. While sovereignty makes for good politics on many issues, it is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters. Borders do not provide environmental security in many cases, with some of the protocols on transnational trade of particular substances being a partial exception. Sovereignty also assumes a long-term political entity (Elshtain 2008), one effectively a permanent fixture on what is understood as a stable geographical configuration of natural features. But as climate change in particular is making abundantly clear—with shifting climate zones, increasingly unreliable weather patterns, and inexorable sea level rise—these assumptions of stability are no longer sensible as a basis for intelligent public policy. Some small low-lying states face elimination due to climate change induced rising sea levels.

Counterintuitively what is most important now is securing the ability to adapt to new circumstances, a flexibility that runs counter to the basic assumptions of territory and property as the bedrock for institutions to deal with numerous threats, and conservation as species preservation in particular places. As species migrate and rainfall patterns move, such ingenuity will be needed to think through innovative adaptive responses to environmental disruptions. These are of course mostly antithetical to the popular impositions of border restrictions as an attempt to "take back control" in the face of rapid change (Agnew 2020).

The urgency of tackling rapid global change requires that the supposed solutions to governance problems be interrogated in light of the novel insights that earth system science is making available (Zalasiewicz et al 2019). Failure to do so will undercut attempts to think about long-term sustainability. There is a danger that

climate change dominates the discussion to the exclusion of numerous other important matters. But given the simple facts that climate is stressing environments, and food production and water supplies very directly, this is perhaps unavoidable. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on a 1.5 degrees climate changed world makes it clear that rapidly reducing the emissions of fossil fuel combustion products into the atmosphere is crucial to the solution of many other issues. In stark contrast the Trump administration saw national security for the United States in terms of increased fossil fuel production despite the long-term dangers both in terms of climate and the difficulties of changing energy systems in the future (Selby 2019).

A parallel set of considerations applies to efforts to use territorial strategies to enforce conservation practices. While parks, ecological reserves and protected areas are standard policy tools used in attempting to at least mitigate the environmental disruptions caused by industrial development and related urbanization, agricultural and resource extraction processes, these practices have often had pernicious and counter-productive effects, once again because of implicit and sometimes explicit attempts to use territorial strategies to prevent migrations and exclude people from designated areas (Buxton & Hayes 2016). While the attempts to counter poaching of endangered species by the use of armed park wardens have laudable aims in trying to prevent the elimination of many animals, the dynamics of political conflict in rural areas have fed into the militarization of conservation (Duffy 2014). The presence of weapons and the arming of rural populations does not necessarily lead to the ends that these projects ostensibly seek: "For example, militarised conservation tactics in specific contexts in South Africa often resemble apartheid-era counterinsurgency practices, where efforts to win the support of local people also coincide with tactics of intimidation and use of violence" (Duffy et al 2019, 68). War and conservation are uneasy bedfellows and the militarization of environmentalism may end up making things worse especially because the dispossession of local populations frequently makes the processes of imposed rule appear fundamentally unjust and thus undermines the long-term legitimacy of what might be seen as urgent necessities.

This is not least because the discourses around poaching turn park rangers into heroes and local populations into villains while often disrupting survival strategies using local ecological resources. In a similar vein at the larger scale some of the environmental problems facing local people in the Lake Chad region in Africa in recent years are as a result of military actions closing national frontiers in attempts to contain insurgencies. One of the unintended consequences has been to make adaptation more difficult precisely by preventing people moving to access economic resources to deal with fluctuating environmental conditions (Vivekananda et al 2019). Once again spatial strategies of security compound environmental difficulties for people whose mobility is restricted.

At the larger scale these same notions of "fortress" responses to environmental insecurities feed into larger formulations of environmental and more specifically climate insecurity where peripheral disruptions and potential migrations are portrayed as the danger to metropolitan prosperity (White 2014). This frequently obscures the causal sources of disruptions which lie with the massive use of fossil fuels in the global economy not intrinsic attributes of rural areas or the political difficulties in countries in the Global South. Contemporary environmental disruptions follow the long-term patterns of European colonization and the displacement of indigenous peoples and societies in many places, and, as Dauvergne (2016) has shown so clearly, modern environmentalism is incapable of dealing with either the colonial legacy or the scale of contemporary disruptions.

When these difficulties are refracted through notions of security, and the criminalization of poachers or migrants, coupled with the strengthening of border controls, the failures to confront the long distance and long-term consequences of contemporary modes of consumption are obscured by a politics of "them and us", with "them" as a threat to "our" supposed entitlements. These geopolitical formulations, only most obviously the widespread use of the argument that climate change is a conflict multiplier in conditions of political fragility (see Klare 2019), invoke geographical designations that obscure the teleconnections and economic linkages that are a key part of contemporary dislocations. Once again, a spatial imaginary of division, of North and South, is reinforced with narratives of resource scarcity driving conflict and requiring either containment or interventions in distant places to provide extended security. Southern population growth can easily be blamed for climate change, despite the obvious point that it is consumption rather than numbers of people that are at the heart of the fossil fuel use which is key to climate change. Immigrants and pollution come from somewhere else in these formulations, requiring violent control of movement; the links to white nationalist racial politics are quite direct (Huntgren 2015). Add in formulations of scarcity as the source of conflict, a theme that runs through much of the climate security discussion, and the potential for violence increases as the sources of environmental danger are reformulated as external threats to domestic prosperity, and hence as disruptive forces that need to be controlled "over there" and "at the border" to protect our lifestyles "here".

The converse of this argument is also important, as states invoke sovereignty as a way of pushing back against global efforts to constrain damaging forms of extractivist economic activity. In many cases this involves international efforts to work with Indigenous peoples to protect their lands from the depredations of resource extractions, the legal enclosure of their territories and the disruptions of their water sources and food supplies. These dynamics were highlighted in mid-2019 once again when attention turned to the fires in the Amazon basin where farmers

routinely use fire to clear forest prior to using the land for agriculture and grazing, frequently at the cost of indigenous inhabitants. International opprobrium was directed at Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazilian president who seemed unwilling to act to constrain the conflagrations despite widespread fears of further damage to the forest. The violence on this frontier where at least some Indigenous peoples try to protect their land, and the movements of landless peoples try to gain sustenance, is not new: ecology is tied into long historical patterns rural dispossession in the Global South (Athanasίου 1996). Chico Mendes, a key spokesperson for the Brazilian rubber tappers was famously assassinated in 1988, but the violent removal of environmental activists, frequently linked to claims of external meddling in domestic politics, adds another important dimension to the issue of the role of borders and violence in global environmental politics (Matejova et al 2018). Here national sovereignty is another mode of fortress thinking about a supposedly autonomous entity to be protected from external influence.

And yet just as such bordering practices are being enforced, simultaneously the economics of the contemporary world make it clear that supply chains that stretch around the world do not operate on such territorial considerations; vulnerabilities here are a matter of disruptions in numerous places, and frequently not specifically at borders and only sometimes because of the invocation of sovereignty. Rising concern about the financial risks that climate change presents to corporations has been linked to the commodity chains that supply products for the contemporary global market place; adaptation is about much more than in-situ policies within individual jurisdictions (Hedlund et al 2018). Coupled to this is a growing concern about agriculture and looming disruptions of climate change, where adaptation in the Global South where farmers are heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture may be especially difficult (Vogel et al 2019). As climate disruption causes difficulty in terms of planting crops and having them mature with suitable weather, the social dislocations resulting from agricultural distress may be large. Migration from rural to urban areas by people in search of sustenance, new economic opportunities and shelter is the most obvious mode of climate adaptation.

Understanding the need for climate adaptation as only a matter of internal affairs for individual states ignores these teleconnections in the global system, both in terms of these economic interlinkages and in terms of the trans-border effects of climate change (Benzie & Persson 2019). Other effects relate to ocean fisheries, vector borne diseases, increased storms, droughts and economic and social knock-on effects from all of these in the global economy where long commodity chains and supply systems are vulnerable to disruptions. As international court cases are starting to emphasize, the worst offenders in terms of nation-states and carbon emissions are not those frequently suffering the worst effects of climate change and hence cases are being brought against governments and corporations that

have facilitated the combustion of fossil fuels despite clear awareness of the risks and consequences (Byers et al 2017). Trans-boundary liability claims are the corollary of the arguments for loss and damage at international climate negotiations, matters that the developed nations have studiously refused to deal with seriously, precisely because of the possible implications that those states who historically caused most of the climate change might be held directly accountable for their actions. Once again, time matters in globalization.

In addition to the direct effects of climate on agriculture and commodity chain disruption there are of course second-order effects as a result of climate policies undertaken by numerous states (Simpson et al 2021). Effectively tackling climate change requires drastically curtailing the use of fossil fuels, and in so far as demand reductions in one state affect the production in others, these have trading consequences. How the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy systems will change the global political economy and with what consequences is far from clear, but if climate is to be tackled effectively these shifts will have to happen, and quickly (Global Commission 2019). Is it possible to anticipate future trade restrictions on fossil fuels, with border checks to ensure that these soon-to-be controlled substances (Burke & Fishel 2020) are not smuggled across national frontiers in violation of trading restrictions? As climate change action becomes ever more urgent such considerations are looming and will inevitably have implications in terms of what happens at borders, wherever their rules actually are implemented.

## Mobilities, Connections, Migrations

All of this is now ever more complicated precisely because of the disruptions of climate change. Sustainability in environmental matters, resource extraction, agriculture, and key issues of irrigation water supply, are premised on overall system stability and assumptions of what hydrologists sometimes call stationarity (Milly et al 2008). While rainfall and temperature vary from year to year, the range within which they fluctuate has been roughly stationary. The past may not indicate precisely what is coming in any particular year, but it has given a very good indication of the range of likely events. These have been key to planning developments, in particular infrastructure like dams and bridges where design criteria frequently include the ability to be able to cope with a one-in-one-hundred-year extreme event. Construction of such infrastructure has been key to development strategies and competition between states to enhance economic growth. In Peter Dauvergne's terms (2016) technical innovation and promises of improved management, the "environmentalism of the rich" were seen as adequate responses to any unfortunate side effects of this mode of development.

But not anymore. As rising sea levels, increased scale and severity of floods, storms and wildfires are making clear,



the stationarity assumption is giving way to an understanding that the world is being rapidly changed. The sheer scale of development and the growth of the global economy is not only causing local disruptions, pollution events and resource problems, but now has begun to change how the earth system as a whole operates (Steffen et al 2018). We are headed into a much less stable set of geophysical circumstances than the world has known through human history, and the rivalries and geopolitical power plays of the future will increasingly play out in less predictable geographical circumstances.

This new situation of an increasingly artificial world being remade by the global economy, captured by the term Anthropocene (Lewis & Maslin 2018), literally the geological age of humanity, suggests that past environmental conditions are no longer a reliable guide as to the range of likely conditions in the future. The corollary is that species will move and hence ecosystem boundaries too are increasingly mobile. Stable borders neither constrain environmental change nor economic innovations, but now in these new conditions they too are increasingly mobile, thus raising profound geographical questions about bordering strategies in these conditions of non-stationarity (Kareiva & Fuller 2016). Conservation and preservation efforts, which have long been premised on places staying the same, now confront the challenge of how to act when stable background conditions are no longer available and when geographies of the past are not reliable as indicators of suitable conditions for many species struggling to adapt to fluctuating ecological conditions. Questions of sustainability now add a very substantial new challenge to global governance (Dalby et al 2019), and in ecological terms conservation strategies now often have to consider how to facilitate the migration of species to more conducive climes rather than trying to keep places in a stable state.

The scale of contemporary disruptions now means that discussions of sustainability, and more precisely, the discursive strategies of sustainable development that have long been used to evade the environmental consequences of conventional development, have to be rethought quite fundamentally. Conventional strategies, based on the massive use of fossil fuels to power human activity have now become, in Dryzek and Pickering's (2019) pithy formulation, "pathological path dependencies". Getting off the path to ever-larger fossil fueled activity is now the challenge for development practitioners; their strategies now have to attempt to secure a functional planetary system for all of humanity if they are to be meaningful activities. The alternative, epitomized by Trumpian patriots, is for the rich and powerful to try to use a fossil-fueled economy to quite literally burn their way to continued prosperity in a system where more and more poor people are rendered vulnerable precisely by such activities (Dalby 2018). The geopolitical nightmare looming if the path dependencies of the present are not effectively changed is of ever larger disparities in a crowded world where violence is increasingly used to control poverty and quell

resistance to further depredations of what remains of the natural world (Wallace-Wells 2019).

While much of scholarship on borders concerns terrestrial frontiers, climate change in particular draws attention to the importance of maritime boundaries, and the rapid changes that are induced by the inundation of shorelines by rising seas. For the atoll states of the Pacific and Indian Oceans as well as numerous low-lying states with vulnerable coastlines, the immediate practical issues are that the borders between land and sea are moving as inundation accelerates. The necessity of recalculating maritime boundaries as a result of the shifting baselines, no longer fixed demarcations as has often been assumed until recently, raises numerous legal questions about transit, economic zones and mobile jurisdictions. These borders are quite literally in motion and, like other bordering practices they emphasize the importance of understanding borders as dynamic entities, not just fixed linear features (Konrad 2015).

Thinking about borders as mobile raises the question of border policy priorities. As Stover (2018) provocatively suggested in the case of Trump administration policy, money spent on border walls might be altogether better spent on climate change given the huge cost of dealing with the imminent inundation of real estate in Florida. The cost of relocating communities in Alaska and Louisiana has also raised issues of climate adaptation, although these are not usually considered in terms of border policy. In the next phase of the Anthropocene, where fixed demarcations of numerous things can no longer be taken for granted, then perhaps mobile borders in terms of geomorphological change need attention as a matter of border management too. Non-stationarity applies quite directly to the location of many borders in the rapid ecological changes currently underway.

The demarcation of territorial waters and exclusive economic zones depends on baselines drawn from coastal features. But where rising sea levels cause inundation and erode coastlines then those baselines are no longer fixed. Where maritime boundaries bisect straits and narrow passages between states, and the shorelines are retreating, then implicitly the jurisdictional demarcations are also in motion. By this logic, as Florida slips below the waves, Cuba's maritime boundary will migrate northwards as Florida's recedes. Or at least it will unless measures are taken to ensure that at least some parts of Florida, or the Keys, are artificially built up to remain above the waves.

However, while the law on maritime boundaries does not necessarily follow directly from land boundaries, nonetheless the apparent necessity of modifying their location as coastal features are inundated will undoubtedly keep maritime lawyers very busy in coming years (Arnadottir 2017). Treaties relating to exclusive economic zones do not establish full sovereign rights, as in boundary demarcations between territorial states, but in the case of territorial states rendered uninhabitable by

rising seas, numerous issues will arise as to what happens to maritime boundaries following the elimination of the state as a territorial sovereign entity, and with it the shore-based territorial seas and economic zones.

For the residents of such states, eliminated by inundation, the legal issues relating to their citizenship may be of more direct concern because they are forced to move. The inadequacy of assumptions of stable physical geography as the backdrop to human activities, and as the context for permanent sovereign states, are paralleled by the inadequate assumptions that people can be defined in terms of stable geographies. The ecological dynamism of the Anthropocene transformation unsettles the implicit assumptions of people as place based, and as such makes mobility a key condition of life rather than its exception (Baldwin et al 2019). This reframing of the human condition raises profound ethical questions too because territorial arrangements are no longer simply assumed as a given context (Williams 2006). This is related to climate justice quite directly, not least because those who invoke the efficacy of borders are frequently those who have indirectly, through their combustion of resources and other materials, caused the disruptions that accelerate migration in the first place. If people are inherently mobile then how migration is viewed is very different in terms of borders, than if assumptions of fixity underpin matters of governance and jurisdiction. This is especially so now that coastal boundaries are moving and ecological adjustments to changing climate patterns relocate plants, animals and their ecosystems as well as traditional geographic patterns of storms, floods and droughts.

Viewed from the perspective of those forced to move by contemporary ecological disruptions, borders are frequently precisely the problem for their security (Jones 2016). At least they are where attempts to cross them run into policies to exclude migrants, either because of xenophobic politics or administrative incompetence, or both. Where climate migrants are represented as refugees, as people without inherent citizenship rights, this is all the more difficult for those seeking safety in new lands; despite the aspirations of the new United Nations Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration. The recent record of European and North American states, formerly destination states for many migrants from poorer places, is worrisome. Borders are being hardened, making refuge for vulnerable people much more difficult (McLeman 2019).

The converse situation is that those who can move are in some senses environmentally privileged, allowed access to spaces that evade the most direct consequences of environmental disruption in enclaves of affluence (Park & Pellow 2019). While this is in some cases tied to the confused politics of racial supremacy and the invocation of anti-immigrant sentiments, those who frequently invoke these tropes are frequently precisely the mobile affluent population who benefit from the labour and activities

of those whose mobilities are restricted. These multiple contradictions of nativist environmentalism inform such novels as Paolo Bacigalupi's dystopian account of the South West United States in *The Water Knife*. Restricted mobilities are now a matter of architectural practicalities in the real world in an increasing number of places as affluence allows access to luxury suites, and manufactured spaces where pollution and environmental disruptions are technologically excluded (Graham 2016).

Making these connections explicit helps challenge the simplistic assumptions that often focus on the abstracted conceptualization of climate refugees, or climate migrants, obscuring the complex social situations that many marginalized peoples find themselves in while simultaneously silencing the racial dimensions of much of the discourse (Baldwin 2016). Simple invocations of borders obscure the patterns of mobility and the social and economic factors that shape the options and adaptive strategies that people use in the face of ongoing economic and ecological disruptions, which are but two ways of focusing on the transformations of the Anthropocene, caused by the rapid expansion of the global economy and its colonizing practices in numerous places. This is why contemporary border studies aims to convey the multi-scalar, mobile, a-territorial, and multi-faceted social constructions that borders really are (Correa-Cabrera & Konrad 2020). Yet, the simple invocations are what resonate, and they are the "go to" definition for many vested power elites.

Arguably the most pernicious point in this discussion is that adaptation to changing environmental circumstances is frequently a matter of moving to more conducive situations. This most basic mode of adaptation is in danger of being thwarted and migrants criminalized when they try to move to facilitate their survival. Mobility is the human condition, and attempts to thwart it render the geopolitics of climate change a violent process. Those forced to move are doubly victimized, by being forced to move in the first place then by being punished or rendered as a security threat when they attempt to cross borders without proper visas and legal protections. As McLeman suggests,

A reframing of this discussion is now in order. Rather than simply debating the need for special treatment for climate migrants, the prospect of greater numbers of people seeking to move because of climate change might be leveraged as an argument for establishing greater rights, protections and opportunities for all migrants as part of larger efforts to meet the SDGs and build adaptive capacity at wider scales (2019, 916).

Hence the contemporary political importance of calls for climate justice in the face of accelerating hazards and disruptions. Assuming bordered spaces as the ontological given, and mobility as a violation of this, is a profoundly dangerous mode of geopolitics in the Anthropocene ecological conditions of non-stationarity.

## Local and Global: Geopolitan Futures?

The classic assumptions of political communities within and dangers outside no longer work in the face of accelerating climate change in particular and the transformations of the Anthropocene in general. Neither do assumptions of progress, the inevitable benefits of expanded technological capabilities and the possibilities of autonomous states with democratic rulers able to determine the important rules whereby citizens will conduct themselves. While in some senses the global climate crisis requires a reworked notion of cosmopolitanism (Deudney 2018), a shared sense of a collective humanity, this alone is now not enough in terms of how to rethink politics in a world where bordering practices, no matter how violent or stringent, are unable to control the key ecological changes that endanger specific locales in various ways, and in the future, the conditions necessary for a large-scale human civilization.

This is not only about climate change, important though it is as a driver of transformation. Humanity is increasingly living in artificial circumstances as a result of machines, buildings, and infrastructures—a growing technosphere in the living earth system (Haff 2014). While numerous new surveillance technologies are becoming available, both on the large scale as cheap satellite launch vehicles make new opportunities for earth monitoring, and the “internet of things” proliferates data generation in numerous modes, there is no guarantee that smart monitoring of ecological phenomena will help if it merely perpetuates existing modes of extractivism (Bakker & Ritts 2018). Without substantial efforts tackling the more fundamental political economy of extraction and the deleterious consequence of waste production, not only in terms of greenhouse gases but also in terms of toxic waste and the problems of plastic pollution too, all the data in the world and lots more border controls will not tackle the major threats of breaching the planetary boundaries. While some controls on the trade of toxic materials are in place, the issues of ocean plastic pollution and greenhouse gases cannot be dealt with by traditional boundary practices (Mitchell 2015).

Humanity is entangled in connections—ecological, economic and political—that require us to understand ourselves within a system that the rich and powerful among us are rapidly changing. This requires thinking well beyond the conventional categories of international relations, which despite the looming existential crisis facing humanity, remains preoccupied with a political imagination of bounded spaces, rivalries and a growing global economy (Burke et al 2016). Novel forms of planetary politics, less constrained by these inherent territorialities, would seem to be urgently necessary as soon as the earth system analysis, and the detailed projections as to what the future holds in terms of climate change, are invoked (IPCC 2018). And yet opposition to attempts to discuss these matters in terms of global governance is quickly mounted not least because of the entirely sensible fear that such formulations empower technological elites

to attempt to manage the planetary system according to their stipulations as to what might be a desirable future. Fears of an imperial politics here, of geoengineering plans and artificial efforts by the rich and powerful to constrain human life in ways likely to be inequitable and violent, challenge notions of politics constituted at a global scale (Chandler et al 2017).

How bad future climate disruptions will be depends on how much the global economy is restructured to reduce the use of carbon fuels and the more destructive modes of resource extraction and agricultural practices in coming decades. But these matters cannot be effectively dealt with only by defensive local struggles that once again invoke a bounded community in need of protection from extractivist forces external to its borders (Routledge 2017). Traditional notions of sovereignty usually implicitly assume autonomy as a virtue, but Anthropocene insights, in common with contemporary border studies, render simplistic assumptions of separation impossible as the premise for policy. In so far as exclusivist logics of self-determination presuppose separation, they are always in danger of occluding the key connections that make particular places.

A more connected notion of political action, one understanding that humans are interconnected profoundly with each other and with both the biosphere and the growing technosphere has to be the basis of what Robyn Eckersley (2017) calls geopolitan democracy. Geopolitan, as opposed to cosmopolitan, in recognition of the mutual enmeshment of humanity and the rest of the earth system. Borders between peoples, and those that supposedly separate people from the increasingly artificial habitat that is the current earth system, are unsustainable in any serious engagement with what needs to be done politically now to shape the future of the Anthropocene in ways likely to reduce the risks for future generations. In summary:

Therefore we cannot simply substitute the political fantasy of rational Earth systems steering led by scientific elites with a political fantasy of local or national self-rule led by political forces which are ignorant of their vulnerability to (and roles in producing) the life-threatening changes to Earth systems processes that are underway (Eckersley 2017, 995-6).

Simultaneously on the other hand: “The minimization of world risks depends on a local understanding of how local practices are inserted into, and bear upon, larger Earth systems processes and vice versa” (Eckersley 2017, 996). Neither local autonomy nor global engineering will do for any serious democratic politics of the present; a much more reflexive politics sensitive to at least some of the key insights of the Anthropocene discussion would seem to be essential. But none of this will work without a careful consideration of the implicit geographical categories invoked in thinking about who decides about what where.

While governance so frequently focuses on territories, sovereignties and jurisdiction, the key to the future of the earth lies much more obviously in decisions about production than it does in traditional notions of protection which so frequently invoke bordering practices (Dalby 2020). Decisions as to whether to invest in fossil fuels or in the rapidly emerging new technologies of electric generation and electric vehicles matter in shaping the new context of the earth system, regardless of the precise geographical location where these decisions are made. While the Paris Agreement operates on the basis of sovereign states making nationally determined contributions to the larger task of emissions reductions, it is noteworthy that this reassertion of the rights of territorial jurisdictions doesn't include an explicit mention of fossil fuels as the primary cause of climate change. Grappling with production decisions, and the political economy of fossil fuel investments in particular, can no longer be neglected in how planetary politics is considered and these matters do not fit well within the disciplinary boundaries of the social sciences (Conway 2020). Likewise in many ways the Paris Agreement and related high-profile international arrangements are empty agreements (Dimitrov 2020), incapable of effectively governing a world where the decisions that matter most are taken elsewhere, in corporate boardrooms and in the processes of drafting investment policies, while the governance focus remains on institutions, procedures and metrics, rather than on the causes of the dramatic material transformations of the planet.

Border scholars, as with contemporary analysts of notions of territory (Peters et al 2018), now need to think much more about the changing geophysical context within which they operate, and how the politics of global environmental change complicates matters; nations increasingly have to be considered as not having borders in the traditional sense (DeSouza 2015). This also requires considering the issues of non-stationarity explicitly—maritime borders in particular are increasingly mobile. A stable geographical backdrop, while always partly a convenient fiction for border studies, is now untenable as a starting premise for either analysis or policy prescription; the earth system sciences are making it abundantly clear that the dynamism of the earth system is now the appropriate context for thinking about governance. Planetary politics demands nothing less of both globalization and border scholars; rapid material transformation of the earth system makes time a key part of these deliberations too. In terms of climate policy it is in very short supply.

The converse of this is that discussions of governance, and novel versions of green thinking in the Anthropocene context in particular (Biermann & Lovbrand 2019), also need to think more carefully about the spatial categories in their analysis, and the jurisdictional questions that persist despite the necessity of trying to think in planetary terms. Globalization is a profoundly material process, and planetary social thought requires that this be taken seriously in thinking about borders too. Failure to

contextualize bordering practices in this manner facilitates the simplistic invocation of patriots as those who will control the future; in so far as they do, and attempt to arrest change by violently bordering spaces, they will make everything more difficult. Fences and walls may be useful for some things, but despite the rhetorical excesses of would-be patriots, they are useless against many of the disruptions already set in motion by processes that now endanger key planetary boundaries.

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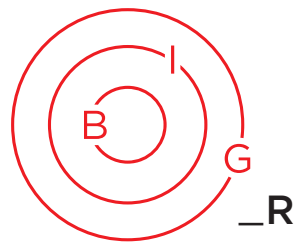
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ARTICLE

# Cross-border Life in an American Exclave: Point Roberts and the Canada-US Border

Pierre-Alexandre Beylier \*

*By applying a theoretical framework based on different models proposed in border studies literature, this article analyzes the morphological, functional, institutional and identity characteristics that make Point Roberts—an American exclave in the Pacific Northwest—a “cross-border town”. Using an online survey and face-to-face interviews, the author combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to examine the forces that link Point Roberts and the Canadian city of Delta that lies across the Canada-US border. This paper highlights the specificities of this unique geographic configuration as well the challenges that the border represents.*

## Introduction

Located in the periphery of countries, border towns were traditionally associated with remoteness and neglect, while assuming a significant military role in the defense of territories. This situation went hand in hand with the use of borders as buffer zones (Sohn & Lara-Valencia 2013; Herzog 1991; Sparrow 2001, 73). However, borders and border towns have seen their role change in the last 60 years with the advent of globalization combined with the appeasement of territorial tensions, especially in Europe and North America. Border regions have gradually become more integrated in the world economy as a result of the defunctionalization of borders, defined as the removal or the weakening of some of their functions (Pradeau 1994) thus shifting from the periphery to a more central role (Sohn & Lara-Valencia 2013; Herzog 1991; Sparrow 2001, 3). This combination of factors has placed border towns at the crossroads of influence and phenomena (Nugent 2012, 570), making them an interesting lens through which one can study borders and the forces that shape them. In the last two decades, scholars in border studies have focused on border towns, trying to define them and to classify them by type.

Buursink offers a straightforward definition of border town: more than just a town located at the border, it is a town “that is dependent on the border for its existence (...) not just a city located close to the border but it also came into existence because of the border” (Buursink 2001, 7-8). This general definition has been refined by incorporating the origins and the causal relationship between the border and the town and taking into account the border-related forces that shape the town, what Reitel calls a “logic of spatial organization” (Reitel 2002, 125). In other words, it is a town that “lives from the border”, that can exploit the discontinuities and that can prosper because of the differentials induced by the border (138).

Many border towns are paired with another town located on the other side of the border with which they have developed very specific links. Whether they are “duplicated” or “partitioned”, these “paired cities” or “twin cities” have received extensive attention on the part of border scholars and geographers (Buursink 2001; Kearney 1995; Vanneph 1995; Soi & Nugent 2017; Jańczak 2017; Ganster & Collins 2017). These researchers have explored

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cross-border trade and cooperation (Nugent 2012, 559; Vanneph 1995) as well as the way these links give birth to a “functional cross-border space” (Foucher 1991, 421). Ultimately, border towns develop mutual dependence that results from the fact that they “feed off one another in an active sense” and share “mutually-embedded relationships” (Soi & Nugent 2017). These links shape those urban pairs and translate into more or less formal relations that can become institutionalized, thus giving twin cities a political or administrative framework of governance (Buursink 2001; Ehlers 2001; Jańczak 2017; Ganster & Collins 2017). Finally, researchers have emphasized the “social base for [town] twinning” (Jańczak 2017): how these specific interactions give birth to specific regional cross-border identities (Bucken Knapp 2001), a sense of “belonging together” (Buursink 2001; Kaisto 2017).

Major cross-border metropolitan areas have come under great scrutiny in Europe—for example, Geneva/Anemasse and Basel/Mulhouse (Reitel 2013), Vienna/Bratislava (Giffinger & Hamedinger 2013)—and also in North America—for example, Detroit/Windsor (Brunet-Jailly 2000), Vancouver/Seattle (Cold-Ravnkilde et al 2004; Brunet-Jailly 2008). Smaller border towns, however, have not been studied to the same extent. The goal of this paper is to examine a small border town in Washington State: Point Roberts. Even though Point Roberts is a part of Cascadia—a major cross-border region that encompasses Vancouver, Seattle, and surrounding areas—examining the situation of a smaller border town and the local phenomena that shape it can be interesting in order to better understand how border towns function. What makes Point Roberts even more interesting is the fact that, in addition to being a border town, this community is also an exclave. Located on a peninsula, it is only accessible by land through Canada. Exclaves were traditionally described by geographers as a curiosity (Lunden & Zalamans 2001, 33) but they are more than just oddities and they are by definition even more dependent on and affected by the border.

One of the earliest settlements in the Pacific North West, Point Roberts was founded in 1857 first as a stop for sailors heading north to Alaska, then as a military base and later as a fishing town known for its salmon canneries (Swenson 2017, 102). Over time, this small unincorporated community has been shaped as much by its maritime connections as by the border (ibid).

Geographically speaking, Point Roberts is located across the border from the city of Delta, British Columbia, which is a part of the Greater Vancouver area and is itself comprised of three suburban communities: Tsawwassen, North Delta and Ladner. Point Roberts, with a population of 1,191 and a density of 243 people per square mile (Census Reporter 2020), contrasts with the dense urban unit of Delta with 102,238 inhabitants and 1,469 people per square mile (StatCan 2016). This configuration is special in that it does not form what Buursink calls “paired towns” or “twin towns” (Buursink 2001) and they are rather marked

by a great asymmetry in terms of population, density and economic dynamism. And yet, exploring the relationship that Delta and Point Roberts share across the 49th parallel can shed light on how border towns work.

The goal of this paper is to examine the unique spatial configuration that combines an international border and an exclave in order to see if it has led to the emergence of a “new territoriality” (Bucken-Knapp 2001, 55, quoting Smouts 1998). In other words, this paper will study the “binational” dimension of Point Roberts and its cross-border dimension in order to assess the extent of its integration in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland in comparison with other border towns in the region. Does its situation as an exclave amplify cross-border integration?

In order to carry out this analysis, this paper will first outline the theoretical framework and methodology then present and discuss data collected through interviews and surveys of residents on both sides of the border.

## Theory

As mentioned in the introduction, a border town cannot be defined only in locational terms: a town at the border. Fuentes underscores the fact that the urban function of a border town is “transformed” by a “transnational relationship” (Fuentes 2000, 21). For Reitel and Zander, it is a town that has developed a specific relationship with the border and thus “presents original configurations in relation with the border’s properties” (Reitel & Zander 2020).

The first relationship has been shaped by the origins of border towns that are often associated with a control function in terms of either defense or customs; traditionally a border town was a stronghold that also served to levy duties (Pradeau 1994; Reitel & Zander 2020; Renard 2000). The second relationship that shapes border towns has to do with the discontinuity that the border represents and that requires transportation to adapt or that is being exploited in terms of differentials by shoppers, commuters or smugglers. Finally, the third one has to do with the instrumentalization of the border town by the central government as an area of representation and symbolism (Reitel & Zander 2020). This three-fold definition highlights factors that shape border towns and that contribute to their specificity, but it remains rather general and some authors have tried to find criteria that are more analytical and that can be used as “tests”.

The criterion that most scholars underscore is the functional dimension of border towns. In other words, the border town is linked by “functional ties” (Herzog 1990; Gay 2004, 70) with the other side of the border, most of the time another town, whether it is a twin town or a “companion town” (Buursink 2001, 16). These links have to do with the fact that the border is an active interface that fosters cross-border links among residents on both sides





of the international line, in terms of shopping, tourism, trade, commuting, and other activities. These links are the sign that the two urban units transcend the border to some extent and function together (Foucher 1991, 421; Herzog 1991), giving rise to a "functional region" (Lunden & Zalamans 2001, 41; Letniowska 2002, 112) or a "cross-border networked space" (Vanneph 1995).

However, this criterion is just one among others, and growing academic interest in border towns has led scholars to propose theoretical models that highlight different criteria. Buursink was one of the first to define "border-crossing cities": "cities that make contact with each other in terms of (1) physical or built-up landscape, (2) institutional framework and (3) the city as a community" (Buursink 2001, 17). These criteria are similar to those put forward by Ehlers: (1) closeness, (1b) size, (2) institutional base and (3) residents (Ehlers 2001, 23, 25). Adapting Buursink's model, Sparrow offered criteria that looked at border towns in terms of integration: (1) physical integration, (2) organizational integration (NGOs and civil society), (2b) political administrative integration, (3) behavioral integration (Sparrow 2001, 82). One can finally mention Gradus' criteria, which are proximity, function that encompasses binational structures and cooperation, and a feeling of closeness (Gradus 2001, 84).

Building on those criteria, Reitel proposes another model that aims at analyzing border towns through the processes that the town is the site of in terms of integration: morphological integration, which has to do with both proximity and the continuity of the urban fabric; functional integration, which concerns the flows of commuters; intentional integration, which is the formulation of a plan for cooperation; and institutional integration, that has to do with cross-border governance and the construction of cross-border institutions. All of them are measured in terms of interactions or what he calls "the level of connectivity of the boundary" (Reitel 2013, 245).

This model is interesting because it applies some of the criteria put forward in the literature of border towns looking at the processes that shape and define them. The difference between intentional integration and institutional integration mirrors the distinction between "formal" and "informal" cooperation that is often highlighted (Ehler 2001, 28; Jańczak 2017, 487). However, a shortcoming of this model pertains to the fact that it does not take identity matters, a criterion highlighted by a number of researchers, into account.

To define border towns, the author will use four criteria, which sum up and combine these models. The first criterion is a (I) *morphological* one that covers both geographical proximity to the border and the continuity of the urban fabric, in the case of paired towns. The second criterion is (II) a *functional* one that has to do with the different flows that occur between the border town and the other side of the border and that link them whether in terms of trade,

cross-border commuters, cross-border shopping and other cross-border activities. The third criterion concerns (III) *cross-border governance* and the construction of bilateral institutions, whether informal or formal in order to promote cooperation. Finally, the fourth criterion is more people-oriented and looks at the emergence of a specific (IV) *cross-border identity*, a sense of togetherness. This paper will apply these four criteria to Point Roberts in order to question its cross-border dimension and its relationship to the border and to the other side.

This theoretical framework would be incomplete without adding the contextual framework, which adds to the specificity of this border community: that of the Canada-US border. Known for the most part of its existence as the longest undefended border in the world, this border was shaped by a long-standing tradition of openness, cooperation and cross-border interactions (Lyebecker 2018, 535; Nicol 2012, 139). As a consequence, a number of border communities have developed countless ties across the international boundary: with "cross-border families" living on both sides of the border (Lyebecker 2018, 535; Poitras 2011; Hataley & Mason 2018, 436), with services shared across the international line, especially in rural regions (Poitras 2011; Lasserre 2012), and more generally with a great deal of cooperation on common issues (Brunet-Jailly 2008, Cappellano & Makkonen 2020). These many linkages have led to communities that are highly integrated across the border, to such an extent that the border becomes a mere "administrative inconvenience" (Drache 2004) or just a "ditch" (Baxter-Moore & Eagles 2016).

A number of authors have also shown that these interactions have nurtured a "common identity" on both sides of the border (Nicol 2012, 139). Studying Windsor at the beginning of the 20th century, Dimmel argued that the city had a "unique transnational identity" based on joint celebration holidays, cross-border commuting, cross-border education and a strong sporting relationship (Dimmel 2001, 200-201). In other words, culturally and economically, Detroit and Windsor were "one". Hataley and Mason demonstrated a similar "collective cross-border identity" between Stanstead, Quebec, and Derby Line, Vermont, based on tremendous and diverse interactions, on political cooperation, on the existence of cross-border networks, on shared services and on cultural similarities. All these factors contribute to building a cohesive cross-border community (Hataley & Mason 2018, 435, 436). Similarly, Richardson showed that cross-border interactions such as shopping, recreation, the relocation of Canadian firms on the American side and so on were part of the fabric that made Cascadia a cross-border region (Richardson 1998). The only major border towns that look on paper like "the perfect border town twin cities" but that are actually rather turning their backs on each other are Niagara Falls, New York, and Niagara Falls, Ontario. Although they appear to constitute a "united urban area", have the same size and speak the same language, they "do not have the social intercourse that

could be expected from twins" and seem to be "living apart together" (Buursink 2001, 10). Interactions are rare in terms of cross-border shopping or cross-border cooperation (Baxter-Moore & Eagles 2016; Buursink 2001, 12).

However, border towns were thrown in a new paradigm 20 years ago. Indeed, the 9/11 attacks and the ensuing homeland security policy put in place by the US to respond to the attacks led to a "hardening" or a "thickening" of the border (Lyebecker 2018, 53; Andreas & Biersteker 2003; Alden 2008). The deployment of a myriad of security measures has made the Canada-US border less flexible and less open than it used to be, which has had an impact on cross-border trade (Globerman & Storer 2009) and cross-border travel (Baxter-More & Eagles 2016; Beylier 2016), while at the same time giving rise to a new "border culture" based on security (Konrad & Nicol 2008). In other words, it has impacted the cross-border linkages that had developed over decades across this peaceful border. More importantly, it has altered the borderland identity, giving primacy to security and hampering mobility and social interactions (Konrad 2014, 49).

## Methodology

This study of Point Roberts is part of a broader project on practices and representations of the Canada-US border that the author conducted in the wider Cascadia region in the fall of 2019. It combines two major research methods: an online survey that aimed at assessing people's interactions with the border, and a series of semi-directed interviews with some of Point Roberts' stakeholders. The survey was posted on many community groups on Facebook that were identified by the author based on the places where their members live. A total of 81 responses were gathered on the part of Point Roberts residents. Among the respondents, 61% were women and 38% were men, ranging in age as follows: 6% between 18 and 35, 7% between 35 and 50, 42% between 50 and 65 and 45% over 65, which mirrors the demographic profile of the community (Census Reporter 2019).

In addition to those responses, the author also took into account the responses that identified Point Roberts as the place they "go to when crossing the border". Including the responses of people that mentioned Point Roberts as their destination, as opposed to just the responses of those who are from there, offers a better understanding of the border town's cross-border links.

The survey consisted of fifteen closed-ended questions with choices involving gender, age, country of residence, distance from the border, frequency of border crossing, reasons for crossing the border, being a member (or not) of Trusted Traveler Programs, the presence of a cross-border identity and feelings of territorial attachment. It also included seven open-ended questions that pertained to the places they live, the places they go to when crossing

the border, how they perceive the border, the manifestation of a cross-border identity, as well as explanations if they do not cross the border or if they have been crossing it less frequently. As a result, the survey provided the author with both qualitative and quantitative data.

Finally, the author conducted nine interviews with different residents who play a prominent role in the community: members of different associations, two businesswomen, a journalist, the current US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Port Director and a fire fighter, all identities confidential. These interviews were semi-guided: all of the interviewees were asked the same questions that had been prepared in advance pertaining to their perception of the border, the ways in which they interact with it and the role the border plays within the community. Some additional questions were asked when clarification was needed or when the author wanted more details on specific topics. These interviews complement the qualitative dimension of the study, allowing the author to share the point of view of some of the most important stakeholders in Point Roberts regarding cross-border life. For this research, the author also conducted in 2019 interviews with Vancouver Airport Director, Gerry Bruno; a spokesperson with the Washington State Department of Transportation; and historian Mark Swenson.

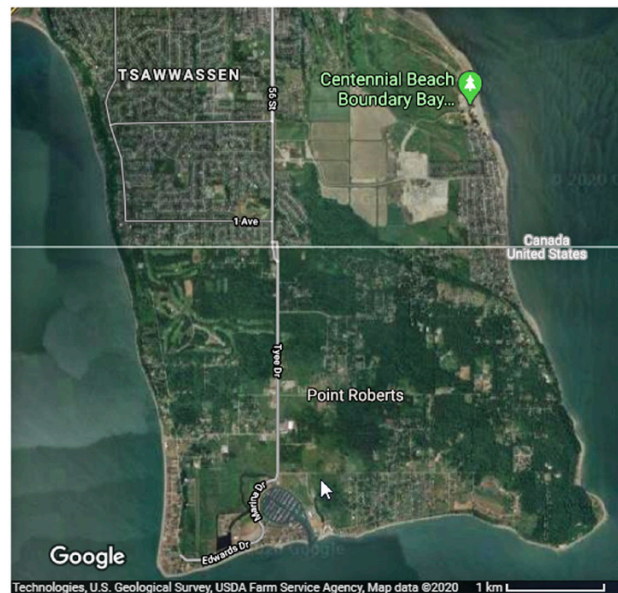
## Analysis

As mentioned above, border cities are traditionally on the periphery of their country and they initially developed by turning their backs on the border (Buursink 2001, 9). As far as Point Roberts is concerned, if the first statement is true, the town has always been turned towards, and dependent on, the border, because of its location as an exclave. More importantly, the border has historically played a central part in the history of the community. It is what historian Mark Swenson highlights: "the border defines and makes Point Roberts unique" (2017, 7). Often described as a natural "gated community", because you have to go through border controls before entering the territory of the town, Point Roberts has been surely shaped by its relationship with the border, which is inescapable.

### (I) *The Morphology of Point Roberts*

Considering the first criterion that is found in theoretical models about (cross) border towns, one can note that, in terms of proximity, Point Roberts' configuration makes it a town that is not only close to but also at the border, with the farthest point from the Port of Entry (PoE), Lilly Point only 3.5 miles away from it. On a satellite image, the urban fabric shows continuity across the border (Figure 1), especially in Maple Beach, the oldest neighborhood (Swenson 2017, 343) in the northeastern part of the town (Figure 1b). Maple Beach follows the same street organization as the neighborhood across the border in Delta, Boundary Bay, and the 49th parallel is not visible in terms of break. Only boundary markers along the





**Figure 1.** Point Roberts/Tsawwassen-Delta satellite map view. Source: Google Maps.

street mark the border in the eastern part of the exclave, and the border crossing itself. It is important however to nuance this point because the difference highlighted in the introduction regarding the density of population is also visible from the sky, the Canadian side being more densely populated than the American side. And this difference is due to the border: when plumbing and tapped water arrived in Point Roberts in the 1980s, strict regulations were put in place to prevent uncontrolled urban development. As Swenson emphasizes, “were it not for the border, Point Roberts would be as developed as Tsawwassen, fully built out” (Swenson 2017, 383).

Then, Reitel proposed an indicator to further assess this continuity in terms of connectivity with the presence of several roads (Reitel 2013-243). Since there is only one road that crosses the border and one PoE in Point Roberts, one might assume a lack of connectivity. And yet, it does not prevent Point Roberts from being the sixth busiest border crossing in terms of vehicles and the third in terms of pedestrians along the entire Canada-US border (Table 1).



**Figure 1b.** Maple Beach. Pictured from the US side (pictures 1 and 3) and from the Canadian side (picture 2). Photo credit: author.

The third morphological element that is worth analyzing is the impact that the border has on the urban structure of the town. Studying Ciudad Juarez, a Mexican city at the Mexico-US border, Fuentes demonstrated how “the transborder interurban relationship and local needs determine the intra-urban space by influencing the location of economic [and residential] activities” (Fuentes 2000, 26). He states that businesses and residential housing compete for locations close to the border, driving up prices and exacerbating inequalities (28). This border effect is even more present in smaller territories, where options are limited. Similarly, Point Roberts’ urban layout is determined by cross-border links. One can note a “specialization” of some districts located near the PoE with pick-up services Point to Point Parcel and In Out Parcel located respectively 0.2 and 0.3 miles away from the PoE on Tyee Street. The district situated at the crossroads between Tyee and Gulf Road and Tyee and Benson Road, one mile away from the PoE, concentrates the services that Canadian visitors cross the border to access, as will be discussed below, with four gas stations, a supermarket called The International Market Place, and two other pick-up services. Finally, down

**Table 1. Border crossings ranked by number of vehicles and pedestrians (2019).** Source: US Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2020.

Rank	Port name	No. of vehicles	Rank	Port name	No. of pedestrians
1	Buffalo-Niagara Falls	4857694	1	Buffalo-Niagara Falls	384676
2	Detroit	4474933	2	Sumas	60125
3	Blaine	3961462	3	<b>Point Roberts</b>	<b>27992</b>
4	Port Huron	1461765	4	International Falls-Ranier	9837
5	Champlain-Rouses Point	1018162	5	Calais	7565
6	<b>Point Roberts</b>	<b>958558</b>	6	Oroville	4867
7	Sumas	880346	7	Port Huron	4416
8	Massena	872880	8	Champlain-Rouses Point	4102
9	Calais	664385	9	Sweetgrass	3153
10	Sault Sainte Marie	656760	10	Eastport	2652

Gulf Road, one can find a bar, Kinisky Reef’s Tavern, and a café, Saltwater Café. Proximity to the border, as well as a very strict zoning code, defined the location of these businesses. In other words, to paraphrase Fuentes, the “urban function” of Point Roberts is deeply influenced by the border (2000, 32).

However, in addition to this positive “border effect”, the 49th parallel also has a negative “spatial effect”, if we stretch Fuentes’ theory a bit, in that the border inhibits some activities by the regulations it entails. The interviewees underscored four border-related problems. The first one has to do with the hiring of staff, as emphasized by six of the eight interviewees, among whom two business owners. Because of its small size and its demographics, Point Roberts does not have a significant workforce especially for restaurants and bars. On top of that, businesses cannot hire Canadians. There was a memorandum of understanding that allowed businesses to hire “seasonal temporary workers” from Canada but it was canceled after 9/11:

There was a provision that allowed seasonal workers to come across from Canada to work in Point Roberts and [because of] the tightening down on the border and the consolidation of the treat-everybody-the-same (...) they weren’t allowing seasonal workers [any more] (...). That shut down the ability of the restaurants to bring people in during the peak season (Interview resident 4, 2019).

Three residents directly blame the border for their labor challenges: “the border keeps us from hiring Canadians” (Interview resident 3, 2019); “the border is that impermeable barrier there” (Interview resident 4, 2019); “there are a lot of challenges running a business here. The border is one of them” (Interview resident 1, business

owner, 2019). There is still the possibility to apply for a work visa but the process is long, up to six months, and lacks flexibility for businesses that cannot plan that far in advance (Interview resident 2, business owner, 2019). Even getting volunteers for associations such as the Food Co-Op is a hassle, and people get stopped at the border (Interview resident 3, 2019).

The second border-related problem that the community faces is a lack of affordable housing. The border and the situation of Point Roberts as a small exclave induce competition for land use. This further impacts businesses in that, if they were to find someone from continental US to work in Point Roberts, they would not be able to find affordable housing in Point Roberts. Commuting from continental US is not an option as it is one and a half hours from Bellingham, the closest major American city, with two international borders to cross. It also impacts the attractiveness of the community, especially for families or single people in their 30s who cannot afford to move to Point Roberts (Interview resident 1, 2019; Interview resident 2, 2019; Interview resident 4, 2019).

This lack of staff combined with the lack of affordable housing has an impact on businesses: “part of the problem is like last year in the summer, I only opened five days a week. I didn’t open up five days a week because of lack of business. I opened up five days a week because of lack of employees” (Interview resident 2, 2019). The situation even forced two restaurants to close down: “And [if] the restaurants could stay open longer, there would be more restaurants—we’ve lost to two big ones—Boosters and TJs—because they couldn’t get help—and [there would be] more businesses in general tourism-related things” (Interview resident 4, 2019).



Because of zoning rules and the competition for space, another problem is the lack of hotels, which further inhibits businesses and the development of the town. As pointed out by one of the interviewees, having even a small 16-room hotel could benefit the community in terms of tourism-related activities by stimulating other businesses. It would also have a snowball effect in terms of revenue because potential visitors would pay the lodging tax, which would then be re-infused in the community and help it develop new infrastructure (Interview resident 2, 2019; Interview resident 5, 2019).

Finally, the presence of the border means that Point Roberts residents cannot get some services. Some companies such as Home Depot or Lowes do not deliver in Point Roberts, and bars and restaurants only get food and drinks twice a week in the summer and once a week in the winter (Interview resident 2, 2019). Some social services provided by Whatcom County, such as Home Care, are not available in the community (Interview resident 4, 2019; Interview resident 6, 2019). Children can only go to school in Point Roberts until third grade, when they are eight years old. When they are older they have to either enroll in a school in Canada or commute to the US mainland, to Blaine, the closest American city where they can go to school, crossing the border twice (Interview resident 7, 2019). Other services such as electrical work and medical aid are difficult to access as well. As one resident put it:

The border (...) is a challenge in ways that, I think, may be a little unexpected (...) because we're so isolated, we don't get a lot of the services that we would if we were on the other side (Interview resident 4, 2019).

These are rather indirect morphological problems that are entailed, some only partly, by the border combined with the fact that Point Roberts is an exclave. As noted, zoning regulations also play a part. But the problems show that the border impacts the fabric and the shape of the community, the "urban function" of Point Roberts to paraphrase Fuentes (2000, 37): some services, some businesses are inhibited by border-related regulations that prevent the development of some border-related activities that would benefit the town's economy. The border has thus a kind of "sterilizing" effect (Pradeau 1994, 227) for Point Roberts, which is, at the same time, heavily dependent on the border. This dual dimension of the border creates opportunities but also represents a source of vulnerability, placing the community in a paradoxical situation, as emphasized by Point Roberts' historian: "Our border plays an important role in our economy, an economy that serves the economy of the visitors but not the community" (Interview with Mark Swenson, 2019). The businesswomen that were interviewed similarly pointed out their dependence on Canadians, saying that between 75 and 80% of their customers were Canadians (Interview resident 2, 2019, Interview resident 1, 2019). This economic dependence is mirrored by the links that tie Point Roberts with Delta across the border, thus structuring between the two a dynamic functional relationship.

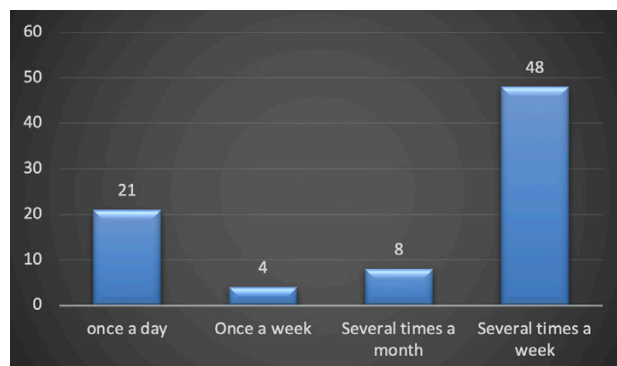
## (II) A Functional Border Community

Because of the geographical situation, residents have little choice but to lead transnational lives. The survey and the interviews have shown that the lives of Point Roberts residents are "rooted on both sides of the border", to borrow an expression used in the context of US-Mexico border communities (Dear 2013, 101) thus nourishing flows that contribute to some kind of functional integration between Point Roberts and Delta. Examining cross-border flows will help us assess the ways in which Point Roberts and Delta constitute what Letniwska-Swiat calls a "cross-border functional region" in that it is defined by people's practices (Letniwska-Swiat 2002, 113).

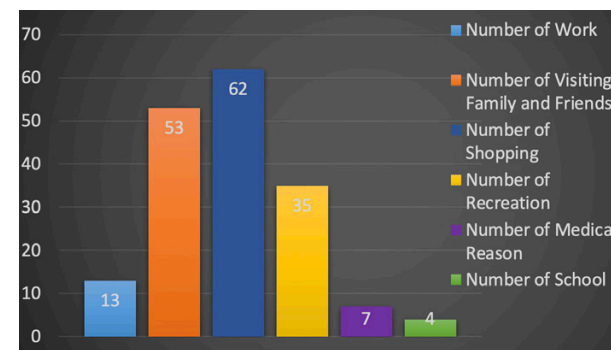
In the case of Point Roberts, the border is heavily "practiced" both from a quantitative perspective and from a qualitative perspective. The first quantitative indicator in the survey concerns the frequency at which residents cross the border. In response to the question "how often do you cross the border?", a majority of residents (85%) indicated that they cross it on a regular basis either once a day (26%) or several times a week (59%) (Figure 2). In other words, interactions with the border are a part of people's daily lives.

Qualitatively, the survey asked respondents the reasons why they cross the border (several responses could be given) (Figure 3). The top two reasons identified by Point Roberts residents are shopping (62 responses) and visiting friends and family (53), followed by recreation (35) and work (13). These activities encompass different aspects of daily life but, more importantly, they mirror the lack of options that Point Roberts has to offer in terms of shopping, work and, because of the relatively small size of the community, social interactions.

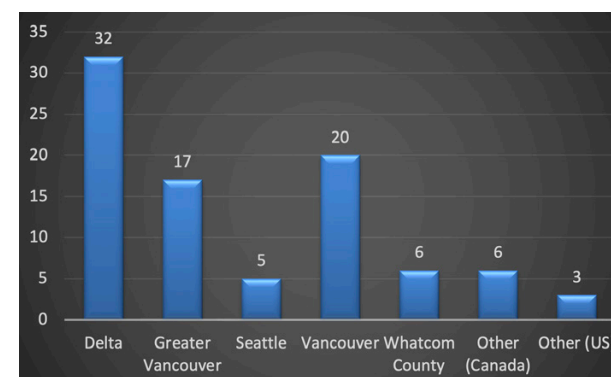
However, these numbers do not mean that Point Roberts residents go to Canada for all these activities. A more thorough analysis shows that in a majority of cases (67%) people either go to Delta or Vancouver, respectively 44 and 23%, whereas in 33.5% of cases people go to either Bellingham, or to a lesser extent, Blaine. Bellingham, the seat of Whatcom County, constitutes the closest larger city on the American side, with over 90,000 inhabitants,



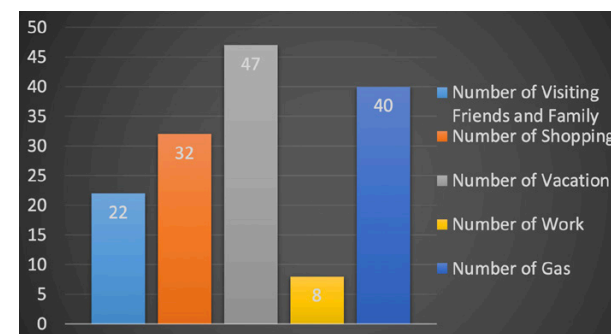
**Figure 2. Frequency at which Point Roberts' residents cross border, in number of responses (81 total).** Source: online survey 2019.



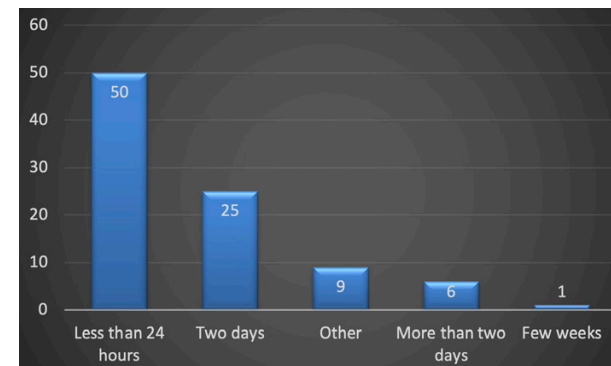
**Figure 3: Reasons for Crossing the Border (Point Roberts Residents).** Source: online survey 2019.



**Figure 4. Origins of the people that identified Point Roberts as their destination, in number of responses (out of 89).** Source: online survey 2019.



**Figure 5: Reasons for crossing of the people that identified Point Roberts as their destination.** Source: online survey 2019.



**Figure 6. Duration of stay for the people that identified Point Roberts as their destination, in number of responses (out of 91).** Source: online survey 2019.

where most people can go shopping in major department stores or supermarkets. These patterns are in keeping with what the residents mentioned during the interviews, most of them crossing the border several times a week, some crossing it two thirds of the time to go to Canada and one third to go to the US mainland while others half and half.

Interestingly, 93% of the people surveyed cross the border for day trips, less than 24 hours, what Macias calls "excursionists" as opposed to tourists, who cross the border for more than 24 hours (2007). Added to the frequency at which Point Roberts residents cross the border, it can be argued that the 49th parallel plays a central part in people's daily lives, which are substantially cross-border.

When analyzing cross-border flows, it is also helpful to look at the respondents in the Cascadia regional survey that identified Point Roberts as the "place they go to when crossing the border". In the sample of 1,500 respondents, 91 people did so. In terms of their place of origin, one can note some great diversity as summarized in Figure 4: 84% come from Canada, Delta being the number one origin (35%), followed by Vancouver (22.5%) and other cities in the Greater Vancouver area (19%), while 16% come from the US, 6% from Whatcom County and 5.6% coming from Seattle. What those numbers mirror is the fact that although playing a role for local communities—namely 75% of people coming to Point Roberts live less than 25 miles from the border, among whom 20% are living less than 2 miles—the border also exerts a huge power of attraction insofar as 25% of the people coming to Point Roberts are from distant places, over 25 miles away from the border and in some cases, such as Seattle, over 100 miles away. So, it shows that the border determines flows at different scales, local and regional, both in Canada and in the US mainland.

In terms of reasons for crossing the border at Point Roberts, one can note a similar diversity. The two main reasons why people are coming to Point Roberts are either for vacation (47 responses) or for gasoline (40). Shopping (32 responses) and visiting friends and family (22 responses) constitute the other motivations for people to cross the border (Figure 5). As emphasized during the interviews, Point Roberts is known for attracting Canadians who own cabins in the exclave and stay there during the summer or who come to fill up on gas or pick up a parcel, two activities that are not limited to Point Roberts and on which other border towns such as Blaine or Sumas thrive. More generally, it is estimated that 40% of border-crossers come to Point Roberts for fuel and 26% to pick up parcels (Swenson 2017, 419). These trends are a direct result of the border effect combined with the value of the Canadian dollar: because of tax differences between the US and Canada, prices are cheaper in the US and Canadians take advantage of these differentials induced by the border. For groceries, for instance, the price differential is 30% (Swenson 2017, 398). This constitutes an underlying force that structures these cross-border flows, making the 49th parallel "a dynamic border". As a result, "every business has both US and Canadian currency" (Interview resident 5,

2019). What is also specific to Point Roberts compared to other border towns such as Blaine, where people cross mostly to go farther south to Bellingham, is that people cross and stay in the community (Swenson 2017, 316).

However, since their reason for crossing is mostly utilitarian, their crossing pattern differs from Point Roberts' residents (Figure 6). First of all, only half of them (50) were excursionists who cross for less than 24 hours—some even specified "less than 20 minutes"—which corresponds to people getting gas, going shopping or picking up mail, while 32 respondents were tourists coming for longer periods of time, mostly for vacation, with a majority of those owning cabins. A third category, classified in the graph as "other" gave mixed responses, saying they sometimes crossed for less than 24 hours, to get gas or go shopping, for example, and sometimes crossed for longer periods of time, in the case of vacation. Secondly, the border is not as much rooted in their daily lives as they cross the border less frequently than Point Roberts residents: most of them

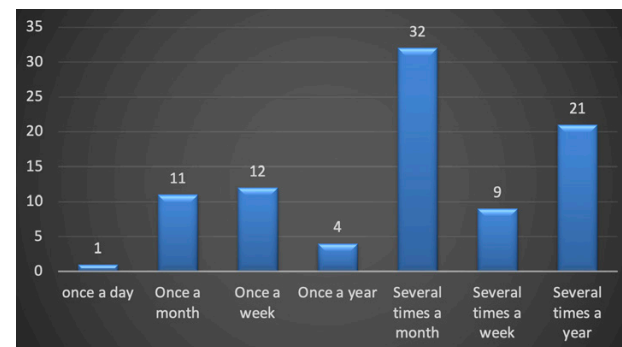


Figure 7. Crossing Frequency of the people that identified Point Roberts as their destination, in number of responses (out of 89). Source: online survey 2019.



Figure 8. Words used by Point Roberts residents to describe the border. Source: online survey 2019.

(36%) only cross several times a month, while 23% cross several times a year and 13% once a week. One can note that the frequency that was present the most for Point Roberts—several times a week—only concerns 10% of respondents (Figure 7). Again, these crossing patterns that are marked by lower frequency mirror their activities, mostly shopping and visiting friends and family.

These numbers indicate that the border is a dynamic interface. However, the interviews as well as one of the questions in the survey suggest that the border still represents some kind of obstacle as a result of the post-9/11 security policy implemented by the US. Referring to this new context, the interviewees describe the border as "a challenge" (Interview resident 1, 2019), "a bit of a bother" (Interview resident 3, 2019), "a slight inconvenience" (Interview resident 4, 2019). Overall, for 68% of the respondents of the survey, the border is "very visible" and for 21% it is "somewhat visible". For the majority of respondents, the border constitutes an obstacle. This fact is reflected in the words that are used to describe the border. The most frequent were "security" (10 occurrences), "time" (9), "safety" (6), the idea of a "gated community" (5), "necessary" (5), "inconvenience" (5) and only in 7th position came the idea of "access" (4) being the only positive word (Figure 8).

This situation is especially acute for businesses as emphasized above. Some pointed out the way people outside of the community were treated by border officers, who sometimes ask very intrusive questions. According to one interview respondent, several people who work in the restaurant sector have said that about half of the time they were asked what they considered "inappropriate questions" by border officers (Interview resident 1, 2019)

To mitigate the negative impact that border controls can have, the residents have put in place different strategies. First, 91% of them are Nexus members, a trusted-traveler program that was introduced in the wake of 9/11 within the framework of the "Smart Border Declaration" to expedite the crossing of the border for people who had been pre-approved after undergoing a background check (Beylier 2016, 121). Secondly, some residents highlighted the fact that the border constitutes a "time factor" (Interview resident 4, 2019) and that they "plan ahead" before crossing the border in order to avoid lines at some times of day (Interview resident 2, 2019; Interview resident 4, 2019). Finally, Point Roberts residents have tried to establish lines of communication with border agencies. Some inform the border agencies in advance when an event is going to take place so that CBP can adapt their staffing levels in order to accommodate these flows (Interview resident 2, 2019). An ad hoc Border Committee was also established a few years ago between members of the community and the CBP Port Director who meet quarterly to discuss some of the challenges that people can encounter at the border (Interview resident 3, 2019; Interview CBP, 2019). The Taxpayers' Association also set up a newsletter through which, among other things, they

inform the residents about changing regulations at the border, regarding, for example, prohibited items (Interview resident 4, 2019). The goal of these initiatives is to raise awareness of the border both among the community and among CBP. Finally, in order to accommodate cross-border traffic, CBP increased its staffing levels between 2017 and 2019 from 17 officers to 24 while also adjusting schedules (Interview CBP, 2019).

### (III) Cross-Border Governance

While cross-border interactions are numerous, few institutional links have developed between Point Roberts and Delta, testifying to a more general phenomenon in North America: the "limited institutionalization" of cross-border relations as compared to Europe (Sohn & Lara-Valencia 2013, 5). Other border cities, such as Blaine or Sumas, testify to a similar lack of cross-border cooperation at the city scale as well as that of chambers of commerce.

Nevertheless, some specific cross-border agreements exist in terms of services. For instance, Point Roberts used to get its electricity and is still getting its water from Canada (Interview resident 3, 2019). Firefighters have also been working with Canadian volunteers for close to 30 years because the demographics of the community proves insufficient to provide people (Interview resident 6, 2019). One instance of cross-border cooperation is particularly worth analyzing. As a response to a project of building AM radio towers in 2012 in Point Roberts, the residents of both Point Roberts and Delta created the Cross-Border Coalition, an association, which launched a legal battle to prevent the construction of these towers. They eventually managed to prevail in March 2015 and

the towers were never built (Interview resident 4, 2019; Swenson 2017, 18, 30). The Point Roberts Marina has also developed relationships with 80-some marinas between the US and Canada, but the connections are more about communication and no working arrangement has been signed to deepen these relations (Interview resident 5, 2019).

As a consequence, one can say that the functional relationship that links Point Roberts with Delta across the border, although very dynamic, has yet to lead to formal cross-border cooperation. Contacts remain informal in shape and limited in numbers. One exception, however, is important to note: although Point Roberts does not have a sister city agreement with Delta, it does with Campobello, New Brunswick, a Canadian exclave on the far east of the border, one of the goals of this agreement being to lobby governments to create a policy provision for exclaves (Swenson 2017, 404).

### (IV) Identity

Finally, since borders can "define and produce a regional identity" (Giffinger & Hamedinger 2013, 207), the last criterion that is worth examining is the presence or the absence of some kind of cross-border identity that can be shared between Point Roberts and Delta. It is what Buursink calls a "feeling of togetherness" or what Herzog describes as a "transboundary social system and a community of interests" (Herzog 1990).

The last section of the survey had to do with this topic. People were asked if they felt they belonged to a cross-border region. As illustrated in Figure 9, similar proportions of the respondents from Point Roberts and Delta answered that they do belong to a cross-border region: between 82 and 86%. For many residents, proximity to the border, the necessity of crossing it and the economic dependence of the community on Canada define Point Roberts as a cross-border region. Likewise, Delta residents highlight similar reasons, pointing out the numerous cross-border trips that people make.

However, this belonging does not necessarily translate into the presence of a cross-border identity on both sides of the border. For respondents in Point Roberts, it does since 83% of them answered positively whereas only 61% of respondents in Delta gave a similar response (Figure 10).

This contrast is even more telling when people were asked about which scale of community they feel the most attached to (Figure 11). In Point Roberts, 23% of the sample first identify with a cross-border region while a majority (41%) identify with their country. For Delta, only 6% identify with Cascadia while a huge majority (60%) predominantly identify to Canada first.

A factor that could foster this emerging cross-border identity is the presence of a cross-border newspaper, the *All Point Bulletin*, a local newspaper founded in 1985. Even

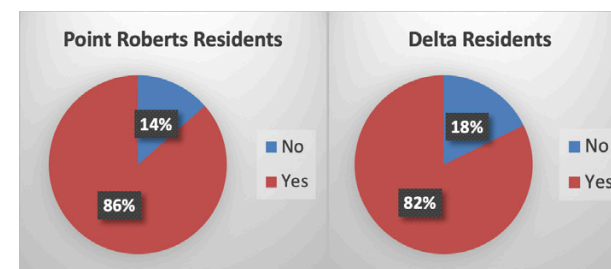


Figure 9. Answers to the question "Would you say you belong to a cross-border region?" Source: online survey 2019.

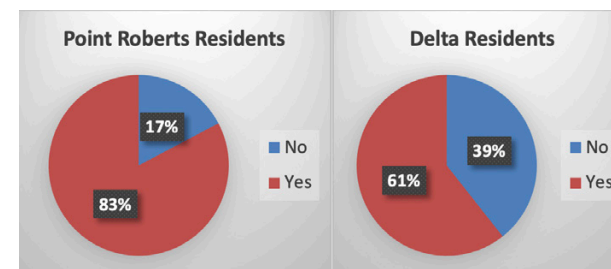


Figure 10. Answers to the question "Do you think you share a common identity with the people living across the border?" Source: online survey 2019.



if it mainly deals with Point Roberts, in order to "diffuse our message and the significance of our newspaper [which] is all about being local", close to half of its copies are distributed in Tsawwassen and Ladner (over 4,000 out of 9,000 copies) (Interview resident 7, 2019).

Interestingly, 19% of people feel a deep attachment to Point Roberts first, on the American side. This "sense of community" permeated the interviews as well. One resident emphasized the fact that Point Roberts is "very community oriented" (Interview resident 4, 2019) as evidenced by the presence of associations that defend the interests of the community such as the Circle of Care, the Voters' Association, the Taxpayers' Association, and the Point Interface, which is a mailing list to inform people about local issues and events. It is also important to underscore that the Taxpayers' Association, although not a cross-border institution per se, was created "to give them [Canadians] a voice" (Interview resident 4, 2019).

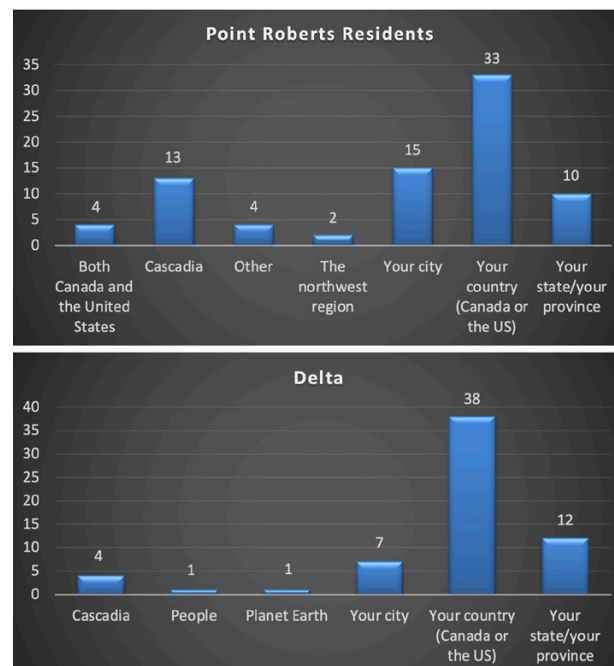
The different interviews also highlighted specific characteristics of Point Roberts such as its quality of life based on safety, tranquility and a low crime rate; the crime rate is 63% lower than the national average and 72% lower than Washington State's average (Swenson 2017, 317). Four interviewees compared Point Roberts to a gated community. This feeling of protection is attributed to the border as summed up by one resident: "The safety and the security that we feel is because the guards have guns, as we are behind a gate of sorts" (Interview resident 4, 2019). It was even compared to "going back to the 70s" by three interviewees. All these characteristics impart to the place a kind of uniqueness that people in Point Roberts frequently underscore. And the border no doubt contributes to this uniqueness and to the specificity of the community:

It [the border] dominates our lives. It's there all the time. You always know about it. All sorts of benefits come with it. It turns Point Roberts into a gated community. It keeps us from being turned into strip malls that are Tsawwassen. It makes it safe as a community, literally the safest community in North America (Interview resident 4, 2019).

## Discussion

What the survey and the interviews have shown is that Point Roberts evinces a great "level of connectivity" to Delta, an expression borrowed from Reitel for whom connectivity is a defining feature of border towns (Reitel 2013, 245). Three of the four criteria proposed to define border towns were found to be present.

Firstly, morphologically (I), the border connects Point Roberts to Delta, but it also defines its urban space, and not always for the better. Indeed, the combination of Point Roberts' geographic situation as an exclave and the presence of the border affects Point Roberts' "territorial capital" defined as "different area-bounded factors that



**Figure 11. Answers to the question "To which of the following do you feel more attached to?"** Source: online survey 2019.

cause some regions to be more competitive than others" (Ginffinger 2013, 207). It constitutes a handicap (Reitel & Zander 2020) and it can be sterilizing (Pradeau 1994, 227). Addressing some of these challenges could help "turn the scar it represents into a resource" (Amilhat-Szary 2015, 85). Exploiting the benefits that the border constitutes would mean, according to some interviewees, having access to the money the border generates in terms of gas money, which finds itself on a Border Transport Benefit Fund to which Point Roberts rarely has access, and in terms of destination tax from the parcel industry, which a lack of transparency makes it hard to assess (Interview resident 3, 2019; Interview resident 4, 2019). These funds could allow Point Roberts to fund a ferry to the mainland as was planned in the 1990s (Swenson 2017, 393) and thus develop accessibility by lessening the residents' dependence on the border.

Then, functionally (II), the border is heavily practiced by local residents, although more by Americans than by Canadians, who use it for utilitarian purposes. Point Roberts' relations are polarized by the border, whereas Canadian residents have access to a vast area—Greater Vancouver—that diversifies their practices and undermines the power of attraction exerted by the border. It still means that it is the location of a great number of cross-border ties, which bind Point Roberts and Delta, defining a "cross-border functional region" (Letniwska-Swiat 2002, 113). The border structures multi-scalar flows, which impart to Point Roberts a level of importance not only locally but also regionally, encompassing a large part of Cascadia.

From an identity (IV) perspective, the survey has shown that residents feel that they live in a cross-border region

while, at the same time, sharing, to some extent, a common binational identity with people across the border. That being said, when asked about the manifestation of this cross-border identity, the respondents gave reasons that were the same as those given for the manifestation of the cross-border region: similar language and common values, cross-border interactions and having friends and/or family in the other country. In other words, they did not necessarily distinguish the existence of a cross-border region from that of a cross-border identity and rather defined both as a result of the functional links that bind both sides of the border. In addition, Americans felt a stronger cross-border identity—although not that prominent in that it rarely prevailed over attachment to country—than Canadians, pointing out an imbalance of feelings of belonging between the two sides of the border.

Finally, as far as cross-governance (III) is concerned, there are very few institutional links between Point Roberts and Delta. Even if some resident-based organizations were created, they never developed into something more official. As often the case between Canada and the US, cooperation is rather informal and/or temporary. On the scale of federal governments, for instance, one can note that the agreements that dealt with the border—whether the Smart Border Declaration or the Beyond the Border Agreement—did not lead to the creation of any cross-border institutions. The Beyond the Border Agreement created a Beyond the Border Steering Committee that disbanded when governments changed (Interview G. Bruno, 2019).

All in all, three out of the four criteria that define a border town are significantly present, pointing to incomplete integration. Besides, from a functional perspective and an identity perspective, cross-border integration is much stronger on the American side than on the Canadian side. Because Point Roberts is an exclave, one can talk about forced, amplified and asymmetrical integration. It is also important to note that some of the cross-border interactions that happen in Point Roberts are not "cross-border" per se insofar as some people are crossing the border to go to the US mainland. Point Roberts is therefore as much anchored in Canada as it is in the US. Further research should focus on identifying the actual proportions of the community's links with Canada and with the US.

## Conclusion

With its unique configuration as an exclave, Point Roberts is at the center of integrational forces, which make it a cross-border community. It is not only defined by its proximity to the border but also by the links the town has developed with Delta and, to a certain extent, the Greater Vancouver area, particularly morphological, functional and cultural. The only type of cross-border connection not really present in the area has to do with institutional cooperation or cross-border governance. Point Roberts is therefore a part of a cross-border region, although asymmetrical and incomplete, shaped by cross-border links that entail

interactions and interdependence between both sides, a key characteristic of border towns (Fuentes 2000).

Even if some authors argue that 9/11 has altered the "social fabric" of border regions (Konrad 2014, 49-50), the border remains a factor of connectivity in that local residents have adapted to the new security measures by enrolling in facilitation programs or by adapting their crossing behaviors. What is certain is that residents have noticed the difference and more specifically have noticed the "banalization" that the Canada-US border has experienced in the last 19 years as a result of the "one face at the border policy" (Beylier 2016, 294):

when the border got tighter after 9/11...the federal government (...) started treating all people the same, which means that anybody coming across the Point Roberts border is in theory treated exactly the way somebody's trying to come through the Mexican border (Interview resident 4, 2019).

While being the community's *raison d'être*, the border still represents an inescapable threat. In 2019, one resident underscored the feeling of isolation that derives from being an exclave: "We're floating off from the US. We're on our own" (Interview resident 4, 2019). This is even more true in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, since March 21, 2020, the Canada-US border has been closed to all non-essential travel, thus putting in jeopardy not only the economic activity of the town, which is heavily dependent on cross-border travel, but also the lives of Point Roberts residents who are taken hostages and felt that the "community was being ripped apart" (Fremson 2020). This situation thus further amplifies Point Roberts' dependence on the border, revealing some of the major issues that need to be addressed. If solutions are not found, the future of the exclave may be put into question.

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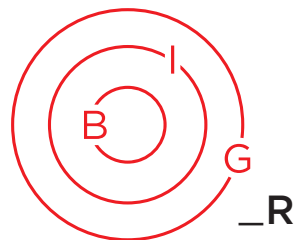
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ARTICLE

## Teaching Borders: A Model Arising from Israeli Geography Education

Tal Yaar-Waisel \*

*Teaching the topic of a country's borders can be challenging. This is especially the case in Israel, where not all the state's borders are agreed: there are internal disagreements between parties on the ground and external disagreements between parts of the international community and the State of Israel. A border, the very symbol of stability and consistency, contains mixed and contradictory aspects; the borders are not always well defined and, for many people, sensitive and contentious subjects. Therefore, teachers often avoid or feel uncomfortable teaching the topic, even though they know well its importance. This study examines existing curricula and textbooks used to teach the topic in Israeli high schools, and develops a picture of teachers' perceptions of teaching the topic through qualitative research. On this basis, the paper proposes a training model that addresses both the social and emotional side of the subject and the historical and political knowledge required to teach it. The purpose of the model is to better equip and enrich teachers to take on the task while minimizing fear of encountering or provoking adverse reactions. The teacher's role is to expose students to different perspectives and positions, so students can begin to assess the problematic and complex nature of the topic in general and Israel's borders in particular.*

### Introduction

Boundaries are not always fixed in their positions and in their functioning: some boundaries that were open have been closed, and some border crossings are no longer operating or under supervision; this has been happening since September 2001 along U.S. borders, as well as more intensively in the last decade at the "edges" of the EU and in between (Popescu 2012; Scott 2010). It has also been happening in the areas surrounding Israel. A border, whose very existence is intended to express a constant and stable entity, expresses contradictory characteristics in Israel and sends out confused messages, and therefore teaching the subject is not at all simple and presents a significant challenge to teachers (Miles 2011).

In the era of globalization, the development of technologies for transfer of information, joint economic interests, international collaborations on the topics of ecology, refugees and migrant workers, terror and drugs raise the importance of teaching this subject. Studies have been published that relate to the emotional and mental side of teaching boundaries in addition to the empirical side. Siedle and Budke (2019) concluded that German students have limited understanding of boundaries and differing spatial concepts of them.

Because borders around the world have been changing their character dramatically in the 21st century (Yaar-Waisel 2018), teaching the subject becomes more complex, and

therefore, requires teachers to teach an uncertain and controversial subject. Recently, the issue reached new levels of importance when the COVID-19 pandemic led governments around the world to tighten their borders more than ever before, including Israel (Newman 2020).

Much has been published about the borders of the State of Israel, concerning their determination and establishment and their changes over more than a century (Braver 1988, 2014; Biger 2018; Newman 2020 among others). This research literature is important for teaching the subject, but this article does not discuss border studies. Rather, this article delves into the subject of teaching about borders. The first part relates to existing curricula and textbooks. Then the paper will present what is actually happening in the teaching of the subject. Finally, the paper will present a model for improved teaching outcomes.

The purpose of this study is to raise the importance of teaching the subject and to examine the ways in which it is studied in the Israeli education system, focusing on the required curriculum and on teachers' perceptions of teaching it. Furthermore, it is hoped that a new model outlined in this paper will help better prepare teachers to teach the subject while reducing anxieties and adverse reactions.

### Research Methods

This study examines the existing curricula and textbooks used to teach the topic in Israeli middle schools and high schools. The Israeli geography curriculum is nationwide for two sectors: in Hebrew and Arabic. All curricula are published on the website of the Ministry of Education. Qualitative research conducted between 2018 and 2020 explores teachers' perceptions of teaching this topic through questionnaires and interviews with almost 50 geography teachers at more than 30 different middle and high schools, teaching students aged 15 through 18, grades 9 through 12. Seventy-five percent of the teachers who answered a questionnaire belonged to the Hebrew-Jewish state education system, and 25 percent are Arabic speaking schools (Muslim, Druze and Christian), which are also part of the state education system. Only ten percent of the teachers that answered the questionnaires teach at orthodox schools. These questionnaires and interviews were used for the purpose of examining what is really happening in classes, beyond the formal curricula. Drawing on this research as well as on many years of experience teaching the subject and training students to teach it, this paper outlines a new model for teaching the topic of borders.

### Framing the Issue / Theoretical background

Much has been researched and written about the importance of relating the content to the learner (Michaeli 2014, Naveh 2014). The teaching of geography at its best connects the study to current events and to the world

experienced by the students (Ministry of Education). Political events taking place every day have a close connection with the geographical world. Teaching that connection is the heart of the profession. Current events are identified through geographical concepts and studied within the framework of the main ideas of geography, using specific methods of inquiry into this subject (Sneh 2004). There is an irony in the inverse relationship between the importance of the subject, as teachers believe, and their eagerness to talk about it in classrooms (Miles 2011).

Teaching political issues encounters difficulties and barriers in various places around the world (Grayson 2015). For example, a study examining the knowledge and understanding of geopolitical teaching in the US at the beginning of this century shows that there is a lack of attention and awareness surrounding geopolitical issues (Holm & Farber 2002). The researchers found that although understanding geopolitical processes was significant for teachers in times of change (the article was written one year after September 11, 2001), the knowledge they demonstrated was poor. The geopolitical issues examined relate to the international economy and international markets, the power of countries, cooperation between countries, multicultural cooperation (e.g., the Olympics reflects the need for cooperation among nations), as well as environmental issues such as climate change and environmental sustainability, human rights, migration, and population growth. The researchers found that the source from which the respondents gained most of their knowledge was not the education system but from the media (Holm & Farber 2002). In Europe, the contents of the study were examined, and it was found that the perception of "European integration" is derived from a national point of view in each country, and that the textbooks serve as "vehicles of nationalism" (Sakki 2014). Professor O'Reilly from Dublin City University emphasizes the complexity of political geography in general, and the issue of borders in particular (O'Reilly 2019).

The importance of teaching the topic can be found in two main directions: the first concerns the importance of basic geographic knowledge for the behaviour of a functioning adult member of society, while the second supposes that discussing real-world disputes improves the critical thinking of students (Sziarto et al 2014; Michaeli 2014; Lamm 1998; Rasisi & Diamant 2002). The complexity of teaching political geography in general, as reflected in this literature review and especially the topic of borders, has created a need for teacher training and teacher guidance for teaching the subject. Therefore, working with Israeli curriculum, this paper asks the following research questions:

- What are the contents that appear in the geography curriculum?
- What are the contents of the textbooks that appear in the educational system?
- What will we actually teach in middle and high school classes?
- How can teachers be trained to teach the subject?







Figure 1. Two views of the separation wall. Photographed in east Jerusalem by the author, 2018.

## Teaching Borders in Israel

Much has been published about the borders of the State of Israel, concerning their determination and establishment and their changes over more than a century (Braver 1988, 2014; Biger 2018; Newman 2020 among others). This research literature informs the teaching of the subject, but this article does not discuss border studies. Rather, this article delves into the subject of teaching about borders. The first part relates to existing curricula and textbooks, the continuation of this paper will present what is happening in the actual teaching the subject in secondary school's classrooms.

A study conducted in 2011 by William Miles on the topic of border teaching in Israel concluded that many teachers feel uncomfortable and avoid geopolitical issues. The researcher concluded that the textbooks on borders contain confusing and contradictory messages. It was also recommended that sophisticated and multi-layered typology was needed (Miles 2011).

The starting point for teaching the subject of borders is that in Israel it is impossible to accept the boundaries as a matter of course. They are a subject that is controversial, expresses conflict and requires negotiation both between Israel and its neighbours and within Israel. Teaching a subject that is uncertain and temporary is problematic and challenging (Bar-Gal 1993); it requires teacher training and preparation for the teaching of the topic in advance.

In order to address geopolitical issues and understand the meaning of the curriculum, this research asked participants questions that have no unequivocal answers. For example: Is there any consensus on the delineation of the state? and what do we teach the younger generation? Paradoxically, something so important receives little attention in the geography class (Bar-Gal 1996; Miles 2011). Further complicating the teaching of borders in Israel, political perceptions that appear directly or indirectly in textbooks, as Peled-Elhanan (2013) argues, are laced with a pro-Israel ideology.

For example, the Green Line was the border between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan from 1949 until 1967. Since then, according to international law it has been the line between the sovereign state of Israel and the Palestinian territory known as the West Bank. For many Israelis, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, with a history that goes back millennia to biblical times. In 2006, the Minister of Education, Yuli Tamir, removed the injunction on drawing the "Green line" on the maps of Israel (which are produced at the Israel Mapping Centre). Still, in most classrooms there are maps that do not contain the "Green Line". Even in most of the atlases that are used in schools, there is no mention of this border. In the latest edition of Professor Moshe Braver's *University Atlas* (2014), the marking of the Separation Fence appears clearly.

## Existing Curricula and Textbooks

The geography curriculum is presented online on the site of the Ministry of Education, Department of Geography, in Hebrew ([http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/UNITS/Mazkirut\\_Pedagogit/Geographya](http://cms.education.gov.il/EducationCMS/UNITS/Mazkirut_Pedagogit/Geographya)). The site lists the content required for teaching the subject of borders. The subject of Israel's borders appears twice in the curriculum for high schools: for the first time in the ninth grade, in the framework of teaching geography for the Land of Israel. All Israeli students are supposed to study the subject in the ninth grade, although in practice this is not the case, and various schools teach innovative interdisciplinary programs that do not follow the "regular" curriculum. For the second time, the subject is meant to be taught in the higher grades as part of the matriculation programme in geography that includes the subject. Geography is a profession that the student can choose, and only a minority of students study geography during their high school studies.

In the ninth-grade curriculum, just two hours of instruction are planned for the subject of Israel's borders. The content required of those teaching this topic includes various terms: the borders of the country (The "Land of Israel") and the borders of the state ("The State of Israel") which are not the same terms in Hebrew, as they involve a deep political and historical meaning. Teaching the borders of Israel today, and lastly, changes in the borders' lines. As mentioned, only two hours are recommended for these complex terms and topics.

The geography textbook for the ninth grade, Israel: *Man and Space* (Fine et al 2007) was published by a private publisher, the Centre of Technological Education and received the Ministry of Education's permission to be used in schools. It contains only three pages on borders. The subject is at the beginning, and this indicates its importance. On the first page are the basic concepts of borders: "The Land of Israel", "The State of Israel", "Agreed border", "Temporary border", "Armistice line". On the second page, the historical processes of border formation in Israel are described: the borders of the British Mandate (1922), the borders of the Partition Plan (1947), borders following the War of Independence (1949), and finally the review of border changes following the Six Day War (1967). One column is devoted to "Israel's borders today". It contains the continuation of the historical review: the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, and finally, the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. Because textbooks are re-written once every five-to-ten years in Israel, teachers have to update the text and to add external sources.

The three-page textbook section includes six maps. Two of the maps are large in relation to the other four, the first of which is the Land of Israel, with its eastern border running along the Jordan River, the West Bank with areas marked "Palestinian Authority A". The second large map



is that of Israel with the occupied territories after the Six Day War (1967), including Sinai, Gaza, Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights. Choosing the size of the maps, the elements included and those that are not included reflect a political statement and meaning (Collins-Kreiner et al 2006).

It is particularly interesting to examine the question that summarizes the chapter:

Write briefly about the four major wars of the State of Israel since its establishment: when did they take place, which countries participated in them, and what were their effects on the borders of the country?

This question expresses the view that the border is a product of war and, as such, it constitutes a problem.

On the website following the textbook there is a video showing a lesson taught by Professor Gideon Biger on the subject of Israel's borders. The professor adapts his lecture to the target audience which is composed of religious youth. The introduction presents borders as a complex problem, and most of the lecture is a historical review of the formation of boundaries.

In 2009, the textbook for twelfth graders was published as preparation for the matriculation exam in Geography. The book *Israel in the 21st Century: Selected topics in Geography for High Schools* (Graitzer 2009) was published by the same private publisher as *Israel: Man and Space*, the Centre of Technological Education. Some of the writers participated in writing both books. The introduction to the 2009 book deals with the borders of Israel. This book devotes fourteen pages to the subject. Half of them are historical descriptions of the formation of Israel's separate international boundaries: Israel-Egypt, Israel-Jordan, Israel-Syria, and Israel-Lebanon, plus special attention to the disputed separation line between the state of Israel and the Palestinian authority. In this book there is a specific reference to the question of the future permanent borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; students are requested to present their own geopolitical point of view. This topic, "Approaches to determining the permanent borders of the State of Israel" is a political, courageous discussion that presents and invites a range of positions on the complex problem, as geopolitical teaching should do.

The students are set the following tasks at the conclusion of the chapter:

- 1a. Define an agreed boundary and a temporary border.
- 1b. Give one example of a temporary border that Israel shares with one of its neighbouring states, and one example of an agreed border.
- 1c. Detail the history of the borders from the days of the British Mandate until the present day.

2. Describe the advantages, difficulties, and problems involved in each of the three approaches to establishing permanent borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Determine your position and justify it.
3. What are the implications of the absence of peace, and consequently the lack of regulated borders, on our region?
4. Discuss the following subjects: security, law enforcement, settlement, social ethics, economics, education and welfare, migration and immigration, planning and development, foreign investments, and Israel's international standing (2009, 19).

These questions provide a structure for engaging with specific and contentious aspects of Israel's borders that leads students to acquaintance with other opinions and higher order thinking. Students are required to base their answers on knowledge of the concepts, knowledge of historical realities, and on their own positions. This is the teaching of political geography at its best.

### Teaching the Subject in Practice

The teaching of Political Geography in general, and within it the teaching of borders specifically, is complicated and challenging. In recent years, there has been an increase in the degree of concern that teachers feel about discussing issues with political implications (Michaeli 2014). Ninth-grade teachers devote two hours to the subject at the beginning of the year using textbooks and very often presentations that are available on the Internet.

In order to get a picture of the actual teaching in the schools, questionnaires were given and interviews were conducted with teachers of geography in high school and middle school. They testify that they teach through the book "Israel Man and Space" (2007), 75% using videos and other visual presentations, and all show maps during their lessons. Many try to hold class discussions.

Teachers claim that the few hours in which they can teach the "Geography of the Land of Israel" require them to choose from the vast amount of subjects included in the field. It should be reiterated that even in the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, the instruction is given to teach the subject of borders for only two hours. Thus, the actual subject matter focuses on a few basic concepts: usually a distinction between a "natural border" and an "artificial border" and less a distinction between an "agreed border" and a "temporary border". Teachers note that they use the term "Armistice line" in class. In addition, teachers require that their students be familiar with the historical processes of boundary formation: Who set the limit and when was it done? Because the material presented in the textbook is readable students are able to read both pages in the book on their own. Teachers often leave little time for discussion of political and controversial issues; it may be a sign of disappointment

because teachers often feel that students lack a sufficient knowledge base of the subject to engage in significant class discussion.

Teachers emphasize the "added value" of teaching the topic when they succeed in conducting a class discussion:

Learning about the subject of borders also allows us to experience the arguments that each person tends to hold in his position, teaches them to listen to other opinions and hold a respectful discussion.

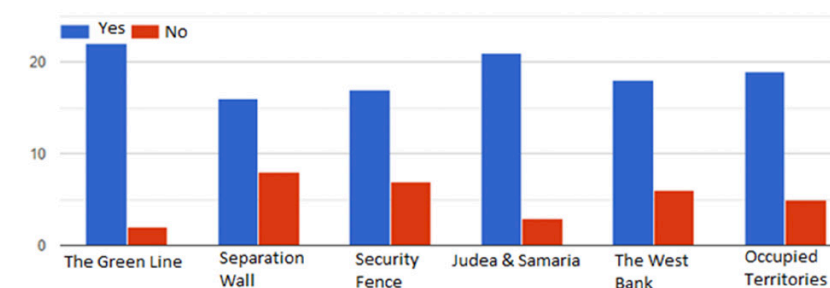
And:

It's a subject I love to teach because it results in a very volatile and very emotional discussion when I manage to conduct an intelligent, reasoned and important discussion with the students.

### Teaching the "Green Line"

As mentioned earlier, the "Green Line" served as the border between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan between 1949 and 1967; it now serves as an administrative border between various districts of the Ministry of the Interior in the sovereign State of Israel and Israel's government in Judea and Samaria (Soffer & Yaar-Waisel 1999). The Green Line is not an agreed border, and there are disagreements over its future (Khamaisi 2008). A "security fence" or a "separation wall" has been built along large sections of the line, sometimes near it and sometimes further.

There is confusion and inconsistency in teaching the Green Line. Those who say that they teach the subject use a wide variety of expressions and nicknames, sometimes alternating back and forth: "Security Fence", "Separation Wall", "cease-fire line". This follows from attempts to explain "what is separated by this border?" "The Territories", "Occupied Territories", "settlements", "Judea and Samaria" and "the West Bank" all hinge on the Green Line (Figure 2). This issue receives more attention since the route of the separation fence was added to the atlas, while most of the maps presented in the classrooms do not contain it. When the students see the line on the map, they ask about it.



**Figure 2. Relevant terms used by geography teachers.** Teachers were asked: Did you use one or more of the following expressions?

Despite the difficulty, many teachers expressed interest in teaching this topic. They responded positively to the question: "Is teaching this topic different from teaching other topics in the geography curriculum?" For example:

The subject is loaded with meaning and causes quite a few arguments.

Teaching this topic differs from teaching other subjects due to the fact that there are points that touch the political debate within the State of Israel that involve the students.

Because there are students who oppose discussing politics in school.

There is an emotional aspect to the subject, It is a national emotional issue.

The teaching of this topic is very different from teaching other subjects, because it touches on many educational questions, such as politics and worldview, and these reflect the lack of knowledge of many of the students.

The teaching of the topic is very different because it involves a whole lot of other subjects.

The students find this topic interesting.

The "interest" and "political complexity" teachers mention is different from the way in which they choose to examine their students. Questions that students were asked in exams and work exercises focus mostly on the historical aspects of the formation of boundaries, that is to say: there is little that could lead to disagreement.

### A model for teaching the subject of borders

The findings stemming from the teachers' remarks and the difficulty they expressed in teaching the subject suggest a way to help teachers approach the subject and prepare lessons more effectively. Borders are important, and teachers want to succeed in teaching the subject.

At the base of the model is the question whether the teacher is interested and understands the subject or feels uncomfortable teaching it and therefore avoids it. A teacher must understand the totality of the subject: both the emotional aspects and the prerequisite knowledge. Learning should include both levels, since geopolitical subjects are not disconnected from the world and from the life experiences of the teachers and students.

The experience of boundaries can be a result of visiting a border area or living near it, of watching news or from stories that pass through family. The teacher and students should be open to the full range of emotions to teach the subject. Although the emphasis is usually on the history of the borders, the process of establishing them and the conflicts associated with them, it is also appropriate to extend the learning to the political and national contexts of the border conceptions and different views regarding the status and political implications of policy makers. For example, reference to land uses in the border area and the possibilities of cooperation across both sides of the border.

In teaching according to the model, special importance is assigned to drawing conclusions and evaluation ("Higher order thinking"), for example, regarding future possibilities for environmental planning and developing the border region for the benefit of all residents on both sides of the border.

The recommended teaching methods in this study are based on independent student learning and classroom discussions, dealing with the meaning of what has been learned. This means that students will research themselves, ask questions and search for information on the Internet and try to answer the questions themselves, without the teacher providing all the answers. This learning model prepares the students for civic involvement and critical observation, as appropriate for a citizen in a democratic state.

After several years of experience in developing teaching according to the model, in teaching in an academic classroom, it seems that it is possible to open a discussion around complex and value-related questions related to this topic, and to develop collaborative learning that engages students.

### Discussion, Summary and Conclusions

In the geography curricula, both in grade 9 of middle school and in grade 12 of high school, the subject of "Israel's borders" appears as an introduction. The topic appears at the beginning of the curriculum and in the opening of the textbooks, a value statement that expresses the importance of the subject. The geography book for the ninth grade contains three pages on borders. Three pages are too few and inadequate for such a subject. Teachers claim that they cannot expand it, although the question of time may be an "excuse" for their concern about dealing with a subject of political controversy.

The 12th grade textbook ends with the chapter entitled "Approaches to determining the permanent borders of the State of Israel", a courageous, political discussion that presents a wide spectrum of opinions and raises the complexity of the problems. The subject becomes important and relevant.

Much of what is required for teaching is based on the history of the boundaries and their processes of formation. The historical part is clearer than the political questions related to the borders of the country. Regarding the processes of determining the boundaries, there is agreement in the curricula and in the textbooks; there is no disagreement regarding the question of the decision to delimit the various border lines or for significant disagreements that existed at the time of their establishment. In the textbooks, which should correspond to the curriculum, a similar division is made: most of the text deals with the history of the delimitation of the borders and, to some extent, the border reality today.

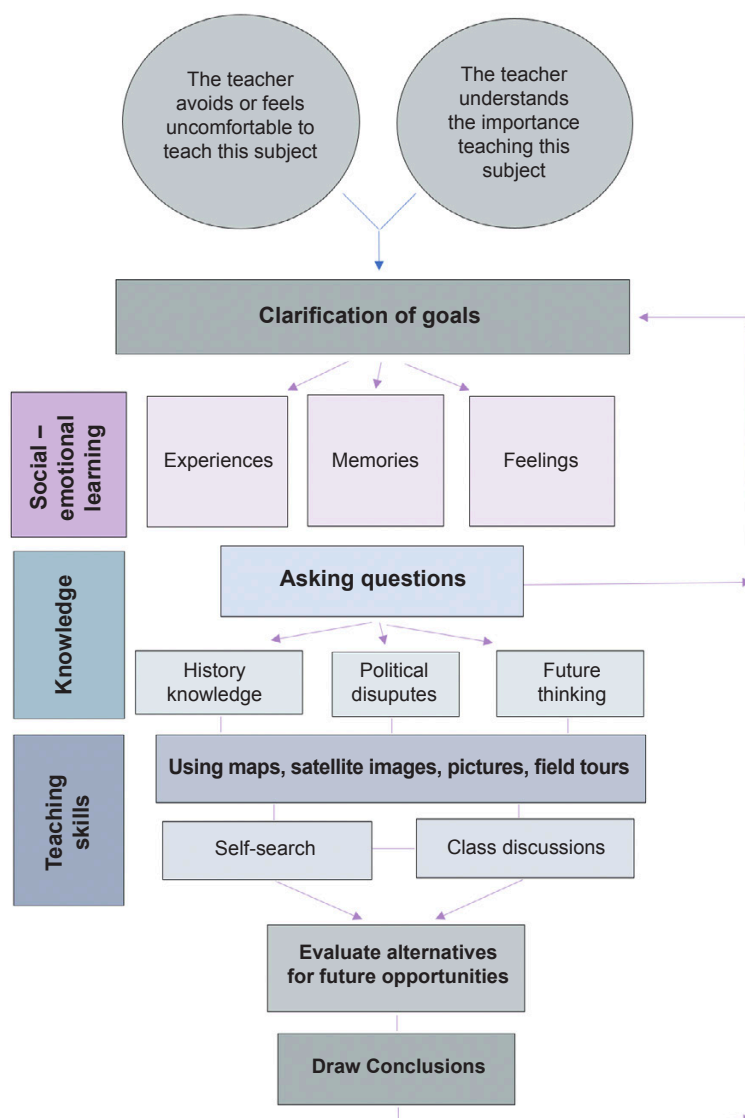


Figure 3. Model for teaching borders.

The curriculum and the textbook intended for ninth graders (middle school), which, officially, all Israeli students are supposed to study, are not aimed at political thinking, or drawing conclusions and formulating personal positions. The topic allows for the study of factual knowledge only. There is no discussion or encouragement in the textbook for the ninth graders to discuss questions such as "What characterises a border area?" or "What are the advantages of an open border?" There is little to think about for the students as regards border crossings and related topics. The student is not asked to draw any conclusions from the historical processes of boundary formation, and there is no assessment that stimulates the student to think seriously about the future of borders.

On the other hand, the material for twelfth graders (high school) includes encouraging the student to think: the questions at the end of the chapter lead the students to higher thinking, and he or she is required to base his or her comments on knowledge of the concepts, familiarity with the variety of concepts, and finally express his or her positions, which is exemplary of teaching political geography.

The study found that teachers want to lead their students to higher order thinking. Teachers enjoy and feel that they are promoting their students' abilities while teaching the lesson. Geography teachers want to relate to the current reality in the classroom, in addition to teaching historical information.

In open-ended questions included in the surveys, teachers wrote:

The subject involves the use of important geographic skills such as map reading and comparison of maps, spatial geographic thinking and dealing with current questions and value problems. That is why I think the issue is important and interesting.

And:

The subject interests the students very much. It is always topical. There are many teaching aids that make the subject accessible and clear (videos and other visual presentations). Maps are used throughout the entire subject.

Teaching materials should be updated frequently, and teachers should be trained to discuss questions that encourage value thinking, even if they have emotional and political aspects.

Teacher training should be based on the recognition of the importance of teaching political subjects and should enable teachers to overcome difficulties in teaching such subjects. Student-teachers, or teachers-in-training, should be exposed to the complexity of teaching the lesson during their training period; they should experience teaching through classroom discussion, and they should acquire the

skills to develop a discussion. There is an important need to expose students to a variety of opinions without fear of confrontation and without imposing a unilateral stance, which may not be well received by students, parents, or the education system. Teachers feel that they are "at risk" when teaching a controversial issue and are cautious in their words. They use different terms for the same things, which can present additional challenges to the students. Geography teachers have to be aware of the existence of a gap between the existing political realities and the maps that exist in class, those that are published in atlases and those in textbooks.

It is important to emphasize to teachers the importance of educating youth in political thinking, evaluating alternatives, and drawing conclusions. A student in a democratic state must develop the tools for independent thinking and establish positions that can be formulated on the basis of historical and political reality. Students who are made aware of different viewpoints and varied opinions become better able to objectively assess the problems being discussed. The subject of the teaching of borders is complex and therefore cannot be taught in only a few hours.

Teachers must be trained to see the teaching of controversial subjects as a primary task, and to reflect on the challenges alongside the deep meaning of teaching this topic. In dealing with this subject, a teacher can bring the "added value" of teaching to class.

Training student-teachers should be done, first, in the course of their training. We must identify the challenging in teaching the subject and encourage them not to feel uncomfortable when raising political issues. Of course teachers can formulate personal positions, based on the wide range of opinions and the arguments that accompany the various opinions.

This subject should also be discussed in teacher training sessions during the academic year. The difficulties associated with teaching this topic can be discussed and legitimized while, at the same time, stressing to the teacher the importance of coping with these difficulties.

This study recommends that one attach importance to the teaching of this issue in various sectors of Israeli society such as those in Arab or Jewish Orthodox religious schools, and to find the common purpose of teaching it, that is exposing the student to a variety of opinions. Of course, when the class population is homogeneous in its perceptions of the subject, the teacher's work becomes even more challenging, because he/or she must present a range of views in the classroom and stimulate students to acknowledge arguments different from those familiar to them.

This paper proposes that teachers in middle school be allowed to teach more broadly the subject of borders. Let us allow teachers to discuss values, morality, debates,



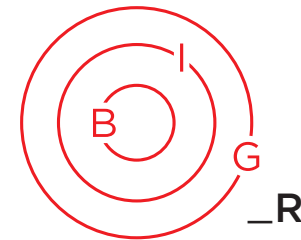
then allow the students to formulate their own positions. Personal attitudes are based on factual information. It is hope that all these activities will encourage the students to be thoughtful and become involved in what is happening around them as befits citizens in a democratic state.

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## ARTICLE (FRENCH)

# Les frontières marocaines à l'épreuve de la pandémie Covid-19

Saida Latmani \*

*Vu l'ampleur des risques d'importation du virus Covid-19, le Maroc a décidé, le 15/03/2020 de fermer ses frontières. Cette décision est venue renforcer le système de filtrage qui a été jusque-là mis en place au niveau des frontières du Royaume. Cette situation révèle que la frontière, en tant que réalité psychologique et sociologique, peut servir d'instrument dynamique de lutte contre cette pandémie. Elle dévoile également, l'insuffisance des dispositifs et des mesures préventives contre la propagation du Coronavirus. Enfin, elle marque une période de changements nécessaires dans la vie des frontières marocaines.*

## Introduction

L'historienne Anne Rasmussen dans son article sur la frontière disait: « *Qu'elle soit barrière de protection contre les importations pathogènes, front pionnier de civilisation hygiénique, ou dispositif mondial de surveillance de la santé publique, la frontière a été, depuis deux siècles, un pivot du gouvernement de la circulation des hommes, des maladies et des germes* ».<sup>1</sup> Si nous suivons cette logique selon laquelle la frontière est la voie de circulation des virus,<sup>2</sup> un dispositif sanitaire efficace au niveau des frontières reviendrait donc à éviter ou à diminuer les risques d'importation des virus dans un pays. Ce qui veut dire que si le virus a fini par infiltrer les territoires des Etats, c'est sans doute parce qu'il y'avait une certaine insuffisance au niveau des dispositifs de filtrage au niveau des frontières. Ce sont les Etats, qui sont les seuls responsables de la politique de santé publique, et qui sont tenus de prendre les mesures adaptées à l'état de leur population, en fonction de leur spécificité sanitaire et de leur organisation institutionnelle.

En effet, dans le contexte du Covid-19 et afin de contenir et de détecter très rapidement les cas suspects, les Etats ont adopté des mesures différentes voire opposées.

Certains ont préféré fermer leurs frontières pour ne pas prendre de risques. D'autres comme le Maroc, ont procédé graduellement à un renforcement des dispositifs de filtrage qui existent au niveau des frontières<sup>3</sup> et ont décrété l'état d'urgence tout en fermant les frontières.<sup>4</sup> Ces mesures préventives<sup>5</sup> ont apporté des modifications sur le système de gestion des frontières.<sup>6</sup> Quels sont donc ces changements et quelles sont les conclusions qu'on peut en tirer?

Cette question peut être examinée sous le prisme de deux constats. Le premier se fonde sur l'observation d'un mode de gestion souple des frontières marocaines dans leur conception d'origine avant l'apparition du Covid-19 (I). Le second prend en considération le nouveau contexte du Covid-19 et justifie les mesures de renforcement voir de réaffirmation des frontières marocaines (II).

La méthodologie utilisée dans la rédaction de l'article est focalisée sur le traitement des données collectées de différentes sources sur la base de l'identification préalable de la problématique et l'émission d'hypothèse. Notre

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recherche est systématique dans la mesure où elle suit des étapes ordonnées de manière logique: identifier et comprendre la nature du problème étudié; puiser dans la littérature concernant le sujet pour comprendre comment les autres chercheurs ont approché le problème; analyser les données appropriées au problème étudié; tirer les conclusions qui s'imposent et faire les généralisations qu'il faut. Enfin notre méthode d'analyse est descriptive et analytique.

## I. Des frontières modernes souples en quête de renforcement

Le Maroc était une terre de refuge pour les étrangers qui recherchaient une protection dans le pays. En tant que pays musulman, ces frontières étaient plus des frontières socio-religieuses que géographiques. Elles séparaient en quelque sorte le monde musulman et le monde des non croyants.<sup>7</sup> Par contre les frontières au sens moderne du terme, en tant qu'espace géographique où s'exerce la souveraineté et qui nécessitent une gestion de contrôle plus organisée, ne sont apparues qu'après l'occupation du pays par la France en 1912. Toutefois, cette gestion demeure nettement relative (A). Car elle manifeste des insuffisances apparentes malgré le dispositif mis en place (B).

### (A) La relativité du contrôle des frontières marocaines

Depuis l'indépendance à nos jours, la gestion des frontières marocaines a connu une évolution progressive. Elle est outillée de moyens classiques de contrôle et de surveillance aux frontières, que ce soit par la construction de postes de contrôle (a) ou par la participation des différents acteurs à la gestion et à la sécurité des frontières (b).

#### a. La construction des postes de contrôle des frontières

Le Maroc a des frontières maritimes avec l'Espagne (13 kilomètres environ) au nord du Maroc au niveau du Détroit de Gibraltar à Tanger. Le Royaume partage également ses frontières terrestres avec l'Algérie à l'Est et avec la Mauritanie dans sa partie méridionale, et dans sa partie septentrionale avec les deux villes Ceuta et Melilla, qui sont situées sur le territoire marocain, mais considérées comme enclaves espagnoles. Au niveau de tous les points d'entrée terrestres, des postes-frontières sont construits. Ils sont surtout renforcés dans les zones où la sécurité est menacée comme entre la frontière avec l'Algérie où tout récemment le Maroc a décidé de construire des postes de contrôle supplémentaires.<sup>8</sup> Ces derniers permettent à la Police nationale marocaine, aux douanes, à la Gendarmerie et aux responsables sanitaires d'œuvrer pour aider à sécuriser la région frontalière. Ils ont également pour mission de contrôler les marchandises illicites ou soumises à des restrictions ou des droits de douane et d'éviter l'entrée des personnes indésirables ou illégales.<sup>9</sup> L'autorisation est souvent nécessaire pour entrer dans le pays à travers ses frontières.

Dans la pratique, la gestion des frontières au niveau des postes d'entrée est partagée entre l'État et les différents organismes.

#### b. Division des tâches entre l'État et les différents organismes

Les acteurs de gestion des frontières au Maroc sont nombreux. D'une manière générale on peut les classer en deux catégories. La première catégorie concerne l'État à travers ses différents ministères à savoir le ministère de l'Intérieur, des Affaires étrangères, des Finances, de la police sanitaire aux frontières. Ces différents ministères jouent un rôle important dans le contrôle des points de passage autorisés et la surveillance des frontières.

S'agissant des contrôles au niveau des points de passage autorisés, ils permettent aux autorités de s'assurer de la régularité des personnes qui souhaitent franchir les frontières du Royaume. Le ministère compétent dans ce sens est le ministère de l'Intérieur. La surveillance et le contrôle des frontières à l'appui d'un dispositif de filtrage contre les traversées clandestines des frontières est du ressort des forces auxiliaires du Royaume.

D'autres organismes participent aussi à la gestion des frontières. L'Agence Nationale des Ports (ANP) et la Société d'Exploitation des Ports (SODEP), ainsi que la Fondation Mohamed V pour la solidarité disposent des structures d'accueil et d'assistance aux différents ports et points d'entrée du Royaume et participent à la gestion des frontières.

### B. Les insuffisances du dispositif de filtrage avant le Covid-19

Le Maroc qui se trouve dans un espace de menace est amené à renforcer son dispositif de filtrage au niveau des frontières pour garantir la sécurité à sa population. Or, celles-ci ont enregistré une certaine perméabilité avant l'apparition de la pandémie due à la difficulté du contrôle des mouvements transfrontaliers (a) et à l'émergence de plusieurs menaces (b).

#### a. Le contrôle difficile des mouvements transfrontaliers

De nombreux obstacles compliquent la fonction du contrôle des frontières marocaines. Deux éléments justifient cette difficulté. D'une part, le trafic illicite des marchandises et d'autre part, la permanence de l'immigration illégale. Concernant le trafic illicite des marchandises, il faut dire que les agents de sécurité ont souvent intercepté d'importantes quantités<sup>10</sup> de produits prohibés.<sup>11</sup> Le plus inquiétant, c'est que ce trafic va de pair avec le trafic illicite des hommes<sup>12</sup> et une accélération de la circulation des armes légères, lourdes et un fort développement des activités criminelles.<sup>13</sup> Cette situation témoigne de la porosité<sup>14</sup> des frontières du Royaume au regard des différents phénomènes et menaces qui s'y développent et échappent à tout contrôle.

#### b. La persistance des menaces multiformes

On peut considérer les catastrophes naturelles, les menaces sécuritaires<sup>15</sup> et les crises sanitaires comme des phénomènes qui nécessitent le même degré de vigilance. Car ils ont des incidences directes sur la stabilité et la continuité des Etats et de leur population. On retient à ce propos les crises sanitaires à l'instar d'Ebola ou récemment la Covid-19.

Concernant Ebola, la pandémie est apparue en Afrique tropicale en 1976, avant de connaître une nouvelle flambée entre 2014 et 2016,<sup>16</sup> en Afrique de l'Ouest en l'occurrence, où de nombreuses personnes ont été atteintes par la maladie. Comme il se trouve à proximité des espaces où le virus a sévi, le Maroc a mis en place un dispositif de veille et de préparation à la riposte contre la maladie à virus Ebola de 2014.<sup>17</sup> Ce dernier s'articule autour des mesures visant la prévention de l'introduction du virus dans le territoire national; de vigilance et de veille en vue de la détection précoce des cas suspects au niveau du territoire national et des points d'entrée et au niveau communautaire; de préparation d'un dispositif de transport sécurisé, de diagnostic et de prise en charge; de communication sur le risque; de Gouvernance et coordination.<sup>18</sup>

À travers ces mesures, le Maroc a su maîtriser la maladie à virus Ebola. Cependant, depuis l'apparition de la Covid-19, force est de constater que le pays a rencontré de nombreuses difficultés. Cette situation alarmante a sans doute poussé les autorités marocaines à renforcer le dispositif existant.

## II. Le renforcement du dispositif existant pendant la période de Covid-19

Le renforcement des frontières marocaines dans le contexte Covid-19 en l'occurrence, se fonde sur le caractère dangereux de la pandémie, en raison de la rapidité de sa transmission et la gravité de ses effets. C'est en ce sens que le renforcement du dispositif existant s'est focalisé sur le contrôle sanitaire (A) et la fermeture des frontières (B).

### A. Le renforcement des contrôles sanitaires

Devant la situation pandémique du Covid-19, le Maroc était contraint d'agir rapidement et efficacement afin de limiter la propagation du virus, en adoptant des mesures préventives<sup>19</sup> allant de l'amélioration des procédures de contrôle sanitaire (a) au renforcement du dispositif des agents de contrôle des frontières (b).

#### a. L'amélioration des procédures de contrôle sanitaire

Les procédures de contrôle sanitaire ont connu une nette amélioration tout au long de la crise pandémique Covid-19, grâce au dispositif de détection préventive du virus au niveau des points d'entrée des frontières. Ce dispositif comprend l'installation de caméras thermiques<sup>20</sup> ou des thermo-flash dans les aéroports et les ports.<sup>21</sup>

Les passagers sont soumis à un contrôle de température corporelle une fois sur le sol marocain. Si la température excède les 38°C, les suspects sont dirigés vers le poste médical des points d'entrée pour un deuxième contrôle de température via la caméra thermique. Un médecin interroge le suspect et lui soumet également un questionnaire afin de vérifier s'il est question de symptômes de Covid-19 ou s'il s'agit d'autres causes qui peuvent expliquer cette hausse de température.

Le Maroc a soumis également les voyageurs au remplissage de la « fiche sanitaire » avant de débarquer sur le sol du Royaume. Ce document est disponible à bord de tous les avions et bateaux à destination du Maroc. Cette fiche permet aux autorités de recueillir plusieurs informations du passager parmi lesquels, son nom et prénom, sa date de naissance, sa date d'arrivée au Maroc, son numéro de siège à l'intérieur de l'avion, son numéro de vol, son numéro de passeport ou encore sa nationalité. Une fois la fiche remplie, elle sera par la suite vérifiée par la police des frontières du Maroc. Si un cas est suspecté à bord d'un moyen de transport (aéronef notamment), le responsable du Contrôle Sanitaire aux Frontières (CSF) ou la police sanitaire, exige le remplissage du document de la partie relative aux questions sanitaires de la Déclaration Générale de l'Aéronef ou la Déclaration Maritime de Santé.

D'autres mesures sont venues renforcer ce dispositif, notamment celles concernant les agents de contrôle.

#### b. Le renforcement des agents de contrôle au niveau des frontières

Soucieux de faire des frontières un instrument de lutte<sup>22</sup> contre la propagation du virus Covid-19, le gouvernement marocain a accordé une attention particulière aux agents de contrôle. La Sûreté nationale, les militaires, la Gendarmerie Royale etc. ont été appelés en renfort<sup>23</sup> pour assurer la sécurité des populations et faire respecter les mesures sanitaires sur tout le royaume.

Le même constat est fait au niveau des autres points d'entrée du Royaume notamment les aéroports et les ports. En effet, depuis l'annonce faite par le ministère de la santé le 25 janvier 2020 pour instaurer des contrôles sanitaires au niveau des aéroports et ports internationaux, les walis ont pris leurs responsabilités. Dans la pratique, ils ont augmenté, jusqu'à doubler, l'effectif des policiers. De même, les contrôles ont été intensifiés pour faire respecter les décisions sanitaires des autorités. Rien qu'en 2020, la Direction de la sûreté nationale (DGSN) a instauré des centaines de barrages de police sur différents axes routiers, points d'entrée et plus de 15600 policiers sont mobilisés tous les jours sur l'ensemble du territoire du royaume.<sup>24</sup>

Toutefois, en vue de limiter la contagion la décision la plus radicale a été de fermer les frontières avec certains pays.



## B. La fermeture des frontières

Le renforcement des frontières marocaines s'est traduit par la fermeture des frontières à travers la restriction des voyages (a) tandis que les frontières commerciales sont restées ouvertes (b).

### a. La restriction des voyages

Le Maroc prédispose de plusieurs facteurs qui l'ont exposé à la propagation du Covid-19. Il s'agit, d'une part, de sa proximité géographique et de sa connexion avec les pays européens du sud où vit une importante diaspora marocaine (85% des 5 millions des Marocains vivant à l'étranger sont en Europe)<sup>25</sup> Il s'agit, d'autre part, de l'interconnexion des villes marocaines, grâce à l'important réseau routier, ferroviaire (dont le TGV reliant Tanger et Casablanca, les deux principaux pôles économiques du pays).

C'est pourquoi les autorités marocaines ont décidé de fermer les frontières avec les pays fortement contaminés comme la Chine, l'Espagne, la France et l'Italie,<sup>26</sup> avant de généraliser la restriction au reste du monde.<sup>27</sup> Le 15 mars 2020, tous les vols internationaux des passagers en provenance et à destination du Maroc ont été suspendus, pour enfin fermer les frontières nationales. Il s'agit des frontières terrestres, maritimes et aériennes. Il a par contre été pris des mesures qui garantissent des possibilités de voyage sous conditions spéciales. Sur le plan national, les voyages terrestres par exemple ont progressivement été autorisés sous condition de présenter une autorisation spéciale. Les voyages aériens ont été suspendus. Sur le plan international, le Maroc a organisé des voyages spéciaux pour rapatrier les nationaux et les résidents sur son territoire, par voie maritime et par voie aérienne. Il a aussi autorisé des vols d'autres pays pour le même objectif.

Suite à la décision de fermer les frontières du Royaume, le contrôle a été renforcé au niveau des postes-frontières de Ceuta et de Melilla qui enregistrent d'habitude un flux important de passagers. Des patrouilles se font dans les deux sens et certains espagnols et touristes bloqués au Maroc, ne peuvent pas rejoindre leur pays à cause des restrictions de voyage, même si en général, la police espagnole et la police marocaine dans le cadre de leur coopération allègent les conditions d'entrée aux marocains habitants les deux villes avoisinantes. Désormais, l'accès à ces deux enclaves est restreint, des barrages policiers multipliés aux environs et le contrôle des passeports et carte d'identités renforcés.

A la suite de fortes contestations par l'ensemble de la population et les associations, le Maroc a allégé les mesures et des vols spéciaux ont été organisés par le Maroc pour permettre aux citoyens européens et Marocains de rejoindre leurs pays respectifs.

Ces mesures préventives ont également affecté l'économie du Royaume, notamment l'économie du tourisme, ainsi que le secteur import-export. D'où le fait d'avoir décidé de maintenir le trafic des produits primaires.

### b. La survivance du trafic des produits de première nécessité

La fermeture des frontières n'a pas concerné les produits de première nécessité, en raison notamment de la nécessité de survie des populations se trouvant sur le territoire. En effet, pour continuer à assurer un approvisionnement constant du marché et pour répondre aux besoins sociaux, afin d'éviter les achats sous l'effet de la panique et le risque d'affluence dangereuse dans les magasins sur tout le territoire du royaume, les transports de marchandises et de bien de consommation ont été autorisés.<sup>28</sup>

Dans ce sens, l'Administration des Douanes et Impôts Indirects a adopté la circulaire n°6040/311 du 25 avril 2019. Cette dernière prévoit l'importation de médicaments et d'autres produits de santé au Maroc, sous couvert des documents fournis.<sup>29</sup> De même, elle a adopté plusieurs circulaires qui ont garanti l'approvisionnement du pays en produits alimentaires, comme le blé tendre et ses dérivés,<sup>30</sup> les pois chiches et les lentilles.<sup>31</sup>

Ainsi au niveau des différents ports du Royaume par exemple, les consignes étaient très claires, aucune perturbation au niveau de l'import et de l'export notamment au niveau du trafic des biens de consommation ne devait être enregistrée.

L'écoulement des produits alimentaires se fait sans aucun blocage au niveau des ports du Royaume et seul le trafic passager a été suspendu. De même, au niveau des points d'entrée terrestre, le transport international routier des biens de consommation se poursuit normalement. Toutefois, malgré le fait que les textes autorisent la circulation des biens de consommation entre le Maroc et le reste du monde pendant cette période de Covid-19, des perturbations<sup>32</sup> ont été observées notamment dans la zone tampon de Guerguerat où le Polisario et ses milices<sup>33</sup> avaient dressé des campements et des barrages pour bloquer la libre circulation des biens et des personnes entre le Maroc et la Mauritanie. Cet incident a affecté lourdement l'économie mauritanienne qui dépend, dans une large mesure, des exportations marocaines, et qui tire énormément profit des camions qui transitent sur son territoire. Les grandes entreprises marocaines qui ravitaillent le marché Ouest Africain ont été également touchées.

La réaction directe du Maroc était de renforcer la surveillance et le contrôle au niveau du poste de frontière de Guerguerat, après avoir alerté<sup>34</sup> la communauté internationale de ces violations. Cela s'est traduit par des mesures dissuasives sans pour autant recourir à la force.<sup>35</sup> Ce qui a permis aux camions marocains de fruits et légumes de rejoindre la Mauritanie en sécurité pour desservir par la suite les autres pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest.

Dans un tout autre registre, il convient de noter que le Maroc a procédé à des exportations sous forme d'aide aux pays africains en l'occurrence, pour faire face à la Covid-19. L'aide comprenait l'octroi des médicaments et des produits alimentaires.<sup>36</sup>

## Conclusion

A travers ces différents actes posés par les Etats, nous constatons que la notion de frontière qui semblait s'éclipser et s'effacer avec le concept de la mondialisation,<sup>37</sup> refait surface et se renforce.<sup>38</sup> Nous observons leur retour<sup>39</sup> à travers leur fonction de lutte contre la pandémie Covid-19.<sup>40</sup> Elle est également par la même occasion, un instrument de répression et de restriction des libertés. Il faut dire aussi, que la pandémie Covid-19, est aussi une opportunité pour les Etats de se réorganiser et de réinventer des stratégies avec des moyens plus efficaces pour maîtriser les hommes et le territoire. En définitive, ce n'est pas seulement le retour des frontières mais également le retour de l'Etat.

La présente recherche, qui se donnait pour ambition d'étudier l'expérience du Maroc en matière de gestion de ses frontières durant la période du Coronavirus, nous aura appris plusieurs enseignements.

Premièrement, que les frontières du Maroc demeuraient poreuses bien avant l'apparition de la pandémie, à cause des pratiques contre légales diverses, telles que le trafic illicite des marchandises et l'immigration illégale. Tant et si bien que ces pratiques ont stimulé l'émergence des menaces diverses, notamment celles liées à la sécurité et à la santé, comme Ebola et le Coronavirus.

Deuxièmement, que, depuis l'apparition du Covid-19, le Maroc s'est donné les moyens pour renforcer ses frontières aériennes, terrestres, et maritimes pour lutter de manière efficace et efficiente contre la pandémie. Dans ce sens, les dirigeants du pays ont mis en place plusieurs mécanismes juridiques et institutionnels au niveau des frontières, avant de décider de fermer ces dernières.

Seulement, malgré les mesures prises par le gouvernement, l'existence du Coronavirus demeure une réalité et la recherche des stratégies devant permettre d'éradiquer la pandémie demeure d'actualité.

## Notes

- 1 Voir le journal, « L'humanité a toujours vécu avec les virus », entretien avec l'historienne Anne Rasmussen». *Journal du CNRS*, 17 avril 2020. URL <https://lejournald.cnrs.fr/articles/lhumanite-a-toujours-vecu-avec-les-virus> (consulté le 6/7/2020).
- 2 Anne Rasmussen, « Nouvelles questions à l'histoire de la santé, du XXIe au XIXe siècle, et retour », *Histoire, médecine et santé*, 15, 2020, pp. 21-28.
- 3 Voir Le Point, « Quand les Etats-Unis se ferment à une large partie de l'Europe », *le point*, Mars 2020. URL [https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/quand-les-etats-unis-se-ferment-a-une-large-partie-de-l-europe-12-03-2020-2366944\\_24.php](https://www.lepoint.fr/monde/quand-les-etats-unis-se-ferment-a-une-large-partie-de-l-europe-12-03-2020-2366944_24.php) (consulté le 24/04/2021).

- 4 Décret n°2.20.293 du 29 Rajab 1441H (24 mars 2020) relatif à la déclaration de l'état d'urgence sanitaire sur l'ensemble du territoire national pour faire face à l'épidémie du coronavirus Covid19.
- 5 Décret-loi n°2.20.292 du 28 Rajab 1441H (23 mars 2020) portant sur les dispositions relatives à l'état d'urgence sanitaire et aux procédures de sa déclaration.
- 6 Elmadmad, Khadija, la gestion des frontières au Maroc, [Migration Policy Centre], [CARIM-South], CARIM Research Report, 2007/04.
- 7 Bernard Lugan, histoire du Maroc, des origines à nos jours, Librairie Académique Perrin/Critériens Saint-Amand (Cher), 2001, p.403.
- 8 Voir « direct infos » Maroc, « Construction de nouveaux postes de contrôle à la frontière algérienne ». URL: <https://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2017/03/09/maroc-construction-de-nouveaux-postes-de-contrôle-a-la-frontière-algérienne> (consulté le 24/04/2021).
- 9 Deux arrêtés mettent à jour la liste des postes-frontières. L'arrêté n°2170-16 du 13 chaoual 1437 (18 juillet 2016) concernant la liste des postes-frontières ouverts à l'importation d'animaux, denrées et produits animaux. L'Arrêté n°2171-16 du 13 chaoual 1437 (18 juillet 2016) relatif à la police sanitaire des végétaux ou produits végétaux à l'importation et soumis à l'inspection sanitaire.
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# A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political

Edited by

**Natasha Sardzoska and  
Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly**

With an Introduction by the Editors



Featuring poetry by Agi Mishol, João Luís Barreto Guimarães, Maram Al Masri, Grażyna Wojcieszko, Fabiano Alborghetti, Gili Haimovich, Daniel Calabrese, Prisca Agustoni, Marilena Renda, Giselle Lucía Navarro, Gjoko Zdraveski, Tatev Chakhian, Yekta, Indrė Valantinaitė, Luca Benassi, Nurduran Duman, Stéphane Chaumet, Ren (Katherine) Powell, Tomica Bajsić, Franca Mancinelli, Tiago Alves Costa, Emna Louzyr, Dragan Jovanović Danilov, Violette Abou Jalad, Tiziano Fratus, Francesca Cricelli, Rafael Soler, Lali Tsipi Michaeli, Tareq al Karmy.

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## Introduction to A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political

Natasha Sardzoska <sup>i</sup>  
Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly <sup>ii</sup>

*Natasha Sardzoska curates works of poets from around the world that illustrate the state of the art and open our eyes, beyond social sciences and humanities, on the contributions of poetry to literary criticism and dissent, and points to the importance of poetry to the field of inquiries on the intersectionality and cosmopolitanism of human activities in borderlands and frontiers. This collection of poems invites the reader to explore innovative and inventive approaches to reading and writing borders, those that transcend language within their conventional semiology of borders crossing.*

This special section focuses on poetry and borders. *Borders in Globalization Review* invited Natasha Sardzoska, the journal's poetry editor, to curate the collection, because, contrary to popular assumptions that poetry is limited to the literary world and literary criticism, poets play a vital role in shaping cultures around borders, and in politics, poets have been fundamental to criticism and dissent. For instance, poet without rival, Percy Besshe Shelley's famous verse affirms, 'Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world' (Shelley 2009). The following pages demonstrate the importance of poetry for borders, borderlands, frontiers, migration, mobility, and the intersectionality of human activities and space. Indeed, over the last 20 years, internationally renowned publications such as *The Paris Review* and *Poetry International* have published poems discussing the crossing of virtual, literary, and hard geographical-territorial borders, and the effects borders have on human beings.

For instance, in 2012, *The Paris Review* published an interview of James Fenton, famed professor of poetry at Oxford. There, Fenton discussed his works on wars and children in exile. Borders are an omnipresent voice in his works; yet as noted by Seamus Heaney, Fenton's verse "re-established the borders of a civil kingdom of letters with history and literature and the intimate affections would be allowed their say". More recently, *The Paris Review* has published 'From Border Districts' by Gerald Murnane (2016) about the gendered crossing of an aisle in a church, Marcelo Hernandez Castillo's (2020) short essay "Going Blind at the Border," and the works of Troy Michie (2020), which illustrate the complexity of growing up multiracial along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Similarly, in 2017, *Poetry International* published a 'Forum: on Poets and Borders'. With texts from Nylsa Martinez, Ming Di, Jorge Ortega, Sandra Alcosser, and a few others,

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this issue posed the question 'what is border life' and delved into the meaning of living on the border (Poetry 2017). Collectively, they reflect on being a borderlander, a Chicano not a Mexican, living and dying building walls in China, or what a life straddling a boundary does to a person. Sandra Alcosser writes, "The purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person, for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors, and invisible guests come in and out at will" (Poetry 2017).

Poetry, despite pervasive associations with merely romantic ideas, has a long tradition in criticism, much more political than often recognized. Indeed, for instance, in the post-9/11 era, U.S. poet laureate Frank Bidart published "Curse" in the spring 2002 issue of *Threepenny-Review*. He wrote: "May what you have made descend upon you, May the listening ears of your victims their eyes their breath, enter you, and eat like acid, the bubble of rectitude that allowed your breath".

More to the point of international boundary lines, in *Life for Us*, Kurdish poet, Choman Hardi writes almost in prose, picturing a border crossing experience. "At The Border, 1979" reads: "The land under our feet continued / divided by a thick iron chain. / My sister put her leg across it ... Dozens of families waited in the rain. / Comparing both sides of the border." Hardi explores the lives of women in situations of terror and of survival (Hardi 2004).

Similarly, Amanda Gorman, a 22 year-old poet, read "The Wall We Climb" during the inauguration of American President Joe Biden. Like many poets, Gorman is an activist on the front lines of change. At Harvard University she fought for diversity in English Class, and as a United Nations delegate she founded One Pen One Page, a project that strives to elevate the voices of youth through writing and creativity.

Gorman, in 'This Place, an American Lyric', makes it plain:

How could this not be her city, su nacion, our country,  
our America, our American lyric to write – a poem  
by the people, the poor, the Protestant, the Muslim,  
the Jew, the native, the immigrant, the black, the  
brown, the blind, the brave, the undocumented and  
undeterred, the woman, the man, the non-binary,  
the white, the trans, the ally to all the above and  
more? Tyrants fear the poet (Gorman 2017).

Clearly, border poetry has a long history of illustrious voices echoing Gorman's allegory "to all the above and more." From the Roman Horace (65-8 BC) to contemporary Americas, Jesse Ed Davis (Davis 2018), whose work illustrates a trend of First Nation poets, including Paula Gunn Allen, and Leslie Silko, who wrote lyrics and melodies relating the hardship of their communities (Allen 1986; Silko 1977). Similarly, Salvadoran Poet Mary DeShazer (1994) and American poet Zoe Anglesey (1987) express First Nations' outrage about racism and colonialism in their work. In Mexico,

during the border war with the United States of 1846-08, Poetesses including Guadalupe Calderon, Josefa Letchipia de Gonzalez, Josefa Heraclia Badillo, and Carolina Coronado all published poems about the war, their losses, heroism, and Mexican identity (Conway 2012). Similarly, in the post-Mao era, poetry became a voice of protest in China (Yu 1983).

This means, in Adam Zagajewski's (2018) words, "poetry is not only about poet's inner life". Rather, the poet has to nominate and denominate the world to reflect on the world (Culture.PI 2021). As such, poetry is potentially political in part because of its shifting and blurred nature. A poem may often be interpreted from various standpoints and contexts, hence possible shifts from the emotional to the political. This collection curates these multifaceted meanings.

Poets are important voices on borders, boundaries, frontiers, and border-regions and their crossings by strangers, migrants, and ideas. We need to read them and to listen to them. Indeed, it is important to read, eavesdrop, and reflect on such voices because they continually explore the intersectionality of spaces, borders, boundaries, frontiers and cultural borderlands. They challenge our ontologies, meanings, and understandings. They open possibilities, giving rise to new experiments into new emotions. Indeed, poetry is an experiment of language. In this experiment—often detached from reality or linked to reality through an analogical nexus of awkward liminal meanings, odd abstract details migrating through a web of significations, crossing boundaries of sense and nonsense—the word becomes the body of motion and the world becomes a space of solitude and alienation: a non-space.

In poetry everything migrates in the space of invisible borders. Every element, every gap, every void, every word migrates. Meanings migrate. Images migrate. In poetry every boundary is crossed, breached, reinvented, reversed, abolished, or established; the boundary of the transcendental sense, the boundary of selfhood. Through often ungraspable abstractions and analogies, the poetic image breaks through with a kind of violence. The semantically dissociated word reveals unprecedented experiences, feelings, and motions and reduces the form to its purity, to its light, to its abstract or hermetical detachment from the conventionally accepted context or meaning. Poetry raises mental maps. Poetry establishes emotional cartographies. Poetry blurs paradigms of borders, raises boundaries and destroys them at the same time revealing their reverse sides. Poetry touches the untouchable zone, tells the unnameable.

The tectonic shifts composed of the multifaceted layers of texture of the poetic body go far beyond the subjective poetry of the isolated lyrical voice, outreaching the nomenclature of an outside world where humanity is more and more tormented and tormenting. Hence, a world where the only visible boundary is the strict and cruel





borderline between pain and release, between resilience and failure, between wrongdoing and redemption, between good and bad.

This special section of *BIG\_Review* is a unique global border poetry anthology. It brings together poets from around the world who have had close, coercive, intimate, interstitial experiences with borders: political, emotional, geographical, policed, spatial, intercontinental, linguistic, sexual, corporal, religious, symbolic, or geographical/natural boundaries.

The poetic reinvention of borders and boundaries circulates in spaces which are appealing to many audiences, not only artistic and poetic, but also to scientific and academic communities that examine borders within the context of border studies. This collection of poems invites the reader to explore innovative and inventive approaches to reading and writing borders, those that transcend language within their conventional semiology of borders crossing.

The poets of this collection have had different experiences with borders and have, through their subtle poetic creation of bordering, brought to this collection fertile creative taste. Their backgrounds span diverse bordering zones, including along the contours of the former Soviet world, Latin America, the Middle East, and the Balkans. They have brought together universes of the empirical and strongly metaphorical dialogues and disclosures with spaces. In these poems, borders are depicted as spaces of loss, spaces of fear, spaces of anomia, spaces of nonce, spaces of non-affiliation and non-belonging, and even spaces of dualling poetical dialogue between conflicted contiguous countries.

In this anthology, we present 30 distinguished international poets: Agi Mishol, Joao Luis Barreto Guimareas, Maram Al Masri, Grazyna Wojcieszko, Yekta, Gili Haimovich, Daniel Calabrese, Prisca Agustoni, Marilena Renda, Giselle Lucía Navarro, Gjoko Zdraveski, Tatev Chakhian, Fabiano Alborghetti, Indre Valantinaite, Luca Benassi, Nurduran Duman, Stephane Chaumet, Ren (Katherine) Powell, Tomica Bajsic, Franca Mancinelli, Tiago Alves Costa, Emna Louzyr, Dragan Javanovic Danilov, Violette Abou Jalad, Tiziano Fratus, Francesca Cricelli, Rafael Soler, Lali Tsipi Michaeli, Tareq al Karmy. Each and every one offers a precious voice exploring a great diversity of emotions on the blurred borders of poetry, exploring in turns inner borders, memory, love, love of land, secret love, soul and borders, language and borders, travels, migration, and walls.

The poet, in a nutshell, neither belongs nor is framed within a bordering space or spaces. The poet breaches the boundaries of language to produce newborn meanings. Roberto Juarroz distinguishes poetry as art apart for its illogical nexus to the symbol and its agrammatical nexus to language. A metaphysical art per se, poetry does not belong to a generic framed field of arts because it is a specific and special art that dissolves and experiments with language, meaning, symbols, and rhythm. The reverse order of notions

and nuances is another example of what Octavio Paz once said, that is to say that poetry is not actually an art of the truth, but rather a resurrection of presences. Thus, through the resurrection of these fine poetic expressions, we want to invite you to a new bordering poetic experience where the borderscape will be a place of escape, a metaphor of the boundary, an isolated and neutral space, but blurred from within in its radically broken limits.

We invite you therefore to discover with innocent eyes this anthology and to investigate artistically and critically the new poetry border-order which transcends and transports, because we believe that precisely because of such uniqueness and freedom, poetry can offer a vivid field of border interpretation, border intersection, border dissection, and border (de)colonization—a poetic occupation and liberation of space; a space which is blurred and yet clear because this is what poetry does to borders: abolishes them and then reinvents new spaces, spaces of freedom in endless self-invention.

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## A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political



Photo © Pony Brzezinski

**Agi Mishol** is one of Israel's most prominent and popular poets, and the author of 16 volumes of poetry. Mishol was born in Romania in 1947 to Hungarian-speaking Holocaust survivors. When she was four-years old, her family immigrated to Israel and settled in Gedera. After completing her BA and MA degrees in Hebrew Literature at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mishol launched a literature and creative-writing teaching career, at Ben-Gurion University, Tel Aviv University, and The Hebrew University (where she was Poet-in-Residence in 2007), among other institutions. In 2006, she served as the artistic director of the Jerusalem International Poetry Festival, and since 2011, she has led the Helicon School of Poetry in Tel Aviv. She lives in Moshav Kfar Mordechai, where she grows peaches, persimmons, and pomegranates.

Mishol's poems have been widely translated and published in books and various anthologies around the world. Some of her poems were composed by various Israeli musicians. Her accolades include the Zbigniew Herbert International Literary Award (2019), the Newman Prize for life achievement in literature (2018), the Italian LericiPea Award (2014), and the Israeli Prime Minister and Yehuda Amichai literature prizes (1995 and 2002, respectively). Mishol was awarded three honorary doctorates—from Tel Aviv University (2014), the Weizmann Institute of Science (2016), and Bar-Ilan University (2018). Facebook: [Agi.Mishol](#).

### מרחקים

יש עץ ששמו בוהיניה  
ויש מקומות ששמם קריקלוד  
או קונטיקט,  
בהם מישהו רץ כעת,  
מהביל בצנת הבקר,  
ומישהי מתהפכת לצד השני  
של חלומה.  
אני נוטה למזרח,  
סוף מערב רחוק לי,  
כנפי אינן עוד כנפי מעוף  
וגם אם אצא, יקפץ ודאי  
התמרור הזה  
'שול צר'  
שבגללו מושכים תמיד את ההגה חזרה  
לאמריקן קומפורט  
ששם הלב הוא לא משהו  
ואין איספלניתי לצער.

### עדות

גם מד החטה מראה  
שעברו כבר חדשים,  
שאפשר כבר לשלף  
קנה מתוך נדון,  
למחץ בקצה  
ולתקע בחצוצרה  
עד אמריקה,

### Distances

There's a tree by the name of Bauhinia  
and there are places named Cricklewood  
or Connecticut,  
where someone is out running now,  
steamy in the morning chill,  
and someone else rolls over  
to the other side of her dream.  
I incline to the east,  
the end of the west is far for me,  
my wings are no longer wings of flight  
and if I do venture out,  
most certainly the sign  
"Road Narrows" will pop up  
the one that makes you swing the steering wheel back  
to American Comfort,  
where the heart is nothing much  
and there is no band-aid for sorrow.

### Testimony

Even the wheat weatherglass  
shows it's been months,  
that now you can pluck  
the stalk from the sheath,  
pinch it at the edges  
and blow the trumpet  
all the way to America –

### דוגית נוסעת

#### Row Your Boat

You're not Noah  
and maybe it's awkward  
but you can always  
sail in me  
like an ark from Ararat  
to Ararat  
with five showers on deck  
a bed to stretch out on  
and shades on the porthole,  
even a kickbox cabin  
and a dovecote,  
because I'm a good ark,  
made of field rafters,  
durable in a deluge,  
fabulous at floating,  
rising and falling on sea waves  
and all my sailors dream on Ritalin.

אולי לא נח  
אבל תמיד תוכל  
כמו בתוך תבה  
לשוט בי מאררט  
לאררט  
עם חמש מקלחות על הדק  
מטה לאפרקדן  
ושיידס על צהר,  
אפלו תא לקיבוקס  
ושוכר ליונה,  
כי אני תבה טובה,  
עשויה מקורות השדה,  
עמידה במבול,  
מקשרת בציפה,  
עולה יורדת בין גלי הים  
וכל מלחי על ריטלין כלם.

Translated by Joanna Chen





Photo © Teresa Guimarães

**João Luís Barreto Guimarães** was born in Porto, Portugal, in June 1967. He is a poet and a plastic reconstructive surgeon. His first seven books of poetry were collected in *Poesia Reunida* (Quetzal, 2011), followed by *Você Está Aqui* (Quetzal, 2013) and *Mediterrâneo* (Quetzal, 2016).

## Falsa vida

*Não me lembro em que  
naufrágio  
disseste que vinhas.  
VÍTOR SOUSA*

A  
areia que trazes da praia não faz de ti  
um ladrão –  
soube que te vais embora do país que não  
te quis  
(prometiam-te o passado  
querias falar de futuro  
separados pelo presente). O vento que  
sopra lá fora  
dá uma falsa vida às coisas  
(difícil manteres-te vivo  
num paul de horas mortas) se  
a cerveja  
aonde à tardinha irás afogar os sentidos  
já tem mais medalhas  
que tu. Se ao fim do dia perguntas para  
onde foi o dia inteiro  
é a hora de partir (não ficar preso ao naufrágio  
esperando um milagre na praia  
chorando os barcos  
pelo nome).

## False life

*I don't recall in which  
shipwreck  
you said you were coming.  
VITOR SOUSA*

The  
sand you track in from the beach doesn't make you  
a thief –  
I knew you'd fled the country that didn't  
want you  
(separated by the present  
they promised you the past  
you wanted to talk about the future). The wind  
blowing outside  
infuses things with a false life  
(it's hard to keep yourself alive  
in a marsh of dead hours) if the  
beer you'll  
be drowning your senses in this afternoon  
already has more medals  
than you. If by the end of the day you ask  
where has the whole day gone  
it is time to leave (and not get stuck in the shipwreck  
waiting on the beach for a miracle  
crying for each boat  
by name).



**Maram Al Masri**, born 1962, is a Syrian writer living in Paris, considered “one of the most renowned and captivating feminine voices of her generation” in Arabic (**Banipal**). She has received several prizes, like the “Adonis Prize” of the Lebanese Cultural Forum, the “Premio Citta di Calopezzati”, the “Prix d'Automne, 2007” of the Société des gens de lettres, and the Cyphers Award, 2021. She has taken a firm stand against the Assad regime in Syria and considers that “every decent person is with the Revolution”. Her poetry book *Elle va nue la liberté* (Freedom, she comes naked, 2014) is based on social media images of the civil war.

On the wall of the school's playground  
The word freedom was written  
in white chalk  
By small children's fingertips

On the walls of history  
Freedom has penned their names  
With blood

I am a human being  
Not an animal  
Shouted citizen  
Ahmad Abdul Wahab  
He filled television screens  
With his broken voice  
Like a captive who has escaped his jail  
He escapes  
Having broken the chains of fear and silence  
The veins in his neck bulge  
His eyes drown in anger  
In his lifetime he never read Balzac or Victor Hugo  
He knows not Lenin or Karl Marx

In that moment  
The ordinary citizen became  
Extraordinary.

*Selmieh ..... selmieh*  
They came out in the street while singing for peace  
With open chest and clean hands  
They sung peace

Freedom ..... Freedom  
They came out shouting ..... freedom  
With nude chest and hand carrying roses  
They sung freedom

Yes, it is the singing that makes  
the depth heart of fear  
shivers and the crawl's mask fell down

على الحيطان الباحة لمدرسة  
كتبت كلمة الحرية بالطباشير الابيض  
باصابع الطلاب الصغيرة

على جدار التاريخ  
كتبت الحرية اسماءهم  
بالدماء

انا انسان ماني حيوان  
صرخ المواطن العادي  
احمد عبد الوهاب  
بصوته المتهدج كسجين هارب من اسره  
يصرخ وقد كسر قيد  
الصمت والخوف  
عروق رقبته منتفخة  
وعينه غارقتان في الغضب  
في حياته كلها احمد عبد الوهاب  
لم يقرأ بلزك ولا فيكتور هوغو  
لا يعرف لينين ولا كارل ماركس

في تلك اللحظة  
مواطن عادي اصبح  
مواطن غير عادي

سلمية سلمية  
خرجوا للشارع وهم يغنون السلام  
بصدور مفتوحة و ايادي نظيفة  
غنوا السلام

حرية حرية  
تظاهروا و هم يصرخون حرية  
بصدر عار و بأيدي تحمل الورود

نعم انه الغناء الذي جعل فرائص  
قلب الخوف الراسخ  
ترتعد

ويسقط قناع الغراب

The children of Syria are shrouded in their coffin  
Like sugar candy in its wrapping  
But they are not made of sugar  
They are flesh, love and a dream

أطفال سورية ملففون في كفنهم  
مثل السكر في أغلفتها  
ولكنهم ليسوا من السكر  
إنهم من لحم  
وحب

The roads await you  
The gardens await you  
The schools and the festive Squares  
Await you  
Children of Syria

الطرقات تنتظركم  
الحدائق تنتظركم  
المدارس وساحات العيد  
ينتظروكم أطفال سورية

It is so early for you to become birds of heaven  
And to play in the sky

باكرا جدا كي تصبحوا عصافير  
لنلعبوا  
في السماء

Where you from?  
— From Syria.  
— From which city in Syria?  
— I was born in Daraa and I was brought up in Homs  
— I spend my youth in Lattakia  
— I blossomed in Baniyas  
— I bloomed in Dier AlZoor and I burned  
in Hama and flared up in Edlib  
— Blazed in Qameshli  
— Slaughtered in Dariya

— من أين أنت  
— من سورية  
— من أين بلد في سورية  
ولدت في درعا ترعرعت في حمص  
شبتت في اللاذقية و ينعت في بانياس ازهرت في جسر الشغور  
ر احترقت في حماة اندلعت لإدلب برقت في دير الزو  
ولمعت في القامشلي .  
— من أنت

— Who are you?  
— I am who fear it.  
— Who will lock it up  
— who will stock it up  
— Who will burn it up

أنا من يسجنوها .  
من يودونها  
من يخافونها  
من يحرقونها  
أنا التي تصرخ في وجه الظالم

— I am the one who leaves the trees of the heart for its passage  
Mountains knees to her grandiose  
History turns upside down for her  
The earth colors for its sun  
I am the one  
Who yells and outcry in the face of the dictator

أنا التي تصرخ في وجه الظالم  
أنا التي تورق اشجار القلب لمروها  
تخر الجبال لعظمتها  
ينقلب التاريخ لأجلها  
تبذل الأرواح لنيلها  
تتلون الأرض بشمسها

I am the one who will not abide except only in the head of the nobles  
And do not know except only the hearts of the heroes  
I am the one who never compromise and not for sale  
I am the bread of life and its milk  
My name is  
Freedom.

أنا خبز الحياة و حليبها  
أنا  
من لا تسكن إلا في رؤوس النبلاء  
و لا تعرف إلا قلوب الأبطال  
أنا التي لا تساوم ولا تشتري  
اسمي  
الحرية.



**Grażyna Wojcieszko** was born in Poland in 1957, is a poet, translator and active culture manager, graduate of Literary-Artistic Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2005). She has published six collections of poetry and is the recipient of several Polish poetry awards. Her poetry has been widely anthologized and translated into several languages. Two collections of her work have been made available to French readers by Editions Caractères. Her recent work lies at the intersection of poetry, music and film.

## Meeting I

i came across you in the thick forest  
who are you i wanted to ask your name  
i don't feel what kind of plant you are your perianth  
develops not only at the top of the stalk

when i speak will you have to  
kill me and maybe you have only  
hallucinogenic properties i don't know in which language  
to ask i am frightened i will turn out to be your enemy

my face is smiling and i can pretend  
to be any kind of butterfly i do not blame you for your lack  
of scent i am not going to analyse the colour of your penis  
just please do not mistake me for a praying mantis

## Spotkanie I

natrafiłam na ciebie w gęstym lesie  
kim jesteś chciałam cię zapytać o imię  
nie czuję jaką jesteś rośliną twój okwiat  
rozwija się nie tylko na szczycie pędu

kiedy się odezwę czy będziesz musiał  
mnie zabić a może masz tylko działanie  
halucynogenne nie wiem w jakim języku  
zapytać boję się okazać twoim wrogiem

twarz mam uśmiechniętą i mogę udawać  
każdego motyla nie mam ci za złe braku  
zapachu nie będę analizowała koloru prącia  
tylko proszę nie pomył mnie z modliszką





Photo © Ladina Bischof

**Fabiano Alborghetti** (1970) is a Swiss poet and writer. He has published a number of poetry books and his poetry has been translated into more than 10 languages. In 2018 he was awarded the Swiss Literature Prize among other awards. He promotes poetry in various venues, including radio, prisons, hospitals, schools, and universities. Currently he's the President of the House of Literature in Lugano. Thanks to the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs he has represented Switzerland at literary festivals and cultural events worldwide.

### Meeting II

i came across you in the thick forest  
the green of our pupils loses itself  
loses itself in the yellow wedding ring  
and yet  
let's aim at each other from the depths of our pupils

when i speak are you going to have  
to kill me so many shoot here and they all  
fall in the rhythm of blunt music and they all  
are as similar to each other as their collars

your pupil is getting ever darker  
do you still see the green in my eye  
who are you i just wanted to ask you  
your name i wanted to ask you the colour of your head

i don't blame you for not remembering the shade  
of weightlessness but when i remind you of its scent  
will i be able to pretend i am a butterfly that you  
dry out in your soldier's survival

### Spotkanie II

natrafiłam na ciebie w gęstym lesie  
zieleń naszych tęczówek zatracą się  
zatracą tak samo żółtawą obrączką  
a jednak  
celujemy do siebie z czeluści źrenic

kiedy się odezwę czy będziesz musiał  
mnie zabić tylu tutaj strzela a wszyscy  
padają w rytm tępej muzyki a wszyscy  
są do siebie podobni jak ich kołnierze

twoja źrenica robi się coraz czarniejsza  
czy widzisz jeszcze zieleń w moim oku  
kim jesteś chciałam cię tylko zapytać o  
imię chciałam cię zapytać o kolor serca

nie mam ci za złe że nie pamiętasz odcieni  
lekkości ale kiedy przypomnę ci jej zapach  
czy będę mogła udawać motyla którego ty  
zasuszysz w swoim niezbędniku żołnierza

Translated from Polish by Sarah Luczaj

*Zlatibor, 48 anni – Djacovica, Kossovo*

Conta i centimetri quadrati rimasti illesi  
diceva, le stoviglie intatte pur mancando la parete:  
a tutela del privato una tenda hanno tirato, una lamiera

e uguale situazione anche agli altri. Nella privazione  
sembra molto il poco  
e così rimane, velata nella tregua

la stessa luce dello stesso cielo  
l'accadere della cena e del risveglio.  
Rifatto l'attorno non cambia il senso.

Là dove tu guardi, cambia la famiglia  
tolta la casa? Scompare l'amore o perdura?  
L'intero suolo è casa, diceva

e dal suo fuoco il fango risplendeva...

*Zlatibor, 48 years, Djacovica, Kosovo*

Count now the square centimetres left unharmed  
he said, the intact crockery even with the wall missing:  
for the sake of privacy they have drawn a curtain, a metal sheet

and similar situations to the others too. In hardship  
little seems a lot  
and so remains, shrouded in truce,

the same light of the same sky  
the event of the evening meal and of the awakening.  
The surroundings rebuilt, the meaning doesn't change.

There where you watch, does the family change  
taking away the house? Does love disappear or endure?  
The whole land is home, he said

and from his fire the mud was shining.



Photo © Gili Haimovich

**Gili Haimovich** is a bilingual poet and translator in Hebrew and English and winner of the I colori dell'anima poetry contest (Italy, 2020), Ossia di Sepia International Contest (Italy, 2019), an excellency grant from the Israeli Ministry of Culture (2015), and other prizes. She has four poetry books in English, most recently *Lullaby* and *Promised Lands*, six volumes of poetry in Hebrew, a multi-lingual book, *Note*, two books translated into French and Serbian, and poems translated into 30 languages, published and presented worldwide. Facebook: [Gili Haimovich](#).

### The Promised Wasteland

I'm pulling you out of the water  
as if out of your own sorrow.  
We don't trust being saved  
is worthwhile,  
even before we know,  
it will take you away from water  
for most of your life.  
The second time you encounter it  
you'll have to break the water.

The desert is wide, wild, wasted, Moses,  
a landscape so widely open that its inaccessible,  
no nooks for havens of rest  
for hiding,  
for intimacy.  
The embrace of curvaceous swarthy dunes  
is abrasive.  
If sand gets in your eyes  
you tear.  
Their tongues bring the opposite of saturation.  
And penetrate determinedly  
the land that already had so little to offer.  
This is when you realize promises better kept unfulfilled  
and you do not enter.

### Arrival

Will be hard to fall for this one.  
Does gratitude measure up to happiness?  
I land in Mexico City.  
After a long flight,  
a long-life spouse, children, my shortcomings and short-lived travels.  
This arrival is long.  
And so is my becoming.  
Will this one break me  
in order to sustain longer in my body?  
The ability, or disability, to split into different fractures of life.  
I'm on the lookout for a moon within reach.  
Compromising on the one of Mexico City  
that when I turn my back to  
switches from orange to silver.



Photo © Evelyn Flores

**Daniel Calabrese** is an Argentinian poet born in Dolores city, Buenos Aires province, living in Santiago de Chile since 1991, where he became involved with the poetry and literary life of his adopted nation. Among his collections of poetry, one must mention such titles as *La faz errante*, which won the Alfonsina Prize, and *Oxidario*, Prize from the National Arts Fund in Buenos Aires, as well as his book *Ruta Dos*, winner of the Prize Revista de Libros in Chile. Anthologies of his work were published in Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, Colombia and China. His work has been translated partially into English, Italian, Chinese and Japanese. He is the founder and director of *Ærea*, an annual review of poetry. Email: [dcalabrese@rileeditores.com](mailto:dcalabrese@rileeditores.com).

### Escritura en un ladrillo

Es de día en un día cualquiera  
y nos preguntamos:  
¿qué hemos escrito que lo cambie todo?

La gente avanza sobre el invierno  
y cruza un puente oxidado en la avenida.  
Por debajo pasa un río de metales  
grises, rojos, blancos.

Dice un graffiti:  
"si no tuvieras miedo, ¿qué harías?"

Vivimos en una tarde azul.  
Alguien se queda afuera y la humedad  
de las baldosas le disuelve los pies  
como a una figura de arena.

Porque hay cuerpos apretados y gruesos  
que forman un muro de espaldas, cerrado.  
Cuerpos que no dejan salir una gota de sombra.  
Cuerpos que pelean y atesoran  
la verdad, la maldición.

A mi hija le gustan los graffitis,  
una vez rayó en la pared del colegio:  
"más amor, por favor",  
y otros hicieron lo mismo después en la calle  
y en ese muro de espaldas, cerrado.

### Writing on a Brick

It's daytime on any old day  
and we wonder:  
what have we written that can change it all?

People move along winter,  
cross a rusty bridge on the avenue.  
Below the metal river flows  
gray, red, white.

Some graffiti says:  
"if you weren't afraid, what would you do?"

We live in a blue afternoon.  
Someone stays outside, the tile  
dampness dissolves their feet  
like a figure made of sand.

There are bodies tight and thick  
shaping a wall of backs, closed-off.  
Bodies powerless to let out a drop of shadow.  
Bodies fighting and amassing  
the truth, the curse.

My daughter likes graffiti,  
one time she scribbled:  
"more love, please" on some high school wall,  
others did the same thing, afterwards, on the street  
and on that wall of closed-off backs.



Es una frontera en ruinas, construida  
alrededor del tiempo.  
Adentro quizás qué, sus caras de mármol,  
un aire prisionero, los brazos reunidos  
sobre el cuello del demonio  
y esas venas oscuras que tienen  
cuando la carne es de piedra.

Las naves tiemblan sobre el horizonte,  
el sol es una piedra con metal.

Apoyado contra el muro  
bebe ahora un capitán  
la espuma silenciosa de las horas,  
y llega tarde al sueño cada noche.

La dársena escondía una sirena  
entre los fierros carcomidos por la sal.

Pensamos en el frío,  
en la luna desgarrada por las grúas  
y soñamos con fantasmas de humedad en la pared.

Es cierto, el cielo ha sido bestial  
este año con los ciegos y ambulantes,  
pero ¿qué hemos escrito que lo cambie todo?

It's a border in ruins, raised  
around time.  
Inside maybe what, those marble faces,  
convict air, arms brought together  
over the demon neck  
and those dark veins they acquire  
when flesh is stone.

Ships tremble on the horizon,  
sun is a stone plus metal.

Leaning against the wall,  
a captain now drinks  
the silent foam of hours,  
is late to sleep each night.

The dock hid a siren  
among the irons salt-eaten.

We think about the cold,  
the moon ripped apart by cranes,  
we dream of damp ghosts on the wall.

It's true, this year the sky's been  
brutal for the blind and the street vendors,  
but, what have we written that changes it all.

Translated by Katherine Hedeem



Photo © Lara Toledo

**Prisca Agustoni** is a poet and translator of Swiss origin. She currently lives between Switzerland and Brazil, where she teaches comparative literature at Federal University of Juiz de Fora (BR). She writes (and translates herself) in Italian, French and Portuguese. Her poems have also been translated into German, Rumanian, Macedonian, Croatian, English, Spanish, French and Swedish. Some of her recent publications include *Un ciel provisoire* (Geneva, Samizdat, 2015), *Animal extremo* (São Paulo, Patuá, 2017), *Casa dos ossos* (Juiz de Fora, Macondo, 2017), *L'ora zero* (Como, 2020) and *O mundo mutilado* (São Paulo, Quêlônio, 2020). Email: [prisca.agustoni@yahoo.fr](mailto:prisca.agustoni@yahoo.fr).

Não sabem que são anjos  
os anjos que vivem conosco no campo:  
acostumados a remexer no lixo  
sabem do estômago a fome,  
do músculo as câimbras.

Reviram as línguas  
como frutos caídos  
cariados no chão, na torre  
dessa babel horizontal

aqui, onde o latim eslavo  
estala suas sementes  
que florescem tardias

e no fígado do dia  
destilamos  
nosso álcool

\*

Os anjos vagam esquivos  
nos arredores de Idomeni:

carregam consigo outros espectros,  
o rosto dos caídos  
deitados na memória

juntos dão voltas  
no limbo, no campo

onde prófugos perpétuos  
rondam em terra de pêndulos

They don't know they're angels,  
those angels living with us in the camp:  
used to digging through garbage,  
in their stomachs they know hunger;  
in their muscles, a cramping pain.

They scan tongues  
like fallen fruit  
rotting on the ground,  
in a tower of babel  
made horizontal

here, where Slavic Latin  
snaps open its seeds  
slow to flower

and in the day's liver  
we distill  
our alcohol

\*

The angels, elusive, wander  
the outskirts of Idomeni:

they carry with them other specters,  
faces of the fallen  
lying in their memory

together they go round and round  
in limbo, in the camp

where perpetual fugitives  
occupy the land of pendulums

enquanto esperam  
enfileirados  
a volta do tempo dos humanos.

A língua não  
tem arame farpado nem  
renúncia possível:

o refúgio  
somos nós,

e as fronteiras perenes  
entre as palavras,

portas onde batemos  
esperando os vivos

balsa que nos leva  
de uma orla a outra

waiting in single file  
for the return  
of the human age.

The tongue has  
no barbed wire,  
no denial of entry:

our refuge is nothing  
but ourselves

and the enduring borders  
between words,

doors on which  
we knock waiting  
for the living,

barges taking us  
from one shore  
to the other

Translated by Johnny Lorenz



Photo © Vito Panico

**Marilena Renda** was born in Erice, Italy, in 1976 and lives in Bologna, where she currently teaches English. She has published the following books: *Bassani, Giorgio. An Italian Jew* (Gaffi, 2010), *Rust* (dot.com press, 2012), *Surrender Dorothy* (L'orma, 2015), *The subtraction* (Transeuropa, 2015) and *Gifts to ghosts* (Mesogea, 2017). With the poem *Rust* she was a finalist for the Delfini 2009 and the 2013 Carducci awards, while *The subtraction* won the Bologna in Lettere 2019 award. Visit her [Ac2 profile](#).

Sui ponti delle navi, i bambini salvati dal mare  
hanno coperte d'argento per il freddo e assomigliano  
a piccole uova di Pasqua, pronte per essere aperte.  
“Possiamo aprirle, è ora?”, chiedono altri bambini,  
che non sanno che lo statuto dei bambini,  
in Occidente, è cambiato. Dei morti in mare  
– centocinquanta, oggi – scrivono in molti,  
tra cui Annarita, che dichiara di sé un discreto  
umanitarismo, e dice: Buon appetito ai pesci.  
Il mare oggi è limpido, non sembra che intenda ribellarsi  
né che voglia ristabilire una giustizia qualsiasi.  
Mia figlia gioca in acqua con altri bambini,  
uno di loro potrebbe essere morto oggi,  
mi stupisco, mentre esco dall'acqua,  
di non vedere cadaveri in mezzo all'acqua limpida.  
Di chi sono questi bambini, quanti sono  
i figli del mare, tutti infine torneranno al mare.

On the decks of ships, the children saved from the sea  
have silver blankets for the cold and they look  
like little Easter eggs, ready to be opened.  
“Can we open them, it is time?”, other children ask,  
who do not know that the statute of the child,  
in the West, has changed. Of the dead in the sea,  
—one-hundred-fifty, today— many write,  
among them Annarita, who declares for herself a discreet  
humanitarianism, and says: Buon appetito to you, fish.  
The sea today is clear, it doesn't seem like it plans to rebel  
nor that it wishes to set straight any kind of justice.  
My daughter plays in the water with other children,  
one of them could be dead today,  
I am amazed, while I get out of the water,  
not to see cadavers in the middle of the clear water.  
Whose children are these, how many  
sons and daughters of the sea, in the end everyone will return to the sea.

Translated by Johnny Lorenz





Photo © Javier Perez

**Giselle Lucía Navarro** (born in Cuba, 1995) is a poet, writer, designer and cultural manager. She holds a Bachelor in Industrial Design from Havana University and is a Professor in the Ethnographic Academy of the Canary Association of Cuba. She has also obtained diverse literary awards: Jose Viera y Clavijo, Benito Pérez Galdos, Edad de Oro, Pinos Nuevos and David 2019, such as some Mentions in the international awards: Angel Gavinet (Finland), Poemas al Mar (Puerto Rico) and Nosside (Italia). She has published the books *Contrapeso*, *El circo de los asombros* and *¿Qué nombre tiene tu casa?* Her texts have been translated into English, French, Italian and Turkish, and published in anthologies in various countries. Visit <http://www.gisellelucia.com/>.

CONTRAPESO

Congelar el cuerpo de un hombre es una tarea difícil.  
Congelar el cuerpo de una mujer, una tarea imposible.  
Congelar el cuerpo de un país es tener miedo a todo lo que crece.

COUNTERWEIGHT

Freezing the body of a man is a hard task.  
Freezing the body of a woman is an impossible task.  
Freezing the body of a country is being afraid of everything that grows up.

Translated by Osmany Echevarría

OTRA VEZ EN EL PRINCIPIO

En el Malecón

Alguien supo que las aguas no serían mansas  
y el muro difícil de olvidar.  
Ningún golpe de suerte lo desterraría.  
Las piedras de las otras orillas son inciertas  
como los rostros de las barcas que se asoman a la costa,  
como los planes de los ojos que se van sin mirar atrás.

Alguien supo que la noche estaría fría  
debajo de las estrellas de esta incertidumbre,  
la maldita incertidumbre que no avanza ni retrocede,  
solo permanece,  
permanece como las rocas del muro,  
el aire que sostiene a los aviones  
o la distancia embalsamada  
en los ojos de aquellos que nunca la han visto.  
Cualquier espacio sería necesario,  
cualquier orilla la adecuada.

Sobre los muros breves nunca hay espacio libre.  
Todos saben que la noche es fría  
y deben cuidarse de las aguas indóciles,  
por eso están esparcidos sobre la piedra.

Hay música  
ojos  
bocas  
idiomas  
y preguntas.  
El muro es lo suficientemente grande  
para cubrir la orilla y protegernos de todo,  
pero aquel que se sienta en el muro  
solo ve la distancia.

AGAIN IN THE BEGINNING

In the Sea Wall

Somebody knew that the waters would not be meek  
and the wall difficult to forget.  
No stroke of luck would banish it.  
The stones of the other shore are uncertain  
as the faces of the boats that lean out to the coast  
as the plans of the eyes that leave without looking back.

Somebody knew that the night would be cold  
under the stars of this uncertainty  
the damned uncertainty that doesn't advance neither go back  
just it remains  
it remains as the rocks of the wall  
the air that sustains to the airplanes  
or the distance embalmed in the eyes of those that have never seen it.  
Any space would be necessary  
any shore the appropriate one.

On the low walls there is never free space.  
Everybody knows that the night is cold  
and they should take care of the indocile waters  
for that reason they are spread on the wall.

There is music  
eyes  
mouths  
languages  
and questions.  
The wall is sufficiently large  
to cover the shore and to protect us of everything  
but for anybody that sits down in the wall  
only sees the distance.

Translated by Noel Alonso



Photo © Nikola Kukunesh

**Gjoko Zdraveski** (born in 1985 in Skopje, Macedonia) writes poetry, short prose and essays. He has published four books of poetry: *Palindrome with Double 'N'* (2010), *House for migratory birds* (2013), *belleove* (2016), *daedicarus icaral* (2017), and one book of short-short stories: *Reality cut-outs* (2019). His poetry has been translated into several European languages, and he has taken part in poetry festivals in Europe. Since 2015 he is part of the *Versopolis* project.

**слобода**

1.

дедо ми со тараби си го омеѓи дворот  
и така доби парче земја,  
ама го загуби светот.  
а потоа почна и тоа свое парче земја  
да го преградува и  
да им дава имиња на бавчите.  
а јас бев дете и најмногу ги сакав  
вратничките што ги спојуваа.

2.

забодуваме колци-меѓници,  
цртаме карти со некакви граници  
и ставаме таму луѓе  
што ни буричкаат по торбите  
и нè прашуваат каде патуваме  
како да им е тоа стварно важно.

gdje se putuje, gojko?  
ме прашува меѓничарот во пет часот  
наутро, а јас, уште неразбуден, му велам: дома.  
а си мислам:  
по земјава  
или угоре-удолу? во просторот  
или во времето? сега  
или секогаш и во вјеки вјеков?

**freedom**

1.

my grandad enclosed his courtyard with a fence  
and thus won a plot of land,  
though he lost the world.  
and then he started to partition  
that plot of land and  
name the gardens.  
I was a child and I loved most  
the little connecting doors.

2.

we stake in poles – bounds,  
we draw maps with some boundaries  
and place people there  
that scan through our bags  
asking us where we are going  
as though it really mattered to them.

where are you heading, gojko?  
the border guard asks me at five o'clock  
in the morning, and I, still not fully awake, say to him: home.  
while thinking to myself:  
back and forth the earth  
or up and down? in space  
or in time? now  
or always and for eternity?

3.

векови сме далеку од слободата.  
затоа што сè уште од туѓите синџири  
се ослободуваме. и не го чувствуваме  
во утробата клучот од ќелијата  
во која сме заробени.

забораваме дека кафето што го пиеме  
за да се разбудиме е содржано во  
талогот на дното од шолјата.

секој ден за неа зборуваме. дури и  
да запееме се дрзнуваме. само,  
тоа го правиме болни. со страв  
полни, наместо со љубов.

3.

we are centuries away from freedom.  
for we still set ourselves free from  
other people's chains. and we do not feel  
in the guts the key from the cell  
in which we are locked.

we forget that the coffee we drink  
to wake up is contained  
in the residue at the bottom of the cup.

every day we talk about it. we even dare  
sing about it. it's just that,  
we do so ill. full with  
fear, instead of love.

Translated by Lazar Popov





Photo © Marek Jurkow

**Tatev Chakhian** is a Poland-based Armenian poet, translator and visual artist, born in 1992. She graduated from the faculty of Cultural Anthropology at Yerevan State University, then earned a degree in International Relations at Adam Mickiewicz University. Selections of her poetry have been translated into German, Polish, Czech, Persian, Greek, Macedonian, Dutch, Spanish, Bengali, and Turkish, and have been published worldwide. The poet collaborates with urban artists and musicians, and translates and promotes Polish contemporary poetry among Armenian readers.

## MIGRANTS' POINT

Եվրոպա –  
Որպեսզի իրար ճիշտ հասկանանք՝  
ես սովորեցի մի քանիսը քո լեզուներից,  
իսկ դու անգամ չջանացիր ճիշտ արտասանել ազգանունս:

Մեր առաջին հանդիպմանը  
երջանկությունից կրկնացի բարձրաձայն –  
իմ երկրի մարդկանց պես,  
հետո գոռացի ցավից – սովորույթի ուժով,  
իսկ դու զգուշացրիր, որ 22: 00-ից  
ցանկացած ձայն աղմուկ է համարվում:

Եվրոպա –  
դու զարմացրիր ինձ, ու ես ինձ զարմացրի՝  
թե ոնց դարձա քեզնից ավելի սպիտակ ու շիկահեր,  
թե ինչ հրճվանքով ձայնակցեցի ցույցերիդ՝  
ընդդեմ նրանց, ում չէի ընտրել . . .

Կապույտ աչքերով, կապույտ արյունով, կարմիր անձնագրով  
սողաներիդ գիշերներում ես քո երազը տեսա,  
բայց առավոտներդ երբեք իմը չեղան, Եվրոպա . . .  
Դու սիրեցիր ինձ, բայց կնության չառար . . .

Եվրոպա –  
Դու ինձնից հազար ու մի գիշերվա հեքիաթներ ուզեցիր,  
բայց հեքիաթային ոչինչ չեկավ մտքիս  
պայծառներով ու պատերազմի ճիչերով լի իմ մանկությանից:

Իմ ներսի բոլոր երեխեքը մեծացել են . . .  
Իմ ներսի բոլոր զինվորները հոգնել են, Եվրոպա . . .  
Իմ ներսի թափառականները կորել են անդարձ . . .  
Եկել եմ գիրկդ, որ մի պահ ոչմիպիսին լինեմ, որ խաղաղվեմ . . .

Եվրոպա, սիրտս ավելի ծանր է, քան այս 56 կգ-ն ծնկներիդ –  
Բայց թե սիրտդ սրտիս համար չի ցավում,  
զոնե անտեսիր, մարմինս էլ չտեսնելու դիր . . .

## MIGRANTS' POINT

Europe –  
To understand each other better  
I've learnt a couple of your languages,  
but you haven't even tried to pronounce my surname correctly.

On our first date  
I guffawed – as my people used to do,  
then howled of pain – as I used to,  
but you warned  
that after 10 PM any sound is considered to be a noise.

Europe –  
You've surprised me as I did myself  
by becoming much paler and blonder than you,  
by feeling in my waters screaming at your protests  
against those not chosen by me.

In the nights of your blue-eyed, blue-blooded, red-passport men  
I've seen your dream,  
but your mornings have never belonged to me, Europe.  
You've made love with me, but never asked for my hand.

Europe –  
You've expected the tales of thousand and one nights,  
but I couldn't recall any from my childhood darkness  
full of bombings and screams of war . . .

All the children inside me have grown up . . .  
All the soldiers inside me are tired . . .  
All the wanderers inside are wholly lost . . .  
I've come to sit on your laps and to be nothinglike, to calm down for a while . . .

Europe –  
My heart is heavier than this 56 kilos you see –  
But if you don't care of my hearts,  
then also connive my body . . .

Translated by Tatev Chakhian

ԱՅՌ ՁՄԵՌ . . .

Այդ ձմեռ ես չուների անձնագիր:  
Ասել է թե՛ ես գոյություն չունեի  
հարկայինի համար,  
ոստիկանության,  
տեղական ինքնակառավարման մարմինների,  
ու մյուս բոլոր մարմինների, բացի մեկից, որի սրտում  
դեռ ապրում էի:  
Այդ ձմեռ նրան սրտի կաթվածով  
հիվանդանոց տեղափոխեցին:  
Այդ ձմեռ անունս հղիվվեց հազար օտարալեզու բերանում՝  
Տաթի, Տատյանա, Տանյա, Թինա,  
իսկ ազգանունս ճովողեցին միայն ամենահամարձակները:  
Բոլոր այլընտրանքներին համաձայնեցի լուռ  
ինչպես անձանոթի հասակին ու քաշին ես համաձայնում՝  
առաջին հանդիպմանը:  
Այդ ձմեռ ես սկսեցի մարզվել, որ չկորցնեմ վերջին կապս նրա հետ,  
ով բառեր է ասում իմ բերանով . . .  
Իսկ երբ մարզչին հարցրի. «Ո՛ւր են գնում կորցրածս կիլոները»,  
խնդրեց իր նման պարզ տղուն բարդ հարցեր չտալ ու  
հռոպելով ասաց. «Ուրախ չե՞ս, որ վերանում ես»:

THAT WINTER . . .

I had no passport that winter.  
Meaning I existed  
neither for the tax service,  
nor the police,  
nor the local bodies,  
just like any other body, except for the one  
whose heart I still lived in.  
That winter that one was rushed to hospital  
with a heart attack.  
That winter my name was inflected in a thousand unfamiliar ways-  
Tatie, Tatyana, Tanya, Tinah...  
I silently succumbed to all,  
like one accepts the height and the weight of a stranger  
at the first meeting.  
I hit the gym that winter not to lose the last connection with the one,  
who articulates words through my mouth...  
And when I asked my trainer: Where do my lost kilos go?  
he pleaded to save a simple guy like him from tough questions  
and joked to the best of his humour: Aren't you happy to disappear?

Translated by Ruzan Amiraghyan



Photo © Matej Pusnik

**Yekta** (born 1979) in La Vallée aux Loups, near Paris, is a French poet, performer and musician. He has been published in many poetry reviews, in several anthologies and he has released four poetry books (latest release: *Broken branches for the stranger*, Petra Editions, 2018). He participated in numerous international festivals and his poems have been translated into Bengali, Croatian, English, Flemish, Italian, Macedonian, Romanian, Slovenian, Spanish and Swedish. As a musician, performer, narrator and singer, Yekta collaborates to several projects linked to poetry and works with different musicians. He has composed soundtracks and released his a piano E.P. with one of his books. Web: <https://yektapoesie.tumblr.com/>

### Punctuation dans l'interstice

Nulle accalmie dans le monologue  
des machines sur mon désir

pas même le crochet d'une virgule  
pour me suspendre à l'infini

mais sur les murs  
en bord d'obscurité  
les tapotements d'un sourcier du vide  
d'un infirmier fébrile  
qui chercherait longtemps  
une dernière veine à piquer  
dans un corps brûlé par les paradis

### Punctuation in the rift

I find no respite in the machine  
monologues tracing my desires

not even the hook of a comma  
to suspend me to infinity

yet upon the walls  
on the fringes of darkness  
a void dowser taps  
feverish nurse  
restlessly searching  
for a final vein to puncture  
in a body burnt by delights

Translated from Polish by Iris Colomb





Photo © Vaiva Abromaityte

**Indrė Valantinaitė** (born in 1984, in Kaunas) is a Lithuanian poet. After graduating from the Kaunas Jesuit Gymnasium, she studied arts management at Vilnius University and at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her first book, *Of Fish and Lilies*, earned her the first prize in the poetry category of the 2006 First Book Contest of the Lithuanian Union of Writers. Her second book *Tales about Love and Other Animals* (2011) has won the Young Yotvingian Prize in 2012. In addition to writing poems, Indrė is a singer, a winner of several singing festivals and also she is a TV journalist and producer.

**Laisvės alėja**

Senamiestyje, name,  
kuriame tarpukariu gyveno  
mano močiutė ir gimė tėvas,

po palėpe, kurioje jie badavo,  
įrengtas madingas restoranas,

kurio atidaryme aš,  
su įmantriausiu maistu burnoje  
ir keistos kaltės jausmu pilve,

tik lubomis teatskirta nuo erdvės,  
kurioje ji paliko raštelį,

žieduota ranka keliu taurę prie lūpų  
ir švenčiu gyvenimą  
už mus abi.

**Freedom Boulevard**

In the Old Town house where  
my grandmother lived between the wars  
and my father was born –

under the loft in which they starved,  
a trendy restaurant has set up.

I attend the opening, standing with  
pretentiously prepared food in my mouth  
and a strange feeling of guilt in my belly.

For only the ceiling separates this space  
from the one in which she left her note.

Lifting a glass with a ringed hand,  
I celebrate life  
for both of us.

**Viešbučio kambarys**

Jis daug keliauja.

Kiekvienąkart jam rodos,  
kad išnuomotas kambarys  
primygtinai siūlo  
visus septynis kelius.

Nors jame tėra  
mini baras ir Biblija.

Du būdai  
įsitverti rytojais.

**Hotel Room**

He travels a lot.

Every night it seems  
that the rented room  
urges him to take  
all seven roads.

There is, though,  
a Bible and a mini bar:

Two ways  
to grasp at tomorrow.

Translated by Rimas Uzgiris



Photo © Spartaco Coletta

**Luca Benassi** was born in 1976 in Rome. He is poet, writer, essayist, journalist and translator. He has published five poetry collections, including anthologies of his poetry in Japan (with the poet Maki Starfield, 2016), in Serbia and Macedonia in 2019, and he translated and published *The Path* (2002) by the Dutch poet Germain Droogenbroodt. As journalist and critic, Luca has published a book of essays *Throttled Streams – Italian poets in the third millennium* (2010).

**(varcando il confine della foce)**

Bisogna aspettarli al varco i salmoni  
al collo di bottiglia della foce  
spauriti, mentre accalcano l'acqua  
bisogna tendere la rete dove  
la superficie si increspa di pinne  
le branchie annaspano quel desiderio  
che riproduce il transito di nuove  
generazioni. Allora è il momento  
di calare la rete, di tendere  
alla gola il laccio, l'arpione aguzzo.  
All'uscita della metro noi siamo  
salmoni ignari verso la mattanza.

**(crossing the boundary of the river mouth)**

Salmon are to be waylaid  
at the bottleneck of the river mouth,  
when they are scared, cramming the water;  
you have to let the net down where  
the surface ripples with fins,  
gills fumbling the desire  
that doubles the passage of new  
generations. That is the moment  
to shoot the net, to stretch tight  
the noose to the throat, the sharp spear.  
At the metro exit we are  
oblivious salmon to the slaughter

**(costruire confini)**

Non chiedete a noi  
solo questo sappiamo: chi siamo e cosa vogliamo  
per il resto ci sarà una ragione  
un perché fondato su una norma  
una legge certa da non interpretare.  
Se le cose stanno così  
è perché si saranno incontrati  
avranno portato carte, grafici obiettivi  
intorno a un tavolo, fino a sera  
avranno chiuso l'accordo e firmato la tregua.  
Ci saranno state tazze di the  
certezze da dare, un aereo da prendere.  
Se le cose sono andate così  
ci sarà un motivo  
vedrete: salterà fuori un libro  
carta intestata che galleggia su un fiume giallo  
una sentenza di tribunale, bibliografie.  
E qualcuno avrà preso una decisione.

**(building borders)**

Do not ask us  
we know just this: who we are and what we want  
for the rest there must be a reason  
a way based on a norm  
a firm law not to be interpreted.  
If things are like this,  
it is because they had met,  
brought in papers, charts, objectives  
around a table late at night  
made a deal and signed the truce.  
There must have been tea cups  
assurance to be given, flights to catch.  
If things were like that,  
there must be a reason  
you will see: a book will pop out  
stationery floating on a yellow river  
a Court sentence, bibliographies.  
Someone will have made a decision.

Translated by the author





Photo © Sena Ertam Ünsal

**Nurduran Duman** is a Turkish poet, playwright, and editor based in Istanbul. Her books include *Yenilgi Oyunu* (2005 Cemal Sureya Poetry Award), *Istanbul'la Bakışmak* and *Mi Bemol*. Other works: *Semi Circle* (2016, US), *Selected Poems* (2017, Macedonia), *Selected Poems* (2019, Belgium), and *Steps of Istanbul* (2019, China, Poetry Collection of the Year, 2nd Boao International Poetry Award). Her poems have been translated into Finnish, Spanish, Azerbaijan Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovak, French, German, Occitan, and Italian. She is featured in the [#internationalwomensday2018](#) (#IWD18) Modern Poetry in Translation (MPT) list of ten international female poets in translation in 2018. She is a member of Turkish PEN.

### güvercin kuğurtusu

—göç göğünde uçuşan çocuklara bakamayan kuşçulara—

silkele dur boşluğu nasılsa kanatların çıkacak

meleksin sen üç vakit var üç dilek sonra  
şimdi ne gelir elden ki zaten ve ama oysa  
bağlaçlar ne güzel yürüyor bak podyum ne geniş  
yürüyor can simitleri biberli hava görür mü ayaklar  
ya da da bir bağlaç sepetimizde bisiklet üç teker  
komşu ülke sınırında yan daire kara suyunda  
dönüp devirecek bu çağı da dönecek bu topal çember

sen hep beyazına konmuş kanmış ya da  
da bir bağlaç kanmış konmuş  
sen bembeyaz beyazdan yana hem görmedin duymadın  
olur da düşerse iş başa ya da da bir bağlaç  
sıkarsa boğazını insansın ya  
kırmızı çocuk ayakkabısı gömmeyi de umma  
renk ne gezer şarkı ne gezer ninni umma

silkele dur boşluğu sen çıkacak kanatların  
nasılsa ne zamansa

### Doves' Coo

—for bird-watchers who cannot look at the children flying through the immigration sky—

go on beating emptiness your wings will happen somehow

you'll be an angel after three wishes after three stages  
what can your hands do now But Because And After Yet  
look how beautiful these conjunctions walk on their wide runway  
young life rings walk through peppery air do your feet see them  
Or is also a conjunction, in our basket a tricycle  
for our neighbour country border in connecting lands and seas  
this lame circle will also turn this age overturn and turn

you're always with white perched quenched either or  
Or is a conjunction quenched and perched  
you're snow white standing by white besides you didn't see didn't hear  
if it befalls you have in mind Or is also a conjunction  
if it constricts your throat you're human after all  
don't expect to bury children's red shoes  
no colour no song, don't expect a lullaby

go on beating emptiness your wings will happen  
somehow sometime

Translated by Grace Wessels



Photo © Astrid di Crollanza

**Stéphane Chaumet** (born 1971 in Dunkerque) has lived in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and the United States. He is the author of the novels: *Même pour ne pas vaincre* (*Even for not winning*), *Au bonheur des voiles* (*The veils' Paradise, chronicles of Syria*), *Les Marionnettes* (*The Puppets*), *L'île impasse* (*Dead-end island*); of the books of poetry: *Dans la nudité du temps* (*In the nudity of time*), *Urbaines miniatures* (*Urban miniatures*), *La traversée de l'errance* (*The crossing of the wandering*), *Les cimetières engloutis* (*The sunken cemeteries*), *Fentes* (*Cracks*), *Le hasard et la perte* (*Chance and loss*), *Insomnia* (*Insomnia*), *Cellules* (*Cells*); and and a book of photographs: *L'hôte, l'autre* (*The host, the other*), photos of Syria before the war. He has translated many contemporary Latin American and Spanish poets, as well as the German poet Hilde Domin and the Iranian Forough Farrokhzad.

tu as pris la route  
ta famille ignore si tu es mort ou vivant  
peut-être préfèrent-t-ils croire à ton abandon  
ou que tu te caches dans la honte et le silence  
personne ici ne sait qui tu es d'où tu viens  
personne ne s'y intéresse  
ils ont donné à ton cadavre sa dernière trace d'humanité  
et gravé avec un bout de bois  
deux lettres dans une couche de ciment  
N.N.  
peut-être au cœur de la nuit une mère ou une sœur t'appelle  
peut-être es-tu de ceux qu'après leur mort  
personne ne nommera

you have hit the road  
your family does not know if you are alive or dead  
perhaps they prefer to believe in your abandonment  
or that your are hidden in shame and silence  
nobody here knows who you are and where you come from  
nobody does not even care  
they have given to your cadaver the last trace of humanity  
and engraved with a piece of wood  
two letters in a layer of cement  
N.N.  
maybe in the middle of the night a mother or a sister would is calling you  
maybe you are one of those that after their death  
nobody will name

Translated by Natasha Sardzoska

*Hay caminos que no tienen regreso*  
ai-je lu au service d'immigration mexicain.  
Chemins  
combien en ai-je pris, abandonnés  
combien m'ont enchanté, déçu  
combien où je me suis perdu  
perdu et ouvert, perdu et rencontré  
où j'ai trouvé l'autre.  
Qu'ont tracé mes semelles ? Qu'ai-je emporté ?  
Ces chemins toujours le même ? Le mien ?  
Il y a des chemins qui n'ont pas de retour  
d'autres qui ne mènent nulle part.  
Mais le retour est un leurre  
et nulle part s'appelle la quête.  
Ton chemin n'est que le réseau  
que tisse et qui tisse ta vie.

*Hay caminos que no tienen regreso*  
I read at the Mexican immigration office.  
Roads  
how many have I taken, abandoned  
how many delighted, deceived me  
how many where I've gotten lost  
lost and open, lost and found  
where I've found another.  
What have my soles mapped out? What have I brought back?  
Roads that are always the same? Mine?  
There are roads that have no return  
others that don't lead anywhere.  
But the return is a lure  
and nowhere is called the quest.  
Your road is only the web  
woven by and weaving your life.

Translated by Hugh Hazelton





Photo credit: private

**Ren (Katherine) Powell** is a poet and teaching artist/mentor. She is a native Californian, now a Norwegian citizen settled on the west coast of Norway. Her poetry collections have been purchased by the Norwegian Arts Council for national library distribution, and her poems have been translated and published in eight languages in chapbooks and anthologies.

### Colonizing

One body of water – but every shore  
names its sea:  
A sea of graveled fog at midnight's North Cape  
can scrape your throat bloody as a child's knees  
and drive you to drink  
A sea of wilted cardboard prayers  
6 a.m. in the Canaries along the resort fronts  
pushes a melancholy history into your lounge  
A sea of watermelon taunts you in Stavanger's harbor  
when the algae melt in spring  
though no watermelons grow  
– or have ever grown there –  
but because a story stormed through immigration  
speaking its own language  
dropping consonants in the tide pools  
and in the landlocked waters  
like fish eggs  
And another story will slip between porous membranes  
during a deep kiss between strangers at an airport somewhere  
and they will stake a new claim.



Photo credit: private

**Tomica Bajsić** was born in 1968 in Zagreb, Croatia. A poet, artist, and literary travel writer, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and has published five poetry books, two prose books, and two picture books. He has been the recipient of numerous national awards for poetry and recently showed two photography exhibitions in Zagreb: Amazon Breathes and Brazilian Rainforest. His most recent poetry collection with drawings, Nevidljivo more / Invisible Sea, was awarded the Croatian Ministry of Culture's highest literary merit in 2019. He serves as president of the Croatian PEN Center and coordinator of Lyrikline, a multilingual poetry platform in Croatia.

### LEPTIR LUTALICA

Iza koraljnih grebena  
pustog mora i prštećih svjetala  
gdje povjetarac i ptica u zraku  
navještaju željeno kopno  
gdje vlada scuba  
diving harmonija  
gdje splavi od bambusa iz Vijetnama  
prelaze ocean u potrazi za kruhom  
i kada vide leptira pamte  
zauvijek svaku njegovu poru  
koja diše u navirućim bojama  
jer to je znak da je blizu kopno  
i da se neće utopiti ili  
umrijeti od žeđi.

Tamo iza podmorja  
okamenjene lave  
leži Australija.

### THE WANDERER BUTTERFLY

Beyond coral reefs  
a deserted sea where a light  
breeze and a bird in the sky  
announce the longed-for land  
of scuba diving harmony.

It is where Vietnamese bamboo rafts  
cross the ocean in search of bread  
and when they see a butterfly  
they remember for ever  
each of its pores  
breathing in spouting colours  
because that means the land is near  
and they are not going to drown  
or die of thirst.

There beyond the seabed  
of petrified lava  
lies Australia.

Translated by Damir Šodan

## POSTKOLONIJALNA PJESMA

Lavovi na trgu Trafalgar u Londonu,  
u četvrti Montparnasse i svuda po Parizu,  
na grobu kralja Richarda u katedrali u Rouenu,  
u parku Tiergarten i otoku muzeja u Berlinu,  
na Lančanom mostu Budimpešte; čuvaju ulaz  
u kraljevsku palaču u Brusselsu, drijemaju  
u podnožju spomenika Kolumbu u Barceloni,  
žongliraju na trgu markiza Pombala u Lisabonu.  
Još davno su kamenim pogledima ispraćivali brodove  
Istočno – indijske kompanije iz Amsterdama.  
Ovdje ih ima više nego u Africi i Indiji.  
Prijestolnice bivših europskih imperija  
ne krasi ni dupini ni ptice, nego lavovi,  
čija je snaga njihova samoća.

Kao dvanaestogodišnjak, klizao sam  
jedne oštre zime zaleđenim jezerom  
maksimirskog parka pokraj ZOO vrta.  
Na jezeru nije bilo nikoga osim mene.  
Ispod jednog od mostova osjetio sam  
kod ulaza u nastambu prisutnost lava,  
čija me rika zaustavila u mjestu.  
I kada ti se čini da te vide, nisi u pravu,  
lavovi zapravo gledaju ravno kroz tvoje kosti,  
kroz zidove, rešetke i drveće, preko jezera  
gdje sam klizao, pa do rimskog koloseuma i dalje,  
prostranstvima urezanim duboko u njihovu memoriju,  
pogled im počiva u savanama Afrike prije kolonija.

## POSTCOLONIAL POEM

The lions at Trafalgar Square in London,  
in quartier Montparnasse and all over Paris, lions  
at the tomb of King Richard in the Rouen Cathedral,  
the Tiergarten park and the Museum Island in Berlin.  
They guard the Chain Bridge in Budapest, the entrance  
to the Royal Palace of Brussels; slumber  
at the foot of the Columbus monument in Barcelona,  
daydream at the Marquise Pombala square in Lisbon.

Long ago their gaze of stone escorted the grand ships  
of East – India Company out of Port of Amsterdam.  
We have more of them here than in Africa and India.  
The capitals of the former European Empires  
are not adorned with dolphins or birds, but lions,  
whose strength is in their loneliness.

One harsh winter as a twelve year old  
I went ice skating in park near our ZOO.  
On the frozen lake no one but me.  
Sliding under one of the bridges  
I felt the presence of a lion.  
Through the snow frosted trees  
I could barely see the winter's den  
but the lion's roar frightened me  
and made me return to where I started.

But when it seems that they see you, you're wrong,  
lions are actually looking straight through your bones,  
through the walls, bars and trees, across the lake  
where I skated and all the way over the Roman Colosseum  
towards the wilderness carved deeply into their memory,  
their gaze steadfastly rooted to the grasslands of Africa  
before the colonies.

Translated by Damir Šodan



Photo © Claudio Mammucari

**Franca Mancinelli** (born in Fano, 1981) is the author of four books of poetry, which have won several prizes in Italy, where she is considered to be one of the most compelling new poetic voices. In John Taylor's translations, The Bitter Oleander Press has published *At an Hour's Sleep from Here: Poems (2007-2019)* and *The Little Book of Passage*—a translation of her book of prose poems, *Libretto di transito* (2018). Her most recent book is *Tutti gli occhi che ho aperto* [*All the Eyes that I have Opened*], issued by Marcos y Marcos in 2020. Her work has been published in several foreign magazines and anthologies.

con passi che vorrebbero piantare  
sassi e semi in cadenza  
vado a rendere alle foglie  
l'albero che hanno perso,  
alle piume cadute l'animale.  
Poi incrocio le braccia  
e il cuore torna in gabbia.

penzola a vuoto a un lato del letto  
i piedi bruciati;  
il pavimento trattiene il suo volto  
in vene di marmo. La luce si allarga  
come una macchia. Qualcuno  
urtando ha versato un altro giorno.  
Torneranno a tracciarsi le strade  
alle scarpe che vanno  
confermando i confini  
di cose tra cose.

with footsteps that would like to plant  
stone and seeds in a cadence  
I'm going to give back to the leaves  
the tree they have lost,  
to the fallen feathers the bird.  
Then I cross my arms  
and my heart returns to its cage.

dangling from one side of the bed,  
her burned-up feet;  
the floor holds her face  
in its marble veins. The light spreads  
like a stain. Someone,  
with a thud, has spilled another day.  
The streets will again be traced  
by shoes walking on  
confirming the boundaries  
of things among things.

Translated by John Taylor





Photo © Alberte Sánchez Regueiro

**Tiago Alves Costa** (born in Vila Nova Famalicão, 1980) is a Portuguese poet, essayist and translator. He published *Zizek Vai ao Ginásio* (2019), *Mecanismo de Emergência* (2016) and *Wc.Constrangido* (2012), with editions in Portugal, Galicia and Brazil. Collaboratively, he participated in the “Current Ibero-American Poetry Anthology” (2018). He received Honorable Mentions in the Glória de Sant’Anna International Poetry Award 2020 and 2018, and the Manuel Murguía for Short Stories Prize 2019. He is the editor-in-chief of the digital cultural magazine *Palavra Comum*. He is a member of the Association of Writers in Galician Language (AELG). He holds a Degree in Advertising (ISCET, PT) and a postgraduate in Creativity and Innovation (TC3, USA).

## IT’S THE NIGHT DOCTOR, THAT HURTS

It’s the night doctor, it’s the night that hurts  
Yes, you can examine the distance  
that goes from my existence to the doubts that lie within me  
You can examine as I have nothing else to hide,  
I don’t even carry a wallet anymore, neither my instinct,  
permanently carried over my shoulder in timeless days,  
neither my other wretched self  
who ran away,  
as soon as he realized that the X-ray proved he was also guilty.  
If it hurts when I breathe?  
It hurts when my inside feels inhabited, doctor  
when my dreams feel like those airports on a Monday night  
where we arrive and leave but never hold ourselves  
to contemplate the airplanes  
So many airplanes, doctor... so many airplanes  
Ah, doctor, of course it hurts!  
Yes, there! Next to that spot, where one day someone will ask whom it was  
from,  
Right after the place only accessed by my mother  
during my childhood  
Please don’t insist, doctor,  
You need to understand once and for all  
that one thing, is the pain hurting from the inside, and another, to the outside  
You need to understand ... that one thing is the scientific method  
and another, to get here with a It won’t be anything serious  
and leave with a that’s the way Life is  
I will calm down, I will calm down, doctor  
But please, don’t press The Night that way  
as if you were searching for a heart in the garbage,  
as if we’ve known each other forever  
as if I was already dead!

Am I dead, doctor?  
I’m not dead  
my body is still in charge look! (he moved the image)  
my body was the one dragging me here today  
it is the one that continues paying the bills from a premature sleepwalking  
it is the one that restores the order,  
when I want to go beyond the orbits of the dawn  
Look doctor, brooding augments everything the body respects  
don’t say now it is my imagination  
when I well know what is written there:  
THIS LIFE AND SIX MONTHS LEFT  
But I take notes of all meanings ... here, in the palm of my hand,  
just in case I get home alive,  
and forget my consciousness outside  
in the rain, scheduled for the end of this year.  
Ah, Doctor, please hear me at once  
It’s the night, doctor, it’s the night that hurts.

## É A NOITE QUE DÓI DOUTOR (portuguese version)

É a noite doutor é a noite que dói  
sim, pode revistar a distância que vai do meu interior ao benefício da dúvida  
pode revistar que já nada tenho a esconder,  
já nem a carteira levo  
nem o instinto, que sempre carreguei ao ombro  
em dias sem tempo  
nem o taful do meu outro eu  
que fugiu,  
assim que viu a radiografia a provar  
que ele também era culpado  
Se dói quando inspiro?  
Dói quando isto está desabitado por dentro, doutor  
quando o sonho se parece aqueles aeroportos a uma segunda à noite  
onde chegamos e partimos mas nunca ficamos  
para contemplar os aviões  
tanto avião doutor tanto avião  
Ai ai doutor, claro que dói!

Aí: mesmo ao lado de onde um dia alguém irá perguntar: de quem era?  
logo acima de onde em pequeno  
só a minha Mãe chegava  
Por favor não insista doutor,  
entenda de uma vez por todas  
que uma coisa é a dor doer para dentro  
e outra é doer para fora  
entenda... que uma é o método científico  
e outra é chegar aqui com um Isso Não Deve Ser Nada  
e sair com um É Assim a Vida  
Eu acalmo-me eu acalmo-me doutor  
mas não me pressione assim na noite dessa forma  
como se estivesse à procura de um coração no caixote do lixo,  
como se nos conhecêssemos desde pequeninos  
como se eu já estivesse morto!  
Eu estou morto, doutor? Ah?  
Eu não estou morto  
aqui quem manda ainda é o meu corpo veja! (mexeu na imagem)  
foi ele quem hoje me arrastou até aqui  
é ele quem continua a pagar as contas do sonambulismo precoce  
é ele quem repõe a ordem,  
quando eu quero ir para lá das órbitas da madrugada  
Olhe que a cisma doutor  
faz aumentar tudo ao que o corpo respeita  
não venha agora dizer que é impressão minha  
quando eu sei bem o que aí está escrito:  
ESTA VIDA E MAIS SEIS MESES  
Mas eu aponto... aqui, na mão de todos os significados  
não vá eu chegar a casa ainda vivo  
e esquecer a razão do lado de fora da chuva  
que está prevista para o final do ano  
Ai doutor dê-me ouvidos de uma vez  
é a noite é a noite que dói

Translated by Joanna Magalhães



Photo © Emna Louzyr

**Emna Louzyr** is a Tunisian poet and journalist. She is a producer of cultural programs for Tunis International Radio. She was also laureate of the Zubeida Bchir Poetry prize in 2009 and attended several international poetry festivals in Lodève (France), Bari (Italy) and Skopje (Macedonia). Her poetry has been translated into Italian, French and English and was scheduled in the modern Arabic literature program at Brighton University (UK). She has published five poetry collections: *Raneen* (2003); *Volcanos silence* (2006); *Sabra* (2009) and *The wind talked home* (2017). One translated collection has been published in France « *Le silence des volcans* » (2015).

## على قيد وهم

سخب غاضبة  
تهدد أحلامنا  
نحن على قيد وهم  
تنازلنا عن الحياة  
منذ أمد

نتنفس مرغمون

سحب غاضبة  
تلاحقنا  
فلا تجد غير ضلال شاردة

لم يبق في الغدير  
إلا سحبية ماء

## Illusioned

Angry clouds  
Threaten our dreams  
We are illusioned  
We gave up on life  
Long ago

We breathe against our will

Angry clouds  
Are chasing after us  
Finding nothing but stray shadows

Nothing is left in the stream  
Except for a minute cloud of water



## فرار

تركت خيمتي  
على هذا الشاطئ

وضعت فيها ما أملك  
قصائد لم تكتب  
أحلامي المنسية  
شيء من ذاتي  
أو ما تبقى  
قطرات الندى  
لحظات الشجن  
و زهرة الصبار الأبدية  
التي أهداني إياها جدي

أسدلت الستار  
على ابتسامة امرأة  
كاد عطرها أن يعيدني إلى الحياة

تركت خيمتي على كثيب الرمل  
و أويت فيها ذاكرتي

سيعود الصيف حتما  
و لن أجد خيمتي

## Escape

I left my tent  
On this seaside

I entrusted it with what I own  
Unwritten poems  
My forgotten dreams  
A bit of myself  
Or what's left on it  
Drops of dew  
Moments of melancholy  
And the eternal cactus flower  
That my grandfather presented me  
The curtain has come down  
On a smile of a woman  
Whose sent almost brought me back to life

I left my tent  
On the sand dune  
And retired my memory in it  
Summer will certainly come back  
Yet I will not find my tent

Translated by Ghassan Al Khuneizi



Photo © Tatjana Rakić

**Dragan Jovanović Danilov**, Serbian author, art critic and essayist, was born in Požega in 1960. He studied at the Faculty of Law and at the Department of History of Art at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Danilov's poetry has been described by Italian, French, English, Bulgarian, Romanian and Slovak-speaking critics. He has appeared at numerous international poetry festivals and has hosted several one-man literary evenings and poetry readings in France. His poetry books have been translated into English, French, German, Italian, Greek, Bulgarian, Slovak, Romanian and Macedonian. His essays on visual art have been translated into English and French.

## СОБА НОШЕНА КРИЛИМА

Ето, путовао сам и ја!  
Синоћ сам читао у фотељи у углу, а данас  
сам испод паукове мреже, на супротној  
страни собе - мачка ми је уснула на крилу  
јер зна да нема разлога у било шта  
се уплитати.

Ова соба из које нема излаза  
учионица је слободе.

О осами зборећи, од осаме се и ограђујем.  
Не преиспитујем границе празнине  
ни могућности песничког језика;  
не занима ме искричава замршеност епова,  
ни подвизи козачких атамана; немам  
на интернету свој сајт, сама је у страшној,  
подивљалој одаји моја сенка.

Нежан као табан детета, оставио сам себе  
у некаквом граалу на обали, да ноћ сиђе  
на моје тело и покрије га неизмерношћу  
неког ко је смирен и ко је свуда.

Топла тампон-држава са нејасно одређеном  
спољњом политиком - тако видим своју  
чедну собу, у којој је потопљена Атлантида.

Домовино, ја сам твој сиромашни дечак;  
ја сам папир на коме куца срце.  
Море неко давно сањано шири мирис  
у моје расуло, гледа ме очима слепца,  
каже да сам највећи путник тамо где се  
не помера с места.

Ето, путовао сам и ја.

## ROOM CARRIED ON WINGS

I, too, had my travels.  
Last night I read in the armchair in the corner,  
and today I'm under the spider web  
on the other side of the room – a cat asleep in my lap  
since she knows there's no reason to get involved.

Speaking of solitude, I distance myself from it.  
I'm not reexamining the frontiers of the void  
nor the possibilities of the poetic language;  
I've no interest in the shrill intricacies of the epic,  
the feats of Kazakh chieftain; I don't have  
my own website on the internet; my wild shadow  
is alone in a room gone wild and terrifying.

Tender like a foot sole of a child, I left myself  
in some seaside town for the night  
to descend and cover my body with the immensity  
of someone who is calm and who is everywhere.

Motherland, I'm your poor child,  
I'm a piece of paper on which a heart beats.  
The smell of the sea dreamed of long ago  
wafts into my chaos, it watches me with eyes of a blind man,  
tells me that I'm the great traveler  
who doesn't budge from his home.

There, too, I had my travels.

Translated by Charles Simic



Photo © Violette Abou Jalad

**Violette Abou Jalad** is Lebanese poet. She studied philosophy and theology and participated in several cultural meetings and conventions in Arab countries, including Amman, Baghdad, Tunis, Algeria and European countries such as France and Spain. She has published several collections of poems: *Sayyad El Naoum*, *Banafsaj Akhir*, *Awan El Nass*, *Awan El Jasa*, *Ourafek El Majanin Ila oukoulihem* (Ed. Fadaat, Amman), *La ahia 'ala haza el kaoukab siway* (Ed. Elka). A new collection in French will soon be published by the publishing house Lanskine: *Alone on this Planet*.

كيف سنكتب عن الحب

نحن الذين فقدنا أطرافنا في حروب صغيرة!

نحن الذين تركنا الأشباح تلهو في غرفنا المعتممة

How shall we write about love

We who lost our members in trivial wars?

We who let the ghosts caper in our dark rooms?

And made of sleep a meeting for tepsters of absence,?

How shall we go to love on our little feet?

We Who sat long behind the windows,

Then we got confused like the the roads on closed doors.

How shall we taste steadily the honey of all those poets?

We, son's of the bitter language,

With the deep scars

Until the very end of death.

وجعلنا من النوم ملتقى لندامى الغياب!

كيف سنذهب الى الحب بأقدامنا القصيرة

نحن الذين جلسنا طويلا خلف النوافذ

ثم ارتبكنا كطَرَقات على أبواب مغلقة.

كيف سنندوق بكل هدوء

عسل كل هؤلاء الشعراء!

نحن أبناء اللغة المُرّة ،

اصحاب الندوب الغائرة

حتى آخر الموت!

عادت الأشباح الى طوافها،

الناس الى منازلهم.

الوحشة المعلقة في الفراغ

أرجوحة بين الحياة والموت.

رمى الله نرداً في الهواء

وكان هذا المجاز الحيّ.

رمى الشاعر نرداً في الماء

فغرقتنا جميعاً في وهم الرحيل.

نحن الكائنات المتواطئة

نتدقّق في مواكب الصلاة كي نتوب عن أفراحنا.

ونصطفّ خلف البنادق كي ندافع عن صلاتنا.

في أسطورة قديمة ،

رمى نردا في اللغة

وكتب كثيرًا عن الأشباح

لكنها عادت الى طوافها ،

وها أنا في منزل مسكون بالإنس

لا تلهو به الرياح ،

لا يتسكّع به الضياع ، لا الضلال.

مشهد يتعثر بالألفة والضجر

في طقس يحتاج لقفازين وقبعة ،

لقبلة طويلة في الحديقة الخلفية

لجنة الله الموعودة

أو لجحيمه الافتراضي .

Ghosts are back to their wanderings

People to their homes

The gloom suspended in the void,

A swing between life and death.

God has thrown a dice in the air,

And it was this living metaphor

The poet has thrown a dice in the water,

And we all drowned in the illusions of the leave .

We, the complicit beings, flow in the prayer's processions to repent our Joys.

Then, we align behind our guns to defend our prayers

In an old myth, I was thrown as a dice into language

So, I wrote so much about ghosts

Yet,they returned back to their wanderings

And, here I am, in a house haunted by humans

Where winds don't caper

Nor do loss and delusion wander in a scene that stumbles on affinity and boredom,

In a weather that needs a pair of gloves and a hat,

A long kiss in the backyard,

God's promised paradise,

Or his virtual Hell





Photo © Tiziano Fratus

**Tiziano Fratus** (born in Bergamo, 1975) grew up in north Italian landscapes, the great plain at the foot of the mountains. When his natural family was dissolved he began to travel, crossing and touching conifer woods in California, Japan and around the Alps where he coined the concepts of Rootman (*Homo Radix*), Wandering Forest (*Bosco itinerante*) and Primordial Root (*Radice primordiale*). He practices an everyday zen meditation in nature and the discipline of Dendrosophy (*Dendrosophia*). Along twenty years of writing he has published a wide forest of words—travel-ogues, meditation books, novels, collections of poems—some by leading Italian publishing houses, some by independent ones. His poems have been translated into ten languages and published in many countries while his photography has shown in solo exhibitions. Visit [Studiohonoradix.com](http://Studiohonoradix.com).

## BOSCO ITINERANTE

C'è  
un bosco  
che mi abita dentro,  
un silenzio cantato e interminabile,  
ruscelli che sgorgano e animali che corrono.  
Io non so chi sono, ripete la voce, non so chi sono.  
Ma sento che c'è questo mondo di fine trama  
che abita un luogo senza confini, qui,  
nel petto, nel cuore, nella mente.  
Popola le ore del sonno e  
nutre le ore di pensiero.  
Ecco perché quando  
faccio ritorno nel  
bosco reale mi  
viene voglia  
di urlare,  
di amare  
come ama  
una madre che  
non distingue un  
figlio da un altro figlio.  
Sono un bosco che cammina,  
un bosco che radica  
e si sradica

## WANDERING FOREST

There  
is a forest  
living inside me,  
a sung and endless silence,  
streams flowing and animals that run.  
I don't know who I am, the voice is repeating,  
I don't know who I am. Yet I feel there is this world of  
fine weaving living in a place without any border,  
here, in my chest, in my heart, in my mind.  
It settles in my hours of sleep and feeds  
my hours of thought. This is why  
when I go back to a real forest  
I feel like I want to scream,  
to love as a mother who  
doesn't discern a son  
from another son  
would do.  
I am a forest  
who walks, a forest who  
roots in and roots  
out

Translated by Eleonora Matarrese



Photo © J. Gadotti

**Francesca Cricelli** is a poet and literary translator. She holds a PhD in Literary Translations (University of São Paulo), is the author of *Repátria* (Selo Demônio Negro 2015), *16 poemas + 1* (Sagarana 2017) and *Errância* (Macondo Edições 2019). She has translated into Portuguese Elena Ferrante, Igiaba Scego, Jhumpa Lahiri and other authors. Francesca currently lives in Reykjavík, where she studies Icelandic Language and Literature.

## É UMA LONGA ESTRADA REPATRIAR A ALMA

Há que se fazer o silêncio  
para ouvir os dedos  
sobre o velho piano da ferrovia  
é uma longa estrada repatriar a alma  
a rota é na medula  
descida íngreme  
ou subida sem estanque —

demolir para construir  
e não fugir do terror sem nome  
de não ser contido  
apanhado, compreendido  
é preciso seguir adiante  
no fogo e sem ar  
e se a dor perdurar  
é preciso ser destemido  
para espelhar o rosto  
em outros olhos  
distantes como num espelho.

## IT'S A LONG ROAD TO REPATRIATE THE SOUL

Silence is needed  
for to read the fingers  
in the old railway piano  
it's a long road to repatriate the soul  
the route's in the marrow  
a steep descent  
or stall-less climb –  
demolishing to erect  
never running from the nameless terror  
of not being contained  
held, understood

got to carry on forward  
breathless, on fire  
and if pain persists  
got to be fearless  
to reflect your face  
in other eyes  
distant like in a mirror.

Minha língua aqui  
é muda  
ou quase

só existe no silêncio  
diálogo íntimo assoprado  
desenlace da tradução.

Minha língua, flor inversa,  
palavra que é corpo e é linguagem  
e não posso transpor.

\*

Adentrar o figo  
sua polpa-essência  
é adentrar um jardim de vespas mortas

a língua a saborear a planta  
o bojo doce um dia à espera da fecundação.

\*

Que gesto é esse que se repete há 34 milhões de anos?

\*

Adentrar essa língua  
sua milenar essência  
é adentar minha memória de pedra

a língua antes dos dentes  
o bojo sem contornos da existência primordial.

\*

Não só na queda se perdem as asas  
(há de se deixá-las do lado de fora)  
também ao percorrer o corredor afunilado  
à procura de alimento e perpetuação.

Ao penetrar o figo, abandonamos o voo.

\*

My tongue here  
is mute  
or almost

it is only in silence  
an intimate whisper  
the outcome of translation.

My tongue is an inverted flower  
a word that means body but also language  
and I can't bridge it.

\*

When you bite a fig  
its flesh and essence  
it's like entering a garden of dead wasps

the tongue tasting the plant  
its sweet bulge, once waiting to be fertilized.

\*

What is this gesture that repeats itself even after 34 million years?

\*

When I enter into this language  
its ancient essence  
I bite into the stone memory inside me

of language before the teeth  
the borderless bulge of my primitive existence.

\*

It's not just when falling that we lose wings  
(one must leave them on the outside)  
it happens as we slither in through the funnelled corridor  
searching for food and perpetuation.

As we penetrate the fig, we give up on flying.

\*

Para cavar uma saída da urna silente  
servem mandíbulas fortes  
dentes ferozes e olhos minúsculos  
- saber se orientar na escuridão.

\*

A muda de hortelã não morreu ao ser arrancada do solo  
- sobrevive num vaso -  
inventou raízes e uma nova folhagem.

\*

Na minha cidade aguardamos o degelo do solo  
como a língua espera pela dentição -  
roçar as coroas que apontam das gengivas  
preparar a mordida -  
o que sobrevive sob o manto branco?

Nossos corpos estranhos se preparam  
(como a vespa-mãe depõe seus ovos no figo)  
raízes de hortelã  
em busca do chão.

In order to dig an exit from the silent vessel  
one must have strong jaws  
fierce teeth and minute eyes  
- one must know how to get around in the darkness.

\*

The mint sprout didn't die from being removed from the ground  
- it has been living in a vase -  
it has invented roots and new leaves.

\*

In my city we wait for the frost to undo itself  
as tongues wait for teething -  
to rub the crowns as they stick out from the gum  
be ready to bite -  
what lives through under the white cloak?

Our foreign bodies get ready  
(as the wasp mother lays her eggs in the fig)  
mint roots  
searching for soil.

Translated by the author





Photo © Lucía Comba

**Rafael Soler** was born in 1947 in Spain, is a poet, an award-winning novelist, university professor, and Spanish Writers Association (ACE) Vice President. He has published five books of poetry, and he has been invited to read his poems in more than fifteen countries. Some of his books have been translated into English, French, Italian, Japanese, Hungarian, Chinese, Macedonian and Romanian.

De todos los recuentos

*valuación biográfica de las fronteras interiores del poeta*

Yo escribía entonces versos falsos y rotundos  
y en las horas peores del licor espeso  
la ciudad era otra piel donde envolverme

fueron años de apenas unos meses  
que iban de paladar en paladar y boca en boca  
susurrando el misterio

un palo y un sombrero  
bastaban para transitar el día

y el polvo de mis botas rezumaba  
el jugo prohibido de algún lugar de África  
tan cerca de los naipes  
que mi lengua de trébol no dormía

y atentos al capricho  
de un corazón desabrochado  
en mi cuaderno caían los olores robados y las citas

un cuenco de sal era mi hogar  
y una paloma mi única vecina

después llegaron otras  
con un hacha en el pico tatuada

vestían de gris eran adultas  
y pronto me ofrecieron  
un empleo estable y una deuda letal con avalista.

Of all recounts

*A biographical evaluation of inner poet's borders*

Back then I was writing false and emphatic verses  
and in the darkest hours of thick liquor  
the city was another skin to wrap myself in

there were years that were barely a few months  
that went from palate to palate and mouth to mouth  
whispering the mystery

a stick and sombrero  
were enough to travel all day

and the dust from my boots oozed  
the forbidden juice of some place in Africa  
so close to the cards  
that my clover tongue did not sleep

and attentive to the capriciousness  
of an undone heart  
in my notebook fell stolen scents and dates

a bowl of salt was my home  
and a pigeon my only neighbor

later others arrived  
with an axe tattooed on their beak

dressed in grey they were adults  
and soon offered me  
a stable job and a lethal debt with a guarantor.

Translated by Gwen Osterwald

No se detiene la memoria

*De la ambigua relación entre el poeta y sus fronteras*

De ocasiones perdidas los bolsillos llenos  
a componer tu hacienda vienes  
con la calma suicida del que tiene  
un pacto de honor con su verdugo

las manos por el tiempo de escarcha tatuadas  
en blanco tu cuaderno donde anotabas todo  
curtido el corazón en la intemperie

y sabes  
que la vuelta a cuanto fue es imposible  
que ahora la lluvia se viste de ceniza

y que el bastón de mando antaño bienvenido  
es hoy el palo con que ahuyentas  
a los gatos que tus entrañas crían

monarca de lo poco  
y señor de lo que queda en nada.

Memory does not stop

*The ambiguous relationship between the poet and his borders.*

Pockets full of lost opportunities  
you come to fix your estate  
with the suicidal calm of one who has  
a pact of honor with their executioner

hands tattooed by the frost of time  
your blank notebook where you wrote everything down  
hardened heart from the outdoors

and you know  
that the return to how it was is impossible  
that now rain is dressed in ash

and that the baton welcomed long ago  
is today the stick with which you drive away  
the cats your womb nurtured

monarch of the few  
and lord of what is left of nothing.

Translated by Gwen Osterwald



Photo © Zvi Pfeffer

**Lali Tsipi Michaeli** is an Israeli independent universal poet. Born in Georgia in 1964, she immigrated to Israel at the age of seven. She has published six poetry books so far, attended international poetry festivals, and was part of a residency program for talented writers in New York in 2018. Her books have been translated into foreign languages in New York, India, France, Italy, Georgia, Ukrain, Russia, Romania and Iran. Lali was defined by Professor Gabriel Moked in his book as “Erotico-Urban Poet” and was highly regarded by critics, who describe her as innovative and combative. In 2011 Lali conducted an anthology for protest *Resistance*, in which she presents her personal poetic manifesto, claiming that “poetry as a whole is a revolt...The poem is not purely individual. It is common ground and should be heard in a great voice”. Lali teaches Hebrew at Ben Gurion University. She has one son and lives in Tel Aviv by the sea.

**בלוז הלילה**

הלילה  
החומה מפרידה  
בינינו  
כל היום ריפאנו את הפצעים שיצרנו  
בליל אמש  
זיכרון תאבתן עם ניבים  
לועס אותנו ופולט  
את פרקי ההיסטוריה שלי בלילות  
ללא אהבה  
אני רוצה לתלוש מהספר  
די לי מלילות החושך  
ימי האפלה  
אנחנו תאומי חוסר סבלנות  
אויבי השלווה  
השייכות שלנו זועקת זה לזו על  
קו החוף  
התשווקה קורסת לאשליה  
הקמטים מתמלאים בדמעות  
והידיים  
הידיים כמו תמיד מאוכזבות  
מוחקות רוב הזמן את הדרך  
חזרה.

**Blues of the night**

Tonight  
The wall separates  
between us  
All day long we healed the wounds we had created  
Last night  
Memory will wilt with fangs  
Chews us and emits  
The Chapters of My History at Nights  
Without love  
I want to get rid of the book  
The words of darkness are enough for me  
Days of Darkness  
We are impatient twins  
The enemies of peace  
Our belonging cries out to each other about  
shore line  
Passion collapses into an illusion  
The wrinkles are filled with tears  
And the hands  
The hands as always are disappointed  
Most of the time, the road is erased  
return.

**אהובי הסודי, אתה**

אנרכיסט שמתקן לי  
את שפתי בשפתי  
זה שלא יראה אותי באדמתו  
זה שלא אראה אותו באדמתי  
אבל הקולות שלנו מרחפים  
כמו מטחים בעולם  
ההיסטוריה שלך נכתבת  
בדיו שיוצר במפעל האהבה שלי.

**My secret lover, you**

An anarchist who corrects me  
His language into my language  
The one who will not see me on his land  
The one that I will not see on my land  
But our voices are floating  
Like bombardments in the world  
Your history is written  
In ink that was produced  
In the factory of my love.

Translated by Michael Simkin





Photo © Atman Amin

**Tareq al Karmy**, born in 1975, is a Palestinian poet from the city of Tulkarm who plays a Nay flute. He has published 11 poetry collections so far. His poems have been translated into various languages and he has participated in local and international poetry festivals. Al Karmy's poems attempt to write poems without ending, in a way that creates a deliberate interruption in the poem, leaving space for the reader to engage in writing the ending of the poem and leaving space for imagination. This is a unique and unusual act in the landscape of Palestinian poetry that makes al Karmy one of the most interesting young voices in contemporary Palestinian poetry.

## طارق الكرمي قلبي جرسٌ لحبك السري

ها انتِ تحت جلدي ر عشةً تنامينَ  
تحليبينَ الفجرَ في قنينةِ عطركِ  
ها أنا احلبُ لكِ قلبي  
حيثُ اصابعي تتغلغلُ عمياءَ عبر سياجِ  
صديءٍ لأقطفكِ  
اصابعكِ تغمسينها في جدار برلين الجديد  
لتقطفيني زهرةَ الفحمِ  
هل غيرُكِ النايُ بين أصابعي التي تتوهجُ  
اصابعكِ المناقيرُ كلها  
وانا تحت هذي الاصابعِ  
البيانو المُتعبُ ابدأ  
ومن اشتباكِ اصابعنا نولدُ..  
انتِ جرسٌ وانا جرسٌ  
نقرعُ بعضنا بكلِّ صمتٍ..

## My heart is a bell of your secret love

Here you are, under my skin, a sleeping tremor  
You milked the dawn in your perfume bottle  
Behold, I love you my heart  
My fingers blindly penetrate through a fence  
To pick you up  
Your fingers dip it in the new Berlin Wall  
To pick me the coal flower  
Did I change the flute between my glowing fingers?  
Your fingers are all beaks  
Under these fingers I'm  
Never tired piano  
And from the clash of our fingers we are born ...  
You are a bell and I am a bell  
We knock on each other in all silence...

\* Evening / Tulkarem



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## Bucolic Borders from the Mediterranean to Central Asia, 2000-2017

François Cayol \*

*I have never been in a country without having the desire to go see the other side of its borders. Borders are always stimulating for the imagination and full of promises—they are suggestive of the edge of another world. A world that is sometimes very familiar, and at other times, often for reasons of geopolitics, very distant. Occasionally, this other world is almost inaccessible.*

*To me, some of the more memorable borders, crossing by train, include for instance going between Turkey and Iran across the mountains of Kurdistan, or more recently, from Tbilisi in Georgia and Baku in Azerbaijan. Less recently, I remember the first time that I crossed the extreme south-east of Morocco at Figuig; the few kilometers of desert that separate the Moroccan and Algerian border posts are forever etched in my memory ...*

\* **François Cayol** (b. 1954) spent his teen years in The Netherlands and studied etching in Aix-en-Provence in 1974 and at the Louis Calvaert-Brun Studio (Paris, France) from 1976. He lived months at a time alternatively between The Netherlands, Aix-en-Provence and Paris (France), and Morocco until the 1990s. All those years, he also travelled to Africa, the Middle East, and North America. From 1990, he spent winter months in Mali. In 1992-94, he was a resident at the Spanish Academy Fine Arts, Casa Velazquez in Madrid. Thanks to the non-profit "Pour Que L'Esprit Vive", he was resident-artist at the La Pré Abbey, France (2000-2005). More recently, his journeys included the Caucasus, India, Morocco, Oman Sultana, Provence and Auvergne regions (France), Turkey, Yemen. His first book *Dessins Nomades (Itinerant Drawings)* was published in 2011. A second book "*Dessins Nomades II*" came out in 2019. Today, he is working on a third book. All are available at <https://dessinoriginal.com/fr> and <https://www.francois-cayol.com>.



... Conversely, there are natural borders that are symbols of natural beauty. I have followed with much happiness such borderlands, as the various rivers that separate Spain from Portugal from north to south: Rio Duero, Rio Tajo, or Rio Guadiana. One can cross those rivers at will, passing by old abandoned customs turrets watched only by vultures perched on cliffs. History is everywhere present. From one village to the next, whether Portuguese or Spanish, one finds high-up fortified castles that for centuries were alternatively Moorish or Christian, Spanish or Portuguese ...

The Rio Douro gorges, in Mirandola, Parque internacional rio Douro (or Duero), Spain-Portugal border, Portuguese shore. Dry pastel 2015



Mirandola, Rio Douro  
16. 18 Mayo

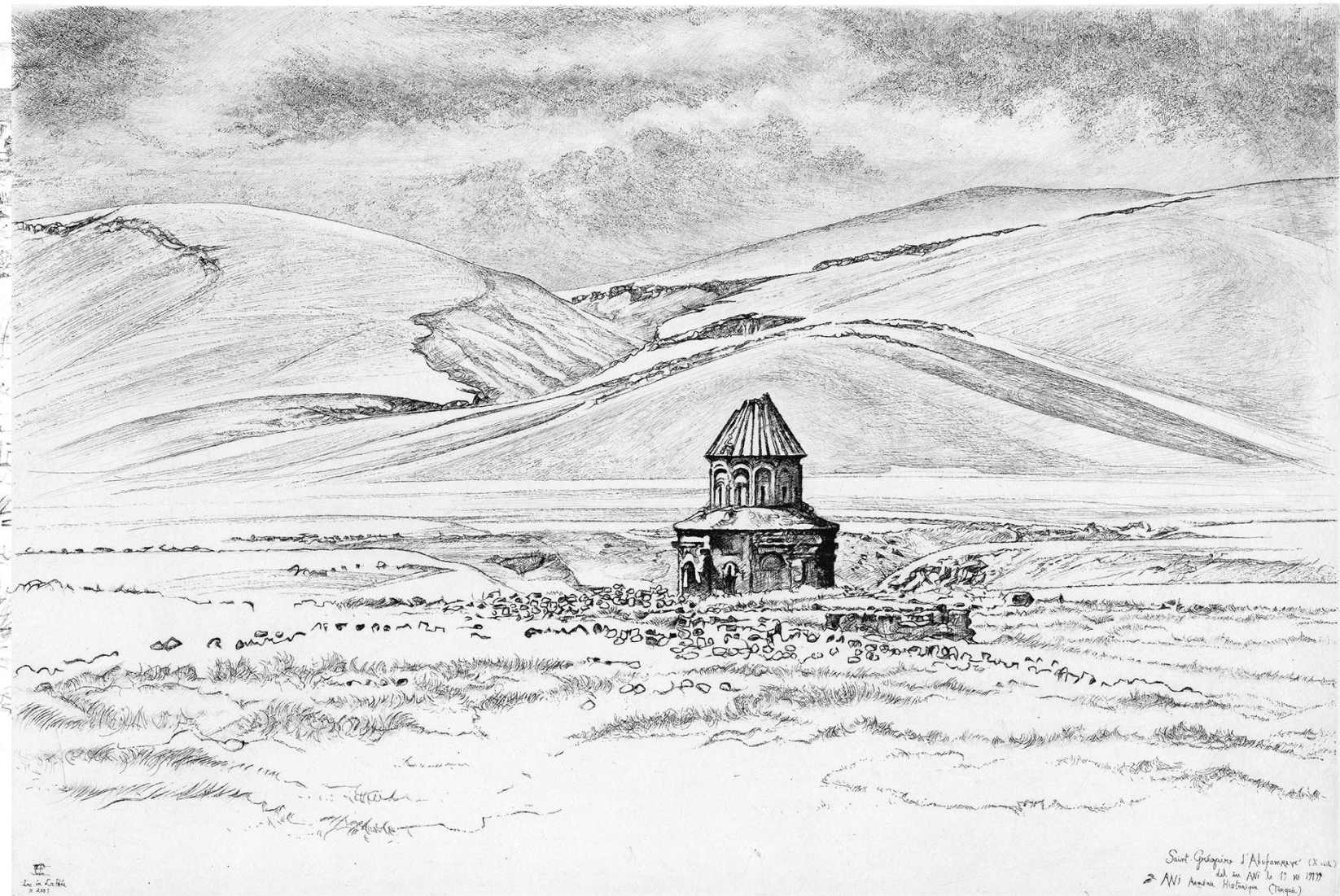


... In Spain as well, Baelo Claudia on the Strait of Gibraltar remains one of my favorite scenes: without ever getting tired I can draw these ruins on the shore within the horizon the Moroccan coast: the Djbel Moussa, the northern cape of Africa at the point of my pencil. On a single sheet of paper, I can bring together two continents! ...



Baelo Claudia, Roman city; the Strait of Gibraltar and the Djbel Moussa, on the coast of Morocco (Africa minor). Pencil drawing 2000.

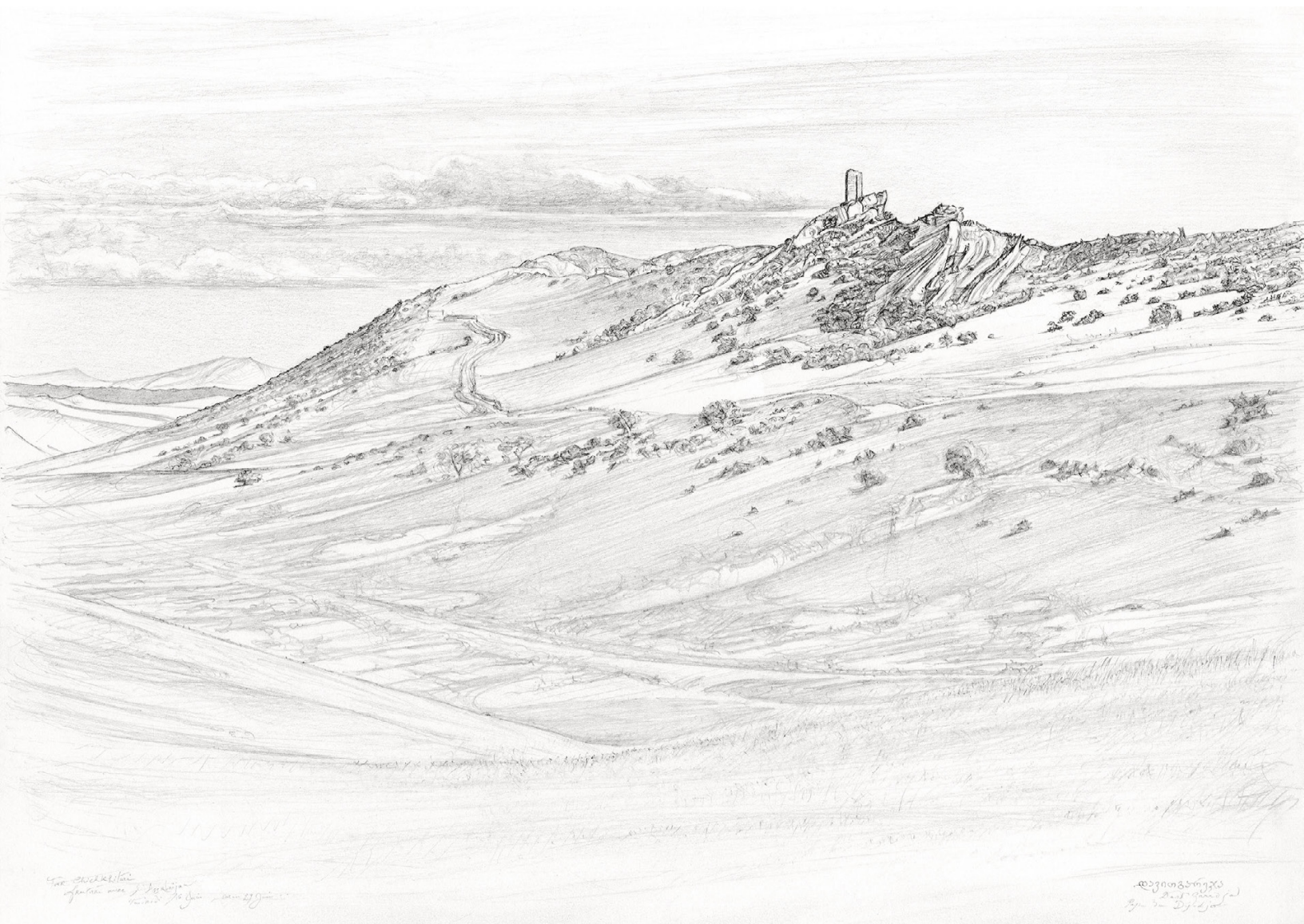
... A similar feeling of standing on the edge of two worlds inhabited me when I was drawing the Bosphorus in Istanbul. This is such a fabulous border; a magnificent symbol to this day because the two shores belong to the same nation, but remain mythical of two world regions: the Middle East and Europe. On the other end of Turkey, I drew once on the site of Ani, the former capital of the great Armenia, now Turkish territory, while on vacation with my family. At the time, a sign forbade the visitor to turn her/his gaze to the other side of a tiny stream that separates two irreconcilable countries and was once a border between the Western and Soviet worlds. Then, Turkish soldiers, a little indolent and at first suspicious, came to check on what this little silhouette was doing—sitting nearly motionless among the ruins for hours. When they saw, my back turned to the forbidden border, that I was drawing the church of Saint Gregory ruined by time and earthquakes, they sat quiet near me to smoke cigarettes and watch me draw ...



Saint Gregory the Illuminator, Ani, formerly capital of Greater Armenia, now in Turkey, on the Armenian border (ex-Soviet). Drypoint engraving 2002.

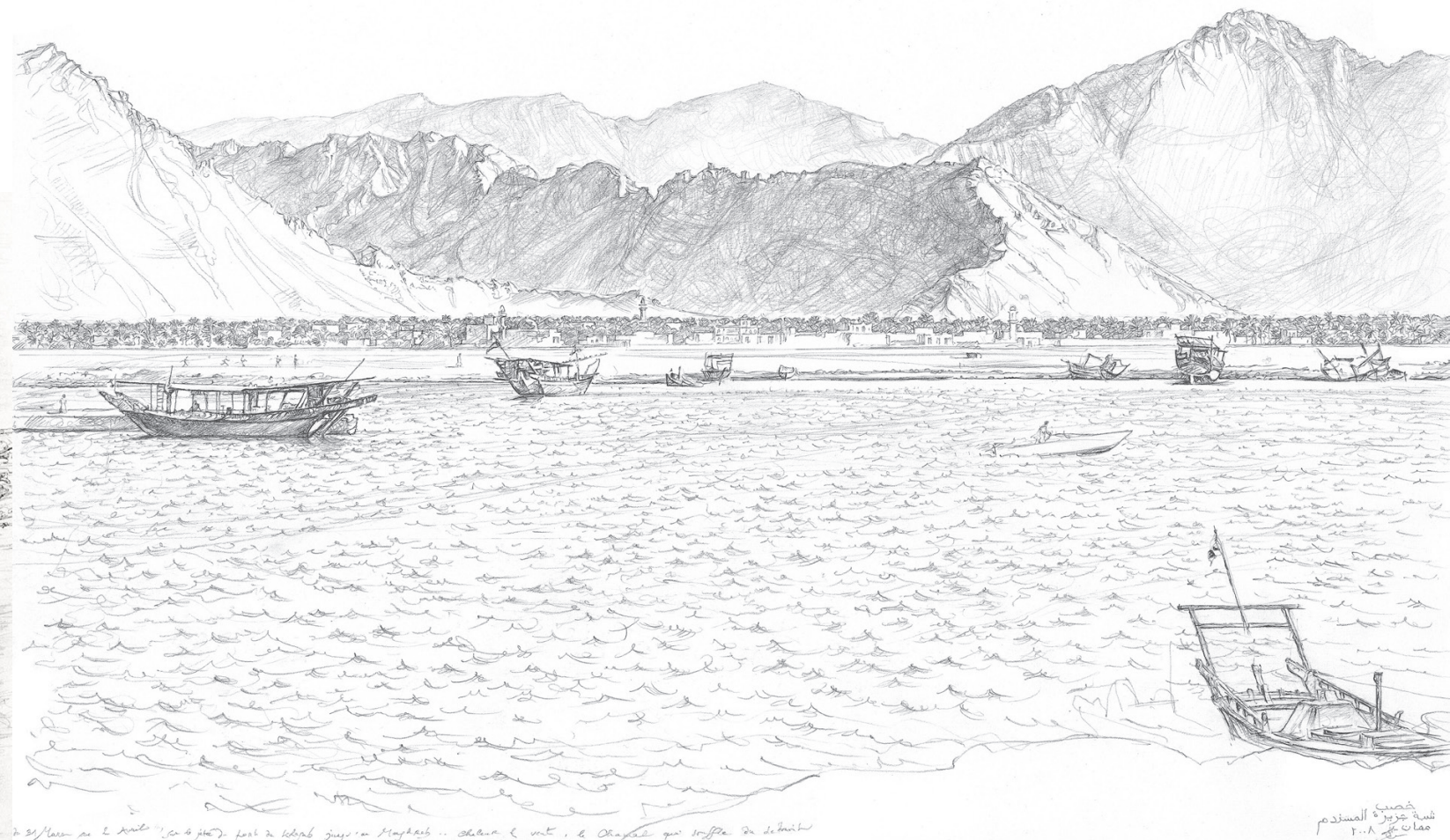


... Another time in Georgia, alone, far from any habitation, I was drawing a watchtower perched on a rocky ridge. This was the border with Azerbaijan, very close. I did not know then that I was being watched. I had heard barking in the distance, a little worried, thinking that they were sheepdogs. But soon after, I saw across the steppe two border guards descend at full speed. They approached, faces closed. One of them came to see over my shoulder what I was doing. Suddenly, he understood that I was drawing. I was an artist, or a painter; he showed me by gestures that he understood ... 'ok, ok' he said and raised his thumb, smiling to his colleague. All of us relaxed. But it was clear that I was in a strictly forbidden area, that I was free to finish my drawing on condition that I did not move from where I drew until I was ready to go back to the trail that passed a little further back ...



Watchtower, near David Garedja, in Georgia, on the border with Azerbaijan. Drawing in pencil 2017.

... Another border, strategic because just a few nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz and the sea channel through which the world's largest oil traffic passes, is a peaceful little seaport of Khasab, an isolated enclave in the mountainous Sultanate of Oman. I drew on the breakwater of the port all day while speedboats left towards Iran trafficking electronic equipment, and large men came to unload flocks of Iranian sheep destined for the rotisseries of the Emirates ...

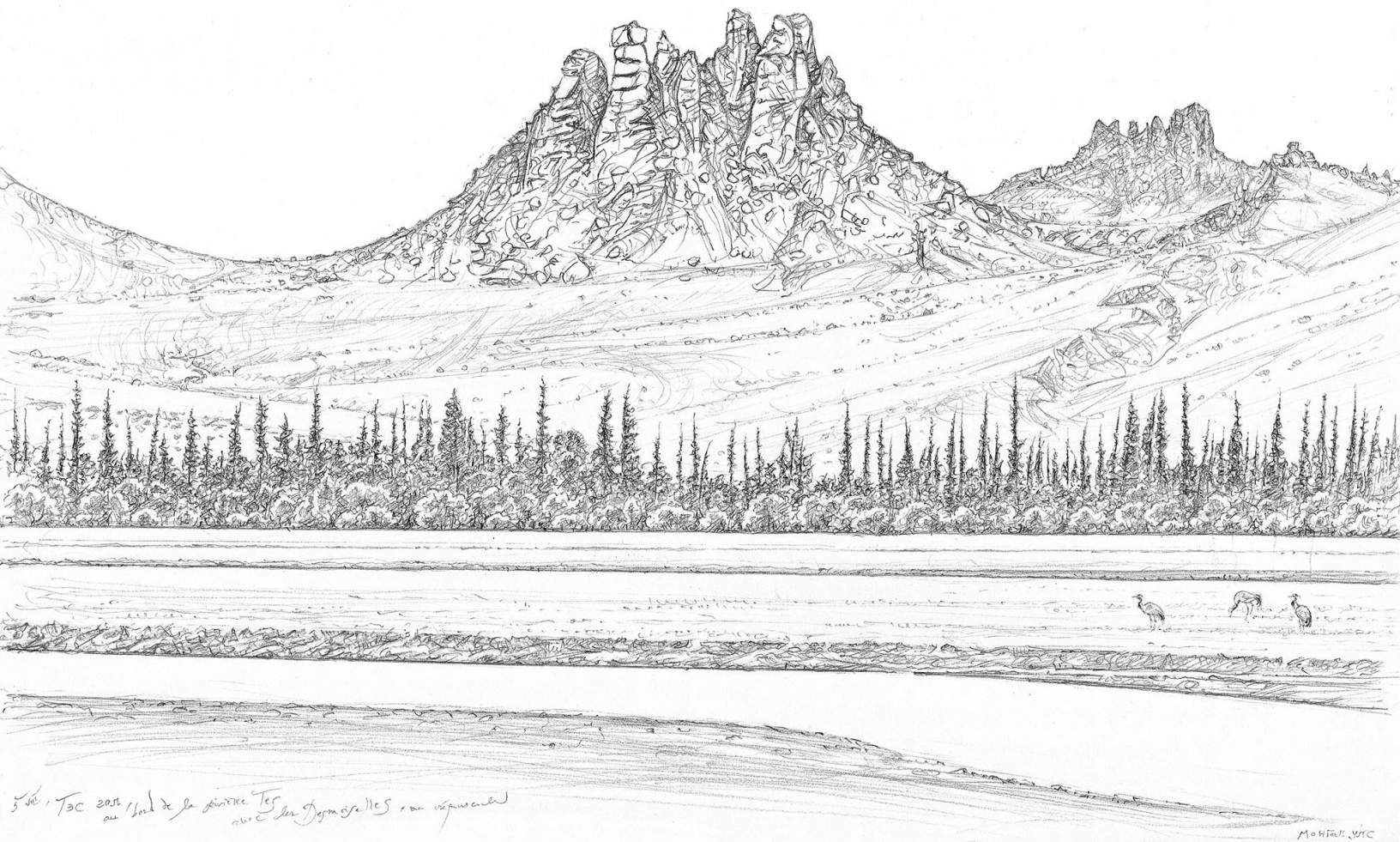


The port of Khasab in Musandam, Strait of Hormuz, enclave of the Sultanate of Oman, between Iran and the UAE. 2006 pencil drawing

... Once in Algeria, at the Moroccan border, it was more difficult: Surprised by an army patrol who accused me of drawing a military building—when in reality I was drawing a small Acacia with large thorns—I was taken back to the border in a Land Rover and spent the afternoon alone with scrutineers and suspicious custom officers. I was only released in the middle of the night on the express condition that I take a taxi to the first town, Bechar, one hundred kilometers away.

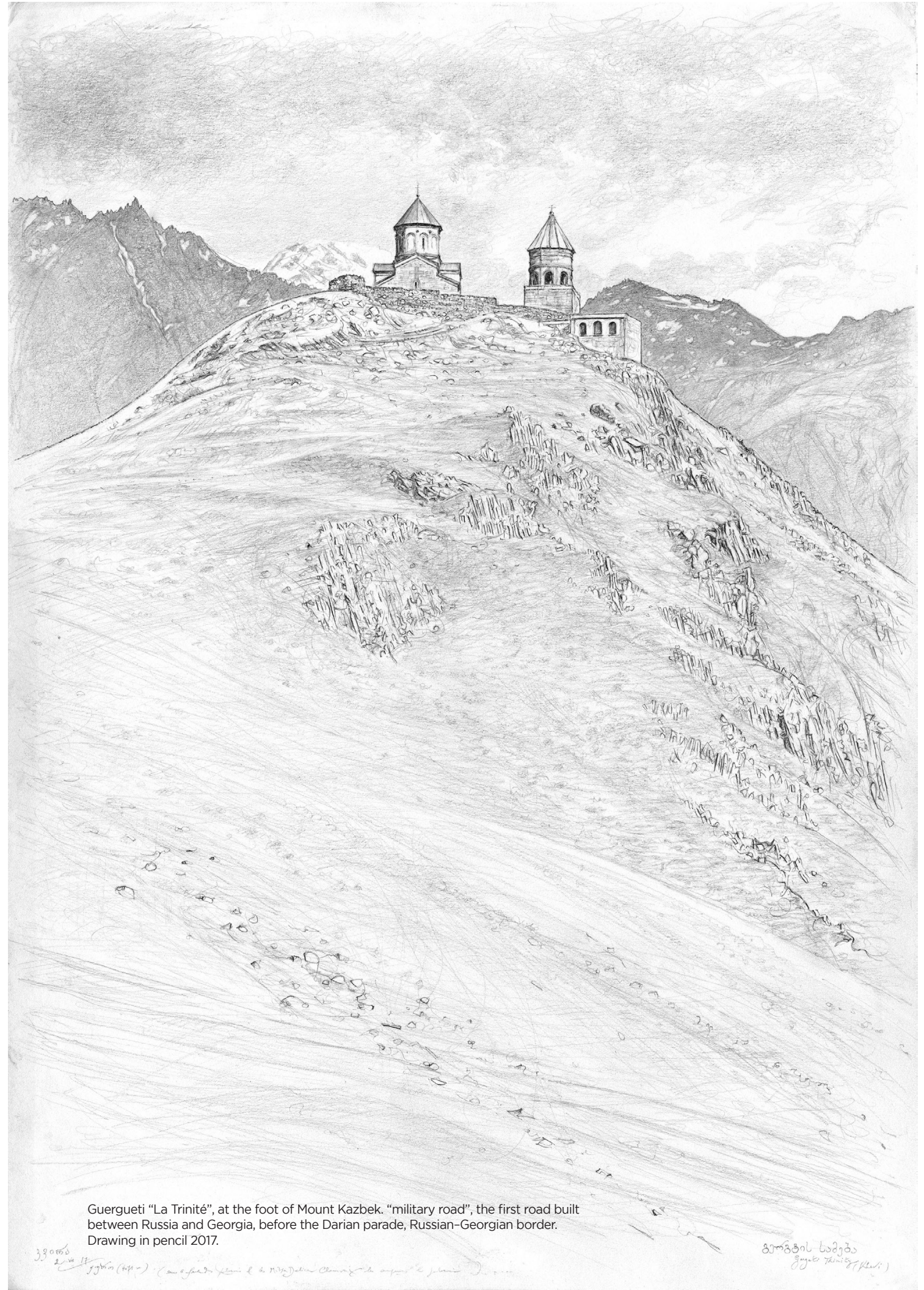
Also, on the Iranian border, in Kurdistan, after inspecting all my luggage, leafing through my notebooks, examining my pastels, and pencils, a custom official concluded that I was not a journalist, and relaxed. He looked at my sketches of coffee shops and asked me to draw him! Thanks to the whistle of the train that was about to leave, I escaped ...





The Tess river, in the north of Mongolia, near the Russian border (Siberia and the former republic of Tuva). Pencil drawing 2008.

*... I believe that my status as an artist, after arousing mistrust and suspicion from customs officers, soldiers and other uniforms in general, in the end often saves me many more serious troubles, inspiring a form of respect or deferential sympathy.*



Guerguete "La Trinité", at the foot of Mount Kazbek. "military road", the first road built between Russia and Georgia, before the Darian parade, Russian-Georgian border. Drawing in pencil 2017.



## Borderlanders of Lebanon: People from the In-between Spaces

Daniel Meier and Hussein Baydoun

This portfolio stems from a research project focusing on the many ways the residents of the border regions of Lebanon, or “borderlanders”, live and perceive the international borders. Funded by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Berlin-Beyrouth) and the Institut Convergences Migrations (Paris), this original research was conducted by photographer Hussein Baydoun and researcher Daniel Meier with the aim of visualizing a category of unseen people: borderlanders. The men and women we met are privileged observers of the border and their lives shed a new light on it. Their daily experiences stand in stark contrast with most people’s experience of borders, encountered only when travelling abroad. Borderlander perspectives can enrich our understanding of what a border is due to the deep meaning and impact it has on their lives.

This fieldwork, conducted in various locations in Lebanon, aims to understand what it means to live in a borderland region for each of the observers. Through their personal life experiences, they all brought to light how “their” border—the one they know and experience on a daily basis—provides them with opportunities and/or creates constraints. Each of them showed that a border is not an abstract phenomenon like a “line of sovereignty” but rather an entity that conditions their lives. In turn, all of them, Lebanese or refugees, underscored how they shape, use and transform this entity.

### Biographies

**Daniel Meier**, Political Scientist, is Lecturer at the Global Studies Institute – University of Geneva, and associate researcher at the CNRS PACTE Grenoble. He also teaches regularly in Beirut, Venice and Turin. Member of the Association of Borderland Studies, his researches are focusing on borders and boundaries in the Middle East with a special dedication for interstitial spaces and people. His most recent edited book is titled *In-Between Border Spaces in the Levant* (Routledge 2021).

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**Hussein Baydoun** is a Lebanese photojournalist with 14 years’ experience and has worked for several local news websites and international agencies. He participated in exhibitions with ICRC, UNDP and the International festival “Visa pour l’image” as well as other projects. He is currently working as photojournalist at Al-Arabia al-Jadeed newspaper and website.

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Our investigation shows that it is not sufficient to say that Lebanon has two very different border dyads – one with Syria and the other one with Israel. The country has far more borders because of the many and various relationships that exist along each segment of the international border, with their own local history and dynamics.

Among the borderland relationships, there is a specific one stemming from the presence of refugees: on the one hand, Syrians who fled the war and may expect to return home soon; on the other hand the Palestinians that appear far from any possible return to Palestine. Through years or decades, both are slowly becoming different from who they were before exile. Beyond the status of refugees or displaced persons, some of them developed a blurred or mixed identity, evidencing what borders can do to people’s sense of self.

The portraits all define distinct relationships with the border. The border itself slowly appears as a dotted line which is fragmented, cut, sometimes isolated but also ideologized. The border is a location that reveals concerns, tensions and the stakes for local life. It is telling of identity and belonging. For these reasons, borders speak to all of us.

He used to be called Abu Ahmad. He is 29 years old and a Syrian worker since a decade or more. Abu Ahmad used to work in Lebanon before the war in his country. We met him on the shores of the border river Nahr el-Kebir on the northern flank of Lebanon, riding his motorbike, registered in Syria. That day, he was discreetly helping another Syrian man to cross the river under the eyes of local inhabitants who came to fish.



Hamad Ribejih is in his 50s. He is a mason and lives in Abboudiyeh (North Lebanon) near the river Nahr el-Kebir for more than 30 years. At first sight, the place is a little strange, an abandoned village along a large road that abruptly stops at the river. He explains: “*After the end of the war, I came here to take profit of the new project of the ‘Arab Highway’. I decided to build a house and have a garage nearby but everything stopped with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri (in 2005)*”. Therefore, he retrained in the farm-tractor business with his cousin who was living in Syria and they undertook various trafficking across the border: “*We used to smuggle a lot of things from Syria. Aside of Diesel petrol, tobacco, cleaning products, wheat, chickpeas, clothes, fabric, earthenware (for mural decoration). We also brought some stuff in Syria like porcelain and bananas. But since 2011, the border became a dangerous place.*”



Fouad is a wedding musician in his fifties. He lives in this Syrian refugee camp near Abboudiyeh (North Lebanon) with his wife. He warmly welcomed us in his tent to show us his musical ability but also to surprise us: “*In fact, I am Lebanese*” while showing us his ID card. “*I used to live in a Syrian town not far from here until 2011. I met my wife there and we used to live there. Because of the war, I had to sell the lands and houses I possessed and move to Lebanon*”. He chose to live under a tent instead of buying a proper flat: “*It was too expensive and moreover I had to choose between having a house and marrying my children...It’s expensive to marry your children, you know!*”







Ahmad Hussein Ezzeddine (previous page, top) is an energetic personage in his fifties. He is a shepherd from father to son in Wadi Khaled. *"I was born here and I inherited this piece of land where we are standing. It goes up to the houses over there, near the border. Aside the flock, I also grow wheat, potatoes, corn and salads. Nothing is sent abroad, all the products stay here".* For him, the border has a clear commercial function: *"Before the war, we used to see Syrians coming here with goods that we were buying. But since then, it is over. Before, I used to go in Syria to find spare parts for my tractor; now it is not possible anymore and I found it annoying".*



On the eastern flanks of the former no man's land (previous page, bottom), between the village of al-Qaa and the Syrian border post, 30,000 Syrian refugees sought refuge in the al-Qaa borderlands, most of them working in the fields of this fertile land.



Naji Nasrallah, 61 years old, is from al-Qaa where he lives. He is a Christian businessman in agricultural products in Ras Baalbeck. Like his father, he is a farmer in this area, a region where he values the territorial depth on the Eastern flank. *"We only once had a problem with Syrian soldiers because they were occupying our lands, it was in 1980. Before 2011, the border did not exist, Syrian policemen where on both sides of the border. Now, the Lebanese army took control of every inches of the national territory!"* In 2017, the Lebanese army came back to these borderlands for the first time, once they were successful against the Jihadist in the Juroud of Aarsal. *"For the first time, our soldiers re-opened the border road, cleared the fields from any bombs and took control of the border. Without border, no country".*



Mohammed Khaled Seeba, 56 years old, is a businessman in the construction field. He is a Syrian from Yabroud, a border town on the Syrian side of Anti-Liban mountains. *"I left Yabroud in March 2014, the weather was cold. I left by car and I entered Lebanon illegally when the Lebanese Army arrested me and threw me in jail in Baalbeck. The general security freed me after paying 600 US\$. Then I came here to Aarsal ... For me the border is a hajez (roadblock) between us and our neighbors. But to cross it and going back home to Syria, we demand international security to protect us".*



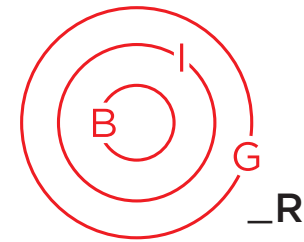




Claudia is a mother in her 40s. She lives in the Christian village of Qla'yat. She lived there without interruption since she was born in the early 1970s. She remembers the Israeli occupation in the southern region and says: *"Our tragedy for the people here is that we were not humans either for Israel or for Lebanon. That's the dominant feeling we experienced here between 1982 and 2000. After the withdrawal, we were capable of moving freely, the Lahad border and then the check-point to enter Saïda at Kfar Tebnine were removed! We became Lebanese again."* When talking about the Israeli wall that embodied the border and which was observable from the window of the dining room, she comments: *"Israel built it for its own security. In my point of view, it is a good thing: it renders the conflict less dangerous and volatile because before that, it was possible to walk along the fence and shout at the Israeli soldiers or throw rubbish at them".*



Between Lebanon and Israel stands the fence of the Blue Line, delineated by the United Nations and marked on the ground in the aftermath of the July War in 2006 with blue barrels. While most of the 118 km long has been marked, Lebanon stated 13 reservations (plus the contentious issue of Shebaa Farms) during the process of delineation in May-June 2000 after the unilateral withdrawal. In 2012, Israel started to build a wall along the blue line in Kfar Kila and continued the walling of the border in 2018.



## ART FEATURE

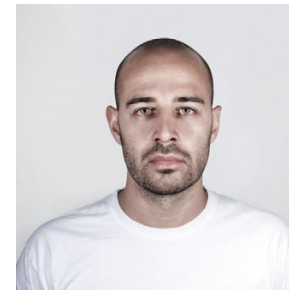


Photo credit: Emeric Lhuiset



Photo credit: Petrov Ahner

# Borders & Personal Mythologies: An Interview with Emeric Lhuiset

By Elisa Ganivet

On February 18, 2021, Elisa Ganivet interviewed the photographer Emeric Lhuiset, known for his immersion in conflict zones. Discussing his art projects, the conversation cross-examined the concepts of border and territory in visual art. Portions of the interview are reproduced here, in English translation from the original French, alongside photos of the artist's work. (The French-language version will be published in the next issue of *BIG\_Review*.)

## Biographies

**Emeric Lhuiset**, born in 1983, grew up in Paris suburbs. He graduated from the Beaux-Arts de Paris and in geopolitics from University Panthéon-Sorbonne and Ecole Normale Supérieure Ulm. His works has been shown in numerous exhibitions around the world (Tate Modern, Museum Folkwang, Institut du monde arabe, Stedelijk Museum, Rencontres d'Arles, Sursock Museum, Musée du Louvre Lens...). In addition to his art practice, he teaches at Sciences Po about contemporary art & geopolitics. [www.emericlhuiset.com](http://www.emericlhuiset.com)

**Elisa Ganivet**, born in 1982, is a doctor of philosophy, art historian and curator. Her research in aesthetics explores the mechanisms of utopian practices and border concepts, especially geopolitical walls. She has been published by Columbia University Press, Transcript Verlag, Presses de l'Université du Québec, Presses du Réel, and *BIG\_Review*. She has been guest Researcher at La Sorbonne and Casa de Velazquez. She works as a consultant for international public and private cultural organizations. Beginning in fall 2021, she will be Visual Art Editor for *BIG\_Review*. [www.elisaganivet.com](http://www.elisaganivet.com)





© Emeric Lhuisset, Border crossing Syria-Turkey, video still, 2010-2018. Courtesy the artist.



© Emeric Lhuisset, Travel, personal archive photo, 2010. Courtesy the artist.



© Emeric Lhuisset, *L'autre rive*, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Germany, Denmark, France, 2011 – 2017. Courtesy the artist.

EG: Emeric, you are an internationally recognized artist for your fieldwork in conflict zones, mainly in the Middle East, as well as in Ukraine, Colombia... Photography is your favorite tool and we discover others over the years. When we first talked about the notion of the border, your first remark was to underline the fact that war and borders were inextricably linked. In your body of work, are there any explicit references to this idea, to this feeling of the border? I'm thinking in particular of your film *When the clouds speak* where at the end we follow you, on a hand-held camera, in one of your clandestine crossings, one of the many you made between Syria and Turkey. Is this video part of a spontaneous practice or is it part of a vision to regroup them later?

EL: Not especially, but I've always been interested in this idea of borders, both state borders and borders within a state. For example, on the Israeli territory (without even mentioning the Palestinian one), there are places that are completely divided. You enter a hangar to take a bus and you are controlled as if you were in an airport, where you will go through portals, scanners, etc. At the entrance of a market, there are barriers and your bags are searched before entering. In France, this is now almost normal but it was not at all normal at the time (2010). When I worked in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey or even Colombia, I passed through many checkpoints which is always quite heavy, complicated. You never know if you'll make it through, sometimes you don't have the authorization to access certain parts of the territory, you have to try to trick them, it can be very oppressive. In Pakistan, it's the same, there are checkpoints to go to the tribal areas where normally a classic visa is not enough. In Iraq, I had to go through checkpoints to enter the Arab zones, whereas I only had a visa for the Kurdish zones. So it is not necessarily a question of purely state borders but of a fragmentation of spaces. This feeling has always impacted me. There is also the case of borders that we do not really see. It is the case in the Amazonian forest for example where one crosses from Colombia to Brazil without noticing it. This caused me some troubles.

These videos made between Syria and Turkey are personal archives. I regularly document my projects, but these archives were not intended to be shown. I finally decided to include this sequence of the passage from Syria to Turkey in a more global project (2010-2018) on refugees. I was interested in the precise moment when people fleeing the war in Syria cross the barbed wire that separates these two states, the precise moment when they physically become refugees. It is an instant. A few centimeters before, they are not yet, a few centimeters after, they are.

It was interesting to include this sequence in this project, because I speak first of all about the time before "being a refugee", about the destiny of people who have become or could have become refugees. I also talk about the crossing, the crossing of the sea, the



© Emeric Lhuisset, *L'autre rive*, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Germany, Denmark, France, 2011 – 2017. Courtesy the artist.

crossing of Europe, then the arrival to a territory where they will settle. With the project *L'autre Rive* (*The other shore*), what interests me is to talk about these friends I met in Iraq or Syria, whom I found again eight years later in Europe and who have become refugees. But this is not the first time that I reuse personal archives. I had already done so in my book entitled *Souvenirs de Syrie* (*Souvenirs from Syria*).

While I was living with Syrian rebel fighters, hidden in a cave in the mountains, I had taken some photographs of this very strange daily life. A daily life made of bombings, shootings but also of waiting and tension. I wanted to document it for my own archives. It was a year later, when I was looking at these images again because one of my friends had been killed and I wanted to see him again, that I said to myself that I had to show them because they were important, they testified to a reality ignored by many. But the question was how to show them. They were not works that I had thought of as such. Moreover, these images were sometimes very hard, quite violent with tortured people, houses just after a bombing, with the atrocities that go with it... For me, hanging these images on a wall doesn't make sense, it would be obscene. So I thought at one point of giving them to the press.

EG: But this goes against your artistic approach.

EL: The idea was to make these images visible, this daily life. It seemed important to me to bear witness. If the press got hold of them, I had to know how to choose the modalities. But these images were a year old, they were already too old, which made me wonder about the obsolescence of the journalistic image. Even an image from a week ago seems outdated. This dimension is a bit absurd because a man shooting from his window in a city in Syria, whether it was taken two days ago or five years ago, is still the same thing to illustrate an article. It's a bit absurd to want the freshest, most instantaneous photograph possible. So since it was impossible for me to use these "archives" with the media, the question was what I could do with them. Can we talk about a memory of a war when it is still going on? This did not seem appropriate to me either. I finally decided to make a black book without text, like a black box, a family album: Memories of Syria. These photographs exist only in this book.

EG: What you question in the daily life of conflict zones is also the moments of waiting, of boredom, of anguish. You transcribe these wars by erasing any sensational effect, of sensationalism. In this dynamic of understanding the mechanism of the war, of its staging, its construction, of being in front, behind, around, the environment, the territory. You manage to define the mechanisms and to bring out a respect as well. One



perceives the respect towards the fighter and towards the image. This is possible thanks to your consistency over the long term, creating bonds of trust and friendship. In your project *When the clouds speak* at the very end appears this illegal crossing from Turkey to Syria. Personally, this touched me enormously because this excerpt gives an incredible scope to the work. In the dedication we see the portrait of one of your friends who disappeared while trying to cross a border. You pay tribute to him. This revealed that sincere experience is something we rarely see in the whole of the artistic production which treats, closely or by far, our themes.

EL: I chose to put this video clip at the end of this film because it makes particular sense with the issue of the Kurds. The Kurdish territory is larger than that of the Turkish state itself. The Kurds are in several states. This is or was also the case with the Armenians and the Assyrians, whom I also talk about. These are different peoples existing on this vast territory but also beyond the borders of this territory, they are peoples who transgress this notion of state border. On the other hand, I also wanted to end with this video because my friend Hamidreza died on the borderline between Turkey and

Iraq during a bombing by the Turkish air force. I wanted to dedicate this film to him because he was someone who had helped me a lot, especially for the series *Théâtre de guerre* (*Theater of war*) and to whom I was close. At a certain point, I had no more news and did not understand why until friends told me that he had died. This border crossing also reflects this story.

EG: The concept of a border is completely ambivalent. Even geographers have difficulty agreeing on a common definition. One can evoke a line, which restricts to the cartographic tool, originally military. One also speaks of a network, a mesh, which is undoubtedly more relevant when one touches the border.

EL: It is also a zone of tension.

EG: Yes, of course. In this regard, the geographer Claude Raffestin describes the border as a cut, one that constrains the individual because of controls, the security measures and the reinforcement of the infrastructure. We think of a cut, like a breach between two worlds.

EL: I have not theorized the notion of the border but yes, I think I can say that it is what separates. These are populations, communities, which through the creation of a state and borders, have decided not to live with others who are next door. Basically, the idea of the frontier is hyper-violent, if we analyze it from that point of view.

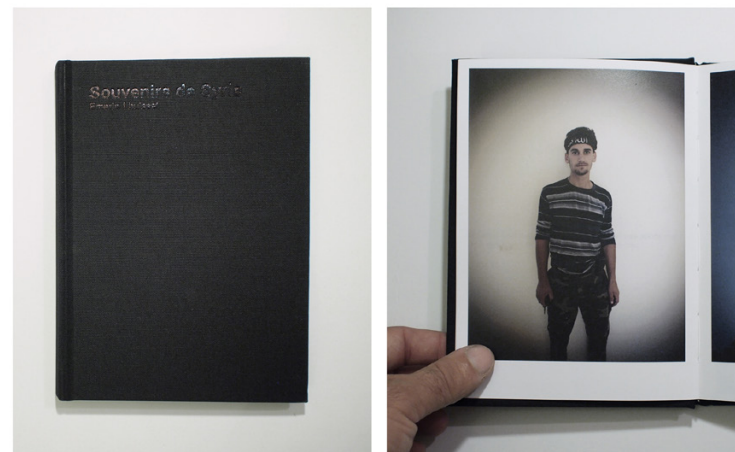
EG: Raffestin also says that the border is a seam, when we consider the social, societal and economic flows and interdependencies...

EL: A seam, or rather I see it as a suture, because it is two elements that have been together and then torn apart. We create bridges from this.

EG: This is also another image. We often speak of Borders-bridges and Borders-walls. When one lives the territory, one realizes this.

EL: Yes, the wound to be healed on one side and the wound left open on the other. If we stay in the metaphor [laughs]. I realize that I've never had very good experiences with borders. It's definitely an element of tension that I've felt. Without even looking at signs announcing them, you know it when you get close. The military is usually more heavily armed, even helmeted, whereas elsewhere they are not etc.

EG: But we ourselves, when we were children, before the Schengen agreements of 1992, experienced this kind of tension at the border crossing.



© Emeric Lhuisset, *Souvenirs de Syrie*, Alep and Idlib province (Syria) June and August 2012 – book realized in 2013. Courtesy the artist.

EL: Yes, that's right. I remember anecdotes about this when I was going to Germany with my grandmother. Once, on the train, she told me not to worry about the French customs officers. And indeed, they were nice and let us pass, with their visors raised a bit coolly. But she had told me that the Germans were less friendly. And I remember German customs officers who didn't smile at all and wore their uniforms in a very strict mode. I don't know if it was a flashback to World War II for her or the fact that we had to show our papers, but she was very stressed about crossing the border. Today it seems so far away, even absurd. Thanks to the near erasure of borders in the European Union, we have arrived at something very pleasant. But during my work in 2016 on refugees, while passing from Germany to Denmark, I was shocked by the Danes who had set up a checkpoint at the border. So, in order to document this, I took photographs with them, pretending to be an idiot tourist so that they wouldn't be suspicious.

EG: It's that we are currently living with the withdrawal of the border because of Covid...

EL: Yes, we are on what I hope is a parenthesis.

EG: On the other hand, you refer to a methodology, that

of the usefulness of playing the idiot tourist in order to document these particular situations. But can you explain your approach when you travel to territories such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan...

EL: In this case, I make very few images. My approach is completely different in conflict zones. First, I meet people and talk to them about my work. It can take years to get these kinds of images because they are based on relationships of trust. It took me three years to make the series *Theater of War* which includes fourteen images. Over time, you can't lie to people. They realize who you are. I didn't try to lie to them, I just told them what I was doing, what interested me, what I wanted to say. We talked, we built the project together. And it is really this approach that interests me in the sense that when I arrive, it is with my culture, my baggage, with all this personal mythology as Roland Barthes would say. The people I am going to meet also have theirs. So we are going to confront these views, not in a confrontation but in an exchange. We will reflect and build the project together. My ideas, my culture do not necessarily make sense to them. When I make a work it is not there or here. This work must be as relevant there as it is here. For me it is essential. That's why I also exhibit a lot in the Middle East. I try to show my work



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© Emeric Lhuisset, *Théâtre de guerre*, photographs with a group of Kurdish guerrilla, Iraq, 2011-2012. Courtesy the artist.

there too and not just do it there. I deal with subjects that are quite far away from me because I need to have enough distance from my subject to be able to deal with it. It is very difficult for me to deal with subjects that I am too close to. Indeed, I feel that I don't have the necessary distance to be able to treat them in an objective way. It is a bias to deal with subjects that are not directly related to myself. For example, I grew up in the suburbs of Paris and I have often been asked why I don't work on this subject. But I don't want to work on it because I lack the necessary distance and objectivity. I have this need to have a distance on my subjects.

EG: But currently, with our travel restrictions due to the pandemic, you are developing a project for which you will go to people's homes.

EL: Yes, but it is finally usual in my work. For example, when I work with armed groups, we are also intimate. Or with the refugees, it's the same sharing, I went to meet them, to follow them as a friend. That's what allowed me to make these kinds of images. I spent time with friends in fact. I documented these moments spent together.

EG: But this is in France.

EL: My work with refugees took place in Germany and Denmark, and for the second generation, in France with friends who had a refugee parent. I worked with Ines whose father had left Algeria, with Sarah whose father had left Saddam Hussain's Iraq, just like my cousin's father, my uncle. I was in the family [laughs]. I work a lot in and with intimacy. I like to understand people. The approach is anthropological, even psychoanalytical. It's about the people themselves, about what they think. I became aware of this dimension late in life. Throughout my schooling at the Beaux-Arts, I took courses in art psychoanalysis with Christian Gaillard. I studied Jung, Freud etc. which certainly influenced me because instinctively, I asked people if such and such a thing did not refer them to such and such. In the field, I proceed in the same way. At the beginning, when you work with guerrilla groups, they will give you the propaganda speech of the group. There is nothing negative about that, it's just the image they want to give. To get beyond that, the psychoanalytical dimension is welcome. It is a question of understanding the individual, the reasons that brought him to this situation, and where he wants to go. Apart from any discourse, what is it that really interests him? And we come back to: "Oh yes, but when I was a kid..." It's fascinating because it's often linked.

EG: You also have to find common psychological traits between each fighter. On both sides your approach to understanding the person is the same...

EL: Yes, to better understand the profile of the fighters I will work with is a fundamental step. We surrender to each other, which in war zones is not without risk. My life is somewhat in their hands. When you are with a guerrilla group in a cave in Syria, your life is not worth much, or on the contrary, it is. You have to build mutual trust. When the fighters let me make images, they give themselves to me too. It's very important to understand the people you are giving yourself to. Within the group, within the community, knowing who you can trust more or less. To understand all the mechanisms both for the project, for my own security, but also simply for human interest. I often try to understand people whose ideology is the opposite of mine. I try to understand the mechanisms of their thinking with which I personally do not agree, and by grasping them, how I can deconstruct them. In particular with regard to the way refugees are looked at, people can have prejudices that seem hateful towards them. If you look deeper, you will see that it is rarely hate. In fact, hate as such is very rare. It is more about misunderstanding and fear. Misunderstanding leads to fear, which in turn leads to a very violent discourse. So, if we stop at the first glance that looks like hate, the rest of the approach will be wrong and we will not succeed in deconstructing the looks.

EG: Why do you want to deconstruct this type of look?

EL: Because I believe that some of them are unjust, that they create violence, a danger both for the people against whom they stand and for society as a whole. Many people with this a priori hateful look will share it, will set up leaders who will decide according to that. In this way, we arrive at totalitarian societies, at the absurdities that man has been able to create, at massacres, at genocides, etc. This is essentially based on this type of mechanism, so for me it is essential to deconstruct this type of look.

EG: How do you perceive this tension, this rise of populism and nationalism? I'm thinking in particular of the AFD in Germany, which is the last straw in the sense that we didn't think it could happen in that country.



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EL: It is very worrying. That is why we must try to deconstruct the views. We must try to stand up against it. But not as a wall, that is not the solution. Because people will end up hitting it and breaking it. So rather, you have to insinuate yourself and try not to convince them, but rather to invite them to ask themselves questions. For example, I put my work on refugees in parallel with that of the Kurdish fighters. There is a gap of eight years between the two. What interests me is that on the one hand, these fighters are like heroes by almost everyone in the West, regardless of their political affiliation. People who reject refugees also idealize these Kurdish fighters; they are the ones who fought Daesh. Except that in my project, it is precisely these same fighters, these people that you find, eight years later, who have become refugees. Now there is a whole section of the population that considers refugees as pariahs, as



parasites, even though they put as heroes these Kurdish fighters. But how can you treat a person like a hero and once he has crossed the sea, consider him like a pariah, a parasite? People don't necessarily make this connection right away. By confronting them with this, doubts, cracks in their rhetoric, their ideology, will be created. It is a question of cracking these ideologies in order to make them collapse. At least that's the way I try to do it. This is obvious during public presentations of my work. At Paris-Photo, for example, when I announced that I was going to talk about refugees, I could feel in the eyes of some people that they didn't really want to listen, that they didn't care, that it wasn't their problem. But as I told the individual stories of the refugees, I could see that the eyes of the audience brightened up a bit that something was happening. When the visit was over, they would end up discussing the subject among themselves, coming back to see certain images, etc. These same people who at first thought they were going to follow the tour out of politeness. It's in those moments that you tell yourself that it works. People won't necessarily change their ideology but they will start to ask questions. That's what's essential, to invite people to question.

EG: While these fighters are heroic, when they arrive on a territory in the West, in this case here in France, it is precisely the question of the other, the relationship to Otherness that arises. We have seen the repercussions of the "migratory crisis" in 2015 and again today, those that have led to a retreat of the borders. What to do with this disturbing Other. As you point out, fear and misunderstanding guide, while we need the other. The excuse is often the demographic term, but the need goes far beyond.

EL: In my opinion, it is a fear that has been created by politicians. There is a play on ignorance, on ignorance, in order to support their power. We always arrive at this search for a scapegoat. From time immemorial this search appears. It has been the Jew, the Protestant, the gypsy... the one we don't know or at least know badly. I have worked a lot on Turkey, where the power is based on the very idea of an internal enemy. It is the Armenians,

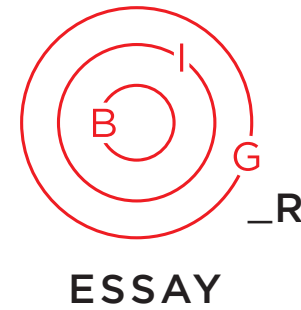
the Assyrians, the Pontic Greeks, the Alevis, the Kurds. You always have to build an enemy from within.

EG: What is frightening is the relay taken by the new technologies where we end up staying in our own clan, without possibilities of crossing. There are fewer bridges between knowledge.

EL: I ask myself many questions about the new technologies. Yes indeed, it facilitates the communication of ideas.

EG: But the framework remains between us, our communities.

EL: Yes, but wasn't that already the case before? For example, I found a book published in France in the 1920s: "The Jewish-German Conspiracy". This kind of book was circulating, being exchanged. Conspiracies have always existed, even before technology. The new technologies just make it possible to accelerate information, as the invention of the printing press did. The real problem, in my opinion, is that in the end those who could work on deconstructing conspiracies do not do so efficiently enough. The recognized media gather accessible information, but very soon there was the alternative of the internet and social networks. This was very quickly taken over by those whose information could not go through the mainstream media. The web served them to spread their ideas, which was not necessarily the case for the majority of the traditional media, which did not need it because they already had their own distribution channels. As a result, they arrived later on a field that had already been taken over by the conspiracists. Of course, raising doubts is quite healthy but the problem is how, how do you question yourself? What is your knowledge of the subject? Who is telling the story? Some conspiracies are extremely complex to unravel because they are solidly constructed, mixing true and false information. Moreover, the conspiracy has something of seducing in the sense that it brings answer to everything whereas sometimes it is also necessary to know how to accept not to know, one cannot have answer to everything!



# The Dutch-German Border: Open in Times of Coronavirus Lockdowns

**Martin van der Velde** i  
**Doede Sijsma** ii  
**Maarten Goossens** iii  
**Bas Maartense** iv

*This essay portrays policies, practices and perceptions at the Dutch-German border during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before that this border was considered one of the most open borders in the world. The first part of the essay deals with the waves of policies and other initiatives aimed at limiting cross-border traffic that have been introduced since March 2020 trying to curb the pandemic. The second part illustrates to what extent these policies might have had an effect on citizens' cross-border practices and perception of the border.*



## Introduction

Many consider the Dutch-German border as one of the most open borders in the world. At first sight this certainly seems to be true. But already before the current COVID-19 crisis cross-border travelling was regularly monitored. Under normal circumstances the Schengen-treaty does not allow for controls and checks right at the border, but the Dutch had so-called 'flying brigades' that 'profiled' traffic a few hundred meters away from the border. These checkpoints were officially labelled as 'Mobile Security Surveillance' (*Mobiel Toezicht Veiligheid*) and not specifically as border control. They were sometimes employed for instance during the refugee crisis that peaked around 2015.

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Under the Schengen regulation, countries do have the rights to setup border control points for a limited amount of time in order to regulate the cross-border flow of people in case of a "foreseeable threat to public policy or internal security" such as during high risks events, possible societal disruption, terrorist threats, diseases etc. These temporary checks serve the purpose of basically keeping out certain groups of people and transports. The border controls during the COVID-19 pandemic (which will probably exceed the time limits set in the Schengen-agreement for temporary border controls) serve a different goal. This time it is (or was) not about denying people access where the 'normal' is free entry, but more pinpointing those that are allowed in, where the reference is no border-crossing activities. Countries are constantly looking for a balance between sealing their borders hoping to keep the coronavirus out and providing access to certain activities.

In this context this essay will deal with the developments and situations at the Dutch-German border with a focus on the border between the province of Gelderland (The Netherlands) and the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany). After a general introduction, this essay will present a timeline of border interventions. The next sections will deal with two possible consequences of these interventions and the pandemic in the border region. The first one is the development of cross-border traffic. The second one concerns the possible consequences of the pandemic on the perception of the border, border policy and the neighbouring country.

### Coronavirus and policies at the Dutch-German border

Throughout the world, the European Union not excluded, borders were closed in an effort to protect societies from being contaminated from abroad. The impact of such a measure on society is particularly large if the norm is that borders are open with no significant border control. This is the case in the parts of Europe covered by the Schengen area. Cross-border commuting, international supply chains, shopping on the other side of the border, visiting family and friends or taking the shorter route to your destination through the other country has been considered normal for Europe's internal borders for about thirty years. For many younger Europeans, a first trip outside the European Union is also the first experience with classic (normal) border control.

Whereas elsewhere in Germany the borders with neighbouring countries were soon (partly) closed, the border between Germany and the Netherlands remained open during the COVID-19 crisis. This was not uncontroversial. There were German federal states, in line with the view of the Ministry for the Interior, that opted for equal treatment of all German borders. The interests to keep the Dutch-German border open were very high. Not only the approximately 50,000 commuters in this area

are involved, also a large proportion of the goods used in Europe, but produced outside Europe, are transported across this border from the ports of the Netherlands and Belgium to their destination. At various other borders (e.g. the Polish-German border) there were long delays for freight and passenger traffic caused by closures or restrictions at the border. Delays in goods transport between the Netherlands and Germany could quickly lead to production problems in German industry or supply insecurity for agricultural products in supermarkets (the Netherlands is the second largest exporter of agricultural products in the world after the USA; Germany is a major destination). Shortages—much more than just the hoarding of toilet paper—could lead to unrest.

Both in the Netherlands and Germany, the policy was and is aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus by limiting the number of contact moments between people. For this reason, both the German and the Dutch side of the border have been asked to refrain from unnecessary travel across the border. Without this being precisely defined, travel to work or transport of goods were generally considered necessary. Examples of non-necessary travel were daily groceries, visits to friends and family or refuelling on the other side of the border.

This call to voluntarily refrain from unnecessary travel across the border was also supported by local and regional administrators especially in the northern part of the border region. One of the actions was a bilingual campaign on social media with the message 'Good neighbours keep their distance' and do not visit each other now.

What was also considered necessary in such a situation is to coordinate German and Dutch (and Belgian) policies. In March 2020, primarily structured along the lines of the regular (intensive) cross-border cooperation between the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia, a joint task force (Cross-border Taskforce Corona) was set up to exchange information between Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Policy coordination was also



**Figure 1: Good neighbours keep their distance!** The text reads: "In these times, everyone stays close to home and shops in their own neighbourhood. Together we stay healthy. See you soon!" Source: Grenspost Düsseldorf (<https://www.grenspostdusseldorf.nl/goede-buren-houden-afstand/>)

intended to prevent the creation of undesirable push and pull factors due to differences in the measures taken. For instance, anyone who could no longer go to their own 'domestic' hairdresser but could still get a haircut nearby but across the border, may be tempted to cross.

A special case in need of coordination concerned the outbreaks of the virus in slaughterhouses in the Dutch part of the border region. The problem was not so much the outbreak itself, but more the fact that these companies make extensive use of foreign workers mostly from Central European countries, hired through temporary employment agencies. They live often in group-accommodations and are brought back and forth to the workplaces in vans. The corona measures, especially the 1.5-meter distance, were often not observed in the workplace, the group accommodation, or in the commute. The cross-border aspect here is that some of these workers were accommodated on the German side of the border. As organisations in the two countries are involved (the Dutch agencies concentrating on the situation in the slaughterhouse and the German governmental agencies trying to control the pandemic where the workers lived), good communication and coordination between the health services on the Dutch and German sides of the border is necessary. Here, too, it proved possible to set up communication and coordination relatively quickly by using the existing cross-border contacts between authorities.

### Timeline of corona measures related to the Gelderland-North Rhine-Westphalian border<sup>1</sup>

**March 16, 2020:** The borders of Germany with Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France, and Luxembourg are closed for non-professional traffic. Border between the Netherlands and Germany (and Belgium) remains open.

**Mid-March:** Kreis Borken (a district in the northern part of this border-region) sends a letter to the German government indicating that it is important that the rules on both sides of the border should be made more equal to keep the border open in a safe way.

**March 18:** The Netherlands introduces Code Orange for travelling to Germany. This means that only necessary trips are allowed, holiday travel/day tourism is discouraged. However, this is not really enforced; it remains a strong advice. Cross-border professional traffic is subject to an obligation to carry a 'Pendlerbescheinigung', a declaration stating that the person is working across the border. This, too, is rarely or not enforced.

**March 21:** Cross-border Corona Task Force is established. This is to support the cooperation between the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium to better coordinate the handling of the crisis.

**April 2:** The Dutch government urges Germans (and Belgians) to stay away from the Netherlands over the Easter weekend.

**April 10 - Mid May:** Quarantine measures are installed in Germany, requiring those travelling into Germany from another country to spend two weeks in home quarantine. Workers, goods and international transit are exempt.

**June 15:** The German borders with Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France and Luxembourg are reopened for all traffic. Non-essential traffic between Germany and the Netherlands is again without any border control (which in practice was never really enforced).

**August 8:** Corona test is required for everyone travelling (back) to Germany. Local border traffic remains possible, without test. Cross-border commuters and people who want to visit family must report themselves once to the local health department.

**September:** A second wave of corona infections emerges in the Netherlands.

**October:** Germany experiences also the start of a second wave.

**October 13:** The Netherlands in partial lockdown with again the advice to travel as little as possible.

**October 15:** The whole of the Netherlands is classified as a risk area for Germany. Non-essential traffic for German citizens towards the Netherlands is discouraged and an official travel warning applies for Dutch citizens. All Dutch citizens must undergo quarantine measures and test before entering the country. Local border traffic to North Rhein Westphalia remains possible.

**October 28:** The Netherlands designate ten larger cities in Germany as Code Orange (only necessary travel), including the North Rhine Westphalian cities of Köln, Düsseldorf, and Essen.

**November 3:** The Netherlands implements Code Orange for the whole of Germany. Only essential travelling is allowed, and a corona test is required upon return.

**November 20:** The government of North Rhine Westphalia decided that the quarantine measures are suspended for people who travel to or from the Netherlands. It remains required to report oneself and to be able to show a negative PCR-test. This is not the case for visits that last less than 24 hours. Local border traffic is thus possible.

**January 23, 2021:** All travellers from Germany must quarantine themselves when entering the Netherlands. However, there still are exceptions such as travel for work or family reasons.

**March 1:** People who travel into Germany receive a 'Corona-SMS' from providers on behalf of the German government with the text to adhere to the test and quarantine instructions.

**April 6:** Germany declares the Netherlands as a high-risk country. Dutch citizens must be able to show an official negative corona test result not older than 48 hours when crossing the border into Germany. Until then it was only required to do this in the first 48 hours of a stay in Germany. Small border traffic is now also affected.



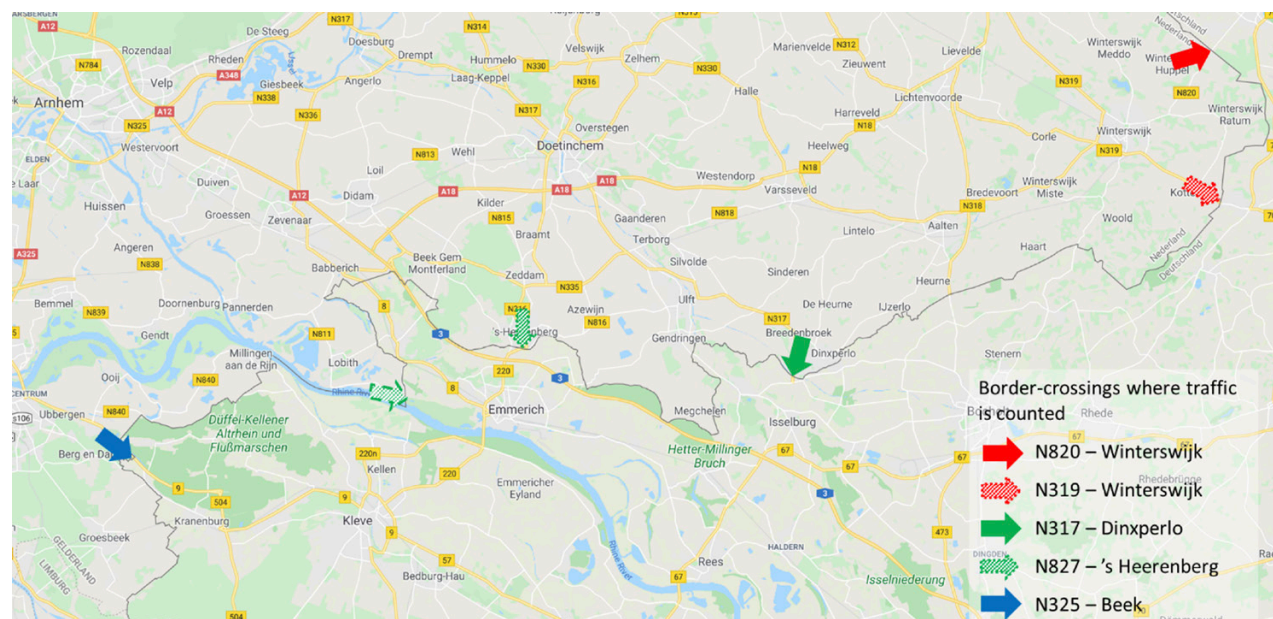
## Cross-border mobility

With regard to cross-border mobility, the corona measures were especially meant to curb non-essential trips. In this respect many Germans travel to the Netherlands, for example, on the weekends to shop. Visiting the Dutch weekly markets is especially popular. Closing these markets (e.g. in Winterswijk) has therefore contributed to reducing cross-border traffic. Many Dutch people travel in the opposite direction, to shop for goods that are only available or considerably cheaper in the neighbouring country. In Germany many more shops were forced to close, compared to the Netherlands, and this also had an impact on need to cross the border.

The province of Gelderland monitors the traffic on the provincial roads and has also made an overview of the differences between the time just before the corona crisis and the weeks after. For the provincial roads this gives the following picture (Figure 2):



**Figure 2. Index of total cross-border traffic at 5 border crossings** (March 2, 2020 = 100; three-week moving average). Source: Province of Gelderland.



**Figure 3. Cross-border traffic data collection points.** Adapted from Google Maps.

In March 2020 traffic initially drops sharply (especially at weekends when there is less commuting), but the situation returns to 'normal' after mid-June. Another sharp decline occurred at the start of the second partial lockdown in October to about 60 to 80 percent of the pre-COVID-19 levels. It dropped even further when a stricter lockdown was announced mid-December. Early 2021 cross-border traffic rose gradually again.

Differences have been observed between five provincial border crossing roads where the province counts the number of cars (Figures 3 and 4).

It is striking that the decline in non-essential traffic in Winterswijk in the north-eastern part of this border region seemed to be much greater than in other parts. Among other reasons this may have been because municipalities in this part of the region communicated more actively about the desirability of not going abroad.

### Changing perception of the border and the "other"?

At the time of the corona crisis, the Euregion Rhine-Waal (Joint INTERREG Secretariat), carried out a "flash" study on the influence of the corona crisis on the perception of borders (especially as a barrier) and the "other" (as an expression of identity) amongst a sample of 84 Dutch and 31 German citizens in the border region. The survey

was conducted in April and May 2020, when the "lockdown" was at its height. Respondents did not often think that the Dutch-German border should have been closed (approximately 10 percent thought so). Not surprisingly many respondents indicated that they perceived the border more as a barrier in April and May 2020. In the case of economic cross-border interaction 45 percent indicated a larger perceived barrier effect. For socio-cultural interaction this was a little higher with 51 percent. It seems feasible to state that the corona crisis has increased the perception of the border as a barrier.

Respondents who took the coronavirus more seriously generally felt a stronger national identity compared to respondents who thought of the coronavirus as less worrying. This could hint at the fact that the corona crisis has made the feelings of national identity stronger. People seem to have generally developed a stronger national identity because of the corona crisis. When asked directly, by presenting a proposition on the relation between the perception of coronavirus and identity-feelings, however, this did not surface. Only 13 percent of the respondents stated explicitly that they felt more Dutch or German because of the corona crisis and only 3 percent indicated that they preferred to deal only with fellow countrymen during the corona crisis. This could mean that the effect of the corona crisis on national identity plays out in the subconscious, i.e., that people did not consciously develop a stronger national identity. Possible implications of this observation are difficult to draw right now, as it must first be clear whether this development will remain once the crisis is over.

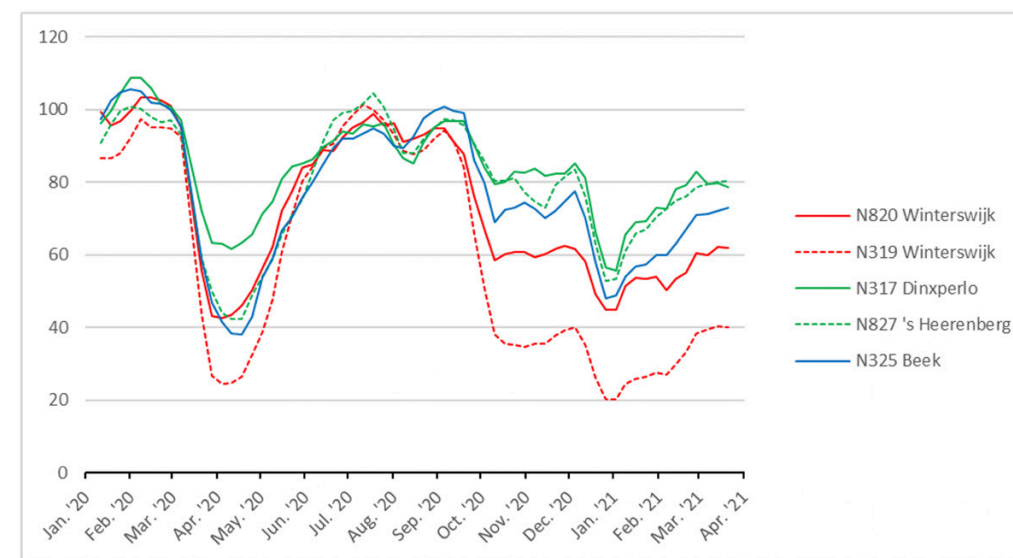
## Conclusion

This essay has offered some insights in the developments of cross-border mobility and feelings in the Dutch-German border region in times of crisis. It comes as no surprise that in the early stages the crisis had a big impact on physical mobility. But mobility seems also to be quite 'resilient', witnessing the return to the levels of mobility before the crisis. It also seems that the relative lenient policy measures have not really affected the spread of the virus either in a positive or negative way. Policy-measures are confined by the border, but the virus is not. Of course, restricting border traffic reduces the number of contacts especially in the border region. This might help to curb the spread of the virus regionally, but it remains a question to what extent this also has a major effect on the development of the virus within the country. We do not know what would have happened had more (or less) drastic measures been taken. But it is safe to say that coordination and cooperation is especially important. Between the Netherlands and Germany, the base for cooperation, trust in each other, is already in place and the additional steps that had to be taken in the current crisis flowed naturally from it.

## Note

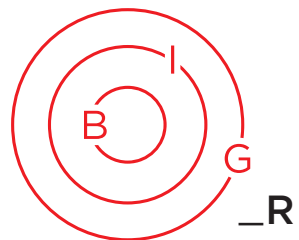
<sup>1</sup> Timeline co-compiled by Lars Kleijne, MA-student Human Geography, Radboud University, Nijmegen.

**Editors' Note:** This essay was prepared for the previous *special issue* but was not included at the time due to editorial issues. The data and timeline have been updated.



**Figure 4: Index of cross-border traffic on Saturdays** (March 2, 2020 = 100; three-week moving average). Source: Province of Gelderland.





## FILM REVIEW

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# Bacurau: The 'Deep Brasil'

Aileen El-Kadi \*

### *Bacurau* (2020)

Film

Written and Directed by  
Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles

Original languages: Portuguese and English

More information at [IMDB](#)

The Brazilian film *Bacurau* (2020), a mixed-genre dystopia set in the near future (written and directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles), intends to nullify any lack of representation of the social margins and prioritize more than one of the so-called social minorities. This film is not about the Brazil of the favelas, nor the world of prisons, or Rio de Janeiro's beaches, but it employs a well-known national geographic trope: the backlands of underdevelopment.

Bacurau is a tiny fictional town surrounded by vast caatinga landscapes of desert vegetation in the northwest of the country. The opening scene of the film shows two individuals in an old truck arriving in town on a desolate dirt road. The female character is Teresa (played by Bárbara Colen), who is traveling to Bacurau to attend the funeral of her 94-year-old grandmother, the matriarch of the village who has just passed away. To enter or to leave that uninhabited and remote natural space means to penetrate an invisible border dividing urbanity from wilderness. The directors emphasize the seclusion of towns like Bacurau -'non-existent' communities on the nation's political map.

Bacurau not only appears to exist outside of any modern border; it also appears to be frozen in time. Its people seem to be living as they did in previous centuries despite the



presence of modern and sometimes futuristic technology, including large digital screens cellular communication networks. In fact, Bacurau seems to avoid change in order to maintain its traditions. In that sense a contradiction arises. In the name of tradition, they exist in a form of paralysis. Thus, there are both spatial and temporal boundaries that contain the town's development.

When the only thing that signals progress disappears—the town's communication network mysteriously goes down—the community's isolation and backwardness come to the fore. A mercenary gang, white men and women who only speak English, have settled in a kind of bunker nearby. Armed with machine guns, they have one purpose: to hunt down the local inhabitants—apparently just for fun. The caricatures of American neo-Nazis allude to real-world contemporary politics, with the emergence of far-right groups bolstered by the rhetoric of authoritarian leaders like President Donald Trump and Brazil's own President Jair Bolsonaro. In the movie, there are two Brazilians working for the white foreigners. They arrive in Bacurau on motorcycles, to the surprise of its inhabitants, who are unaccustomed to strangers visiting them. The 'outsiders' are Brazilians working as spies like CIA agents. They speak English with their employers, and they are white, but not white enough to belong to the elite. "We are not from this region"—one of them justifies themselves to their superiors—"We are from southern Brazil. A rich region, with German and Italian colonies. We are more like you." This is about the "You versus Us", where color is not necessarily the dividing line that allows them to side with those who have the power to kill and spare lives. "Why are you doing this?" asks the town's new female leader, a strong-willed doctor whom everyone respects, named Domingas (played by Sônia Braga), when confronting the head of the terrorist group, Michael (played by Udo Kier). But there is no comprehensible answer; it is 'because we can'. The desire for power and domination and to subjugate and murder mark the dividing line between inferiors and superiors. The perpetrator builds himself on the basis of fascist beliefs, where his victims lose their humanity to become 'social waste'.

In one of the scenes, when an American kills a child, he justifies the shooting by thinking that the child was armed, when in fact he was carrying a flashlight. In the United States, cases in which black people have been killed by the police or who died in their custody sparked protests at the national and international level. In July 2020 there were also demonstrations in Brazil against this type of racial violence. In a country like Brazil, which is systematically and historically racist, and where exhibiting European genealogy represents superiority over African and native ancestry, where prestigious professions and positions of power are in the hands of whites, and where the great majority of inmates are black, the film's criticism is timely, despite its future setting.

Bacurau appears to be an inclusive democracy. The leadership is in the hands of women, and the deceased matriarch has been replaced by another well-respected woman. There are transgender characters, gays, blacks and whites, prostitutes and criminals, children and elderly citizens, and they all live in apparent harmony. The scene of the funeral collation is a window on that social democracy. The church serves as a repository, but there is no religion, and, to ensure every citizen never forgets the proud history of their town, a sacred museum displays, as trophies, the weapons used by their ancestors during a revolt. These weapons will be resuscitated to defend themselves from the new invaders. Echoes of Quilombo dos Palmares, Canudos, resonate here. History repeats itself.

In a post-modern Western makeup, this dystopia, which flirts with sci-fi, attempts to create a multi-layered temporal universe. The historical past is reiterated in the present and is projected into a future that will surely repeat, albeit with variations, a past of violence, colonial submission, stagnation, indifference from the rulers, and geographic, economic and social isolation. There are two types of violence in the film, one internal, the other external. But only one is presented as a threat. The internal violence is inherited, it is a violence of a historical and national nature. It is the violence of everyday life, naturalized and accepted as the 'way of life'. Only in the face of external violence do the inhabitants of Bacurau react as a unit, as a community. But it is an intentional and temporary unit to defend themselves against the external otherness. There is a constant invisible border separating Bacurau from the rest of the world, whether past or future, fiction or real life; there are communities that were and will continue to be invisible.

Perhaps there is, in this political allegory, an intention to contrast the existential emptiness of these foreign sociopaths with the identity of 'authenticity' of the rural community, a community that finds peace in its apparent stagnation. A community that seems to sleep calmly over its violent past but can erupt if threatened.

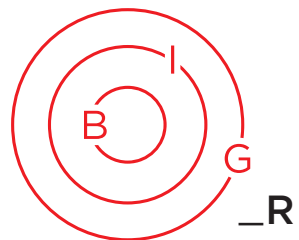


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## FILM REVIEW

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# Leila: Exposing the Borders Within

Dhananjay Tripathi \*

### *Leila* (2019)

Television series

Created by (adaptated by) Urmi Juvekar  
Directed by Deepa Mehta, Shanker Raman,  
and Pawan Kumar

Original language: Hindi

Available on **Netflix**

Six episodes, released June 2019

More information at **IMDB**

The research literature on borders (Border Studies) revolutionizes the way we study and engage with borders. The border commonly denotes a line of division marking the territorial limits of a nation-state. Inside the borders, theoretically, is a nation. The nation, according to Anderson, is an “imagined community” (1983). In legal terms, a nation-state implies homogeneity of social, cultural and political spaces. Such theoretical and legal interpretations of nation-states are misleading and far from the objective ground reality. It is difficult to identify a country in the world that doesn’t have citizens of a different faith, belief and cultural practices. Albeit, there are political parties committed to converting the imagined community into a reality. These are generally right-wing ultra-nationalist parties that purposely ignore or erase the presence of different communities within a country. The political agenda amounts to depriving minorities of constitutional rights and rendering them second-class citizens or worse. The world has seen atrocities along these lines countless times, including against Jews in Germany under the rule of Nazis and more recently under the brutality of the Taliban in Afghanistan, to name just two examples.



Border Studies disputes that there are no lines inside a country. There are several invisible borders and boundaries in the nation-state too often ignored by International Relations and Political Science scholars (Tripathi 2015). Border Studies is also open to studying borders and boundaries through different mediums, including film (television series, documentaries, movies) (Staudt 2018).

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BIG\_Review journal homepage: <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/bigreview>  
Borders in Globalization homepage: <https://biglobalization.org/>



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Today, Netflix is a primary source of entertainment, and there are numerous shows on this online platform that involve compelling socio-political issues. One such series that is liable to draw the attention of Border Studies is *Leila*, a Hindi-language series directed by Deepa Mehta, Shanker Raman and Pawan Kumar. The series is based on Prayaag Akbar’s English-language dystopian novel and began streaming online in June 2019. It is a story of a struggling mother in search of her daughter Leila.

The political plot of *Leila* is about a future authoritarian regime where people of other faiths are outlawed. The progressive citizens of society have been put in different camps/reform centres for ‘purification’. This is where Leila’s mother Shalini is kept after being arrested from her house on the pretext of wasting water. The real reason for her arrest was different. Shalini, an upper-caste Hindu, married a Muslim, and interfaith marriages are immoral in the land of Aryavarta, which was established on the principle of racial purity. Moreover water is regarded as a rare resource in Aryavarta and the supply of pure water is controlled by the dominant political group consisting of upper caste Hindus.

Shalini’s desperation to escape the purification camp to meet her daughter is shown in the first episode. She is asked to prove her loyalty by killing two prisoners of the purification camp. However, she refuses to push the button to kill and consequently is sent to a labour camp. There Shalini meets a guard named Bhanu who is actually a rebel. With the help of Bhanu, Shalini finally reaches the house of the top leadership of Aryavarta, Mr. Rao, where she starts working as a housemaid. Bhanu asks her to collect more information on operation Skydome—a dream project for the privileged few of Aryavarta. Skydome is basically a giant air conditioner that refines and cools the climate within its perimeter while expelling hot air to surrounding areas, so communities not covered by the system bear the environmental costs. Shalini helps Bhanu learn more about the sinister project. Finally, Shalini, along with Mr. Rao, arrive at the core of project Skydome, where she meets her daughter. To the shock of Shalini, her daughter Leila refuses to recognize her and instead calls Aryavarta her mother.

This series shows how a fundamentalist political group creates borders amongst humans based on caste and religion. The government and people legally sanction these borders and no one can cross them without state’s permission. The internal borders are even stricter, more

impermissible, securitised and authoritarian than the international borders. Every border has a specific function, “separates the wanted from unwanted, the imagined barbarians from the civilized, and the global rich from global poor” (Hountum 2012, 405). Borders in this regard are “fabricated truth” (Hountum 2012, 405). This is precisely illustrated in *Leila*—internal borders with particular exclusionary political functions.

The series also portrays a society under extremist rule. There is a suspension of human rights, and everything is determined by race/religion. The first season of *Leila* left an impact on viewers particularly of India which recently saw a rise of religious fundamentalism. There is a strong socio-political message in the series that has six episodes in this season. It is about discrimination, deprivation, and patriarchy. All the top positions of Aryavarta are filled by male leaders, and women are to serve as loyal companions both in family life and the political arena. Thus, there are borders within borders. One salient border is the wall that separates the dominant political section from people of other religions and beliefs. Inside this powerful section, women are depicted in subordinate political positions. In this regard, the fight of Shalini becomes more profound, as a progressive, secular and strong woman fights against a range of political barriers. The first season ends with a question about how Shalini will react to the situation where she is standing with a powerful weapon, given to her by the rebel Bhanu, to detonate and eradicate the leadership of Aryavarta—with her daughter among them. Needless to say, viewers eagerly await the second season of the series, which has not yet been confirmed.

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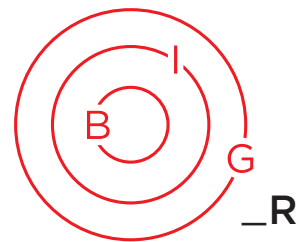
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## BOOK REVIEW

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<https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr22202120208>

# Review of Klaus Dodds' *Border Wars*

Simon Dalby \*

### *Border Wars:* *The Conflicts that will Define our Future*

By Klaus Dodds

London: Penguin Ebury Press 2021.

Hardback, 304 pages

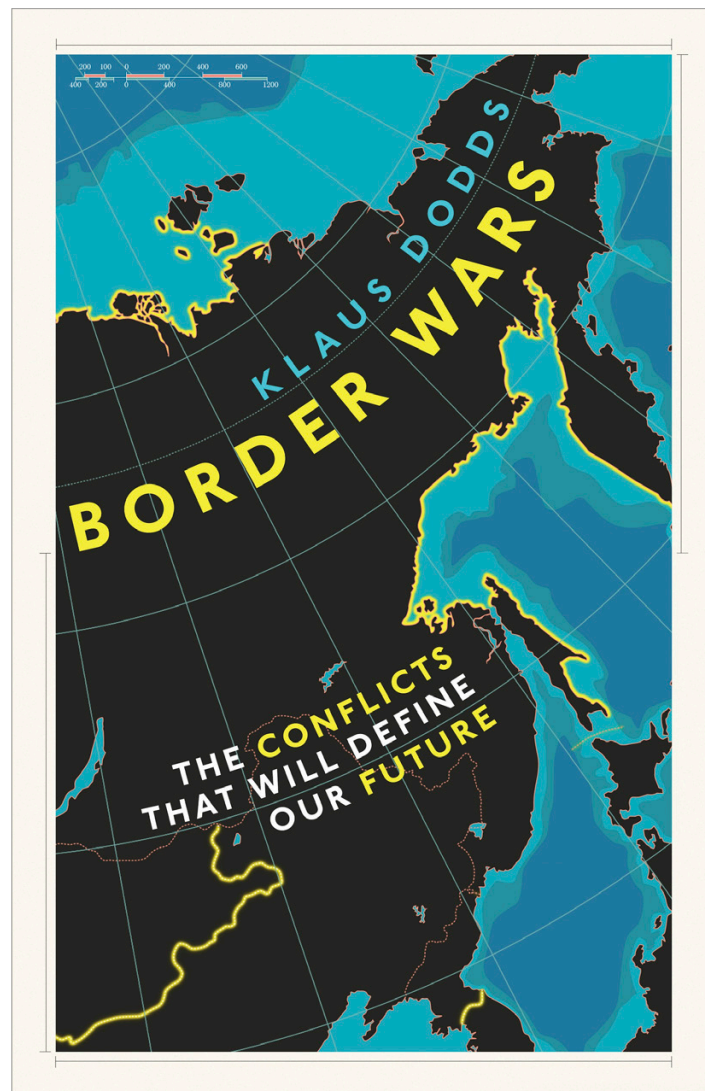
ISBN 9781529102598

Ebook available

<https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1116981/border-wars/9781529102598.html>

For more than a decade Klaus Dodds, Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London, has been writing a short column on geopolitical hotspots for *The Geographical Magazine* focusing on contentious places, boundary disputes, regional rivalries and conflicts all around the world. Now he has pulled a decade's worth of thinking and writing about such issues into an easy-to-read volume which is effectively a fascinating compendium of historical but mostly contemporary border controversies.

In a world of border walls, pandemic travel restrictions, Brexit and reassertions of territorial sovereignty in the face of globalization and increasing human migration, this is a very timely survey. A brief introduction is followed by nine substantive chapters. After a discussion of bordering practices in the first chapter which focuses on, among other things, partition and the legacy of ongoing conflict in divided



spaces, the subsequent chapter deals with mobile borders. Yes, climate change is actually moving borders in places where glaciers are melting, and highlighting the practices of border designation, delimitation and demarcation. This world is a dynamic place and watery borders too, the subject of the next chapter, are moving as rivers and coastlines erode and aggregate material. While maps may have firm lines on them, in reality these designations are complicated on the ground, or crucially, in rivers that move. Some borders are simply vanishing as rising sea levels inundate islands and coastlines and the fate of peoples in island states is discussed here too; societies with disappearing borders require attention as to where they will move too and how their future identities will be defined, or bordered.

Other borders are a matter of “no man’s land” because they are not fixed firmly and agreed to by contending states. India, Pakistan and China are still squabbling over the Siachen glacier and where territorial lines should be drawn on what, in practical terms, ought to be an uninhabited space given its altitude and extremely harsh weather conditions. But national pride intrudes on such cartographic oddities all too often and in the process perpetuates conflict over matters that would be much better ignored in a sensible world. Unrecognised borders come next, because such things as claims to portions of Antarctica or the Russian presence in Crimea mean that despite the supposed fixity of the lines on the map that designate national frontiers, they may simply not be recognised as such. This leads logically to a chapter discussing the new technological innovations that are giving us supposedly smart borders. And, yes, there is money to be made supplying states with improvements in surveillance technology which increases the efficiency in facilitating border crossing by authorised travellers, while making matters more difficult for those without approved credentials.

Well before Elon Musk set about acting on his desire to colonize Mars, and in the process revived speculation about space travel, borders in outer space were a matter increasingly being discussed. Renewed moon and Mars exploration has rekindled discussion of issues of sovereignty, law and jurisdiction there too. Finally, and now alas as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, unavoidably Klaus Dodds turns his attention to viral borders and the lessons that attempts to use border controls as a mode of limiting disease spread may

teach us. Here the results are obviously not yet in, but here too matters of sovereignty and national pride are intertwined with both attempts to limit travel as well as supply vaccines. Vaccine nationalism is now a phrase used widely and the question of who gets vaccinated where underlines the key point that borders are very important despite the interconnections in the global economy and the supply chains that cross so many frontiers. We may live in a global economy but these chapters remind us clearly that territorial jurisdictions continue to matter in numerous practical ways despite the rhetoric of interconnections, one world and a supposedly common humanity.

One might question the title of this volume. After all, despite the numerous fascinating vignettes that are the substance of this very easy-to-read global survey of borders and bordering practices, few of them relatively speaking, have in the past or are likely to in the future, involve full-scale war. But that is a quibble; conflicts of lesser scope persist in numerous places, not just the unlikely demarcation disputes about high-altitude glaciers. It is also probably a valid generalization that flows from the cases discussed in this volume that good fences do indeed make good neighbours. Which is why settling disputes on borders remains a key matter for international institutions interested in making a more peaceful world. Borders are not the only cause of conflict but they are in many cases an irritant that, while maybe useful for justifying military and surveillance budgets for nationalist politicians, would be much better dealt with by diplomatic agreement to resolve contentious issues.

The final section of this book provides a guide to key source materials and to further reading for those readers wanting to follow up the themes of each chapter. Given the fascinating details of numerous borders that are presented in this volume, there will undoubtedly be readers who want to do just that. Not least because, in writing about these cases, Klaus Dodds has managed to sneak in numerous theoretical insights about borders, sovereignty, jurisdiction and cartography to whet the appetite for further investigation. As such, although written as a trade book for a popular audience, *Border Wars* might serve very well as an introductory text book for courses in border studies and political geography. It is no easy task to cross these genre boundaries, but this volume manages this with aplomb. Congratulations to Professor Dodds!

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## New Border Studies On Israel/Palestine: Review of Two Books

Daniel Meier \*

***The Politics of Maps: Cartographic  
Constructions of Israel/Palestine.***

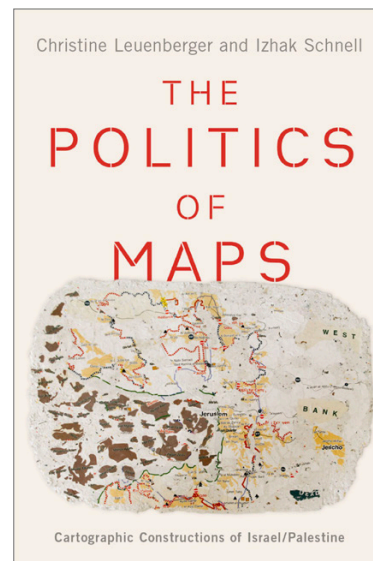
By Christine Leuenberger & Izhak Schnell  
Oxford University Press, 2020.  
Hardback, 252 pages, 47 maps and figures  
ISBN: 9780190076238  
Ebook available

<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-politics-of-maps-9780190076238?cc=fr&lang=en&>

***Penser la Palestine en réseaux***

Edited by Véronique Bontemps, Nicolas  
Dot-Pouillard, Jalal al-Husseini & Abaher al-Sakka  
Diacritiques Editions & Presses de l'Ifpo, 2020  
Paperback, 257 pages.  
ISBN: 9791097093105

<https://diacritiques.hypotheses.org/1568>



Border studies have investigated the Israeli-Palestinian space as fruitful for conceptualization given the matrix of control the Israeli state has dispatched over the whole territory over the last decades. The two recent books selected here are part of an attempt to conceptualize Israel and Palestine beyond the classical tools of border studies while investigating firstly the Israeli construction of cartographic material to represent the ongoing conflict and secondly the concept of network to think about Palestine beyond its borders. Both are worth reading for different reasons but share a common attempt to rejuvenate our perspective on this inextricable conflict.

The fascinating book written by Christine Leuenberger and Izhak Schnell is the result of longstanding research that took years to appear in the final format of this

book. And the result is worth waiting for. Published by Oxford University Press, *The Politics of Maps* will stay as a reference in the field of cartographic research applied to a rather complex case study, Israel-Palestine. This elegant and compact text provides the reader with dense material crafted with theoretical tools, narratives, documents and maps (some in color). Aside from the book's pleasant aesthetics, it shows determination to dig through layers of ideologies and to get to the root of this complex conflict that is shattering the land of Israel-Palestine. Nine chapters and a short conclusion wrapped up in a 200-page well written book with an attractive front cover—a map of present-day Jerusalem and its surroundings—cannot leave the reader indifferent. The sub-title *Cartographic Constructions of Israel/Palestine* gives the angle on which the book relies, and the first

pages outline more precisely the intent to investigate “how maps serve as rhetorical tools to advocate for particular, socially constructed, value laden, and ideologically charged geopolitical visions” (p.2).

Why maps? This original angle allows the authors to go beyond the classical conception of map as either purely scientific or willfully propagandistic. All maps are necessarily selective, contingent and contextual, as Kitchin and Dodge (“*Rethinking Maps*” in *Progress in Human Geography* 31(3), 2007) would recall, reflecting on the production of reality, as maps helped to create nations, boundaries, spatial imaginations and national identities, and also because they are continuously made and re-made. This critical cartography delves into each map to ground an interpretative analysis on visual signifiers (scale, symbols, level of detail, choice of contrast, colors and visual metaphors), textual signifiers (naming, headings, written justification and methods showing the audience targeted), the demarcation of the space (creating spatial orders and hierarchies by including or excluding borders, routes, and sites). Maps are therefore understood as discourses but not only. The authors also highlight the role and function of maps in the nation-state building by tracing the history of mapping and the social, cultural and political context of their production, with maps stemming from different horizons and political or private groups. The research is obtained through various qualitative methodologies, including interviews with map-makers and state officials, NGO workers, academics, international organization workers, and other stakeholders, providing the authors with insights “from above” and “from below” in the field of map-making.

In the second and third chapters, the authors examine first the role of cartography in the shaping of the territorial entity of the state of Israel alongside the role of many other actors, among them the geographers. They underscore the key aspect of science and technology as resources to shape the state and the belief in a biopolitics capable of knowing, managing and improving Israeli society within its territory. It is of key importance to consider that the British Mandate of Palestine shared with the Zionists a modernist ethos. While the British registered the land and established a survey of the population, the Hagannah (ancestor of the Israeli Defence Forces) looted the *Survey of Palestine* and accessed the cartographic material which helped them to win the war in 1948 and facilitated statecraft. The Israeli state then introduced a new land tenure system that clashed with the traditional Ottoman land allocation practices and lead to a massive dispossession of many Arab landowners and landholders: 93 percent of the land thus became Israeli state land! Far from ratifying this process, the authors highlight the fact that such scientific and legal paradigms of Western influence is not in itself responsible for this outcome but that Israeli surveyors who were registering the land had a collectivist Zionist and nationalist vision and contributed by their methods to the “Israelization of the lands” (pp.47-55).

The fourth chapter deals with the key role played by the Jewish National Fund in the aftermath of Israeli independence as a socializing agent into notions of territory with the dissemination of the “blue boxes” used to collect donations and buy land in the “Holy Land”. The authors remind that “re-naming territory is a pre-condition for the transfer of territorial control” (p.11). That is also the duty of the Names Committee that established a Hebrew toponymy of the land. An atlas soon helped to shape the representation of Israel's national story, Zionist achievements and technical prowess. The next two chapters focus on the period after the 1967 war, when Israel more than tripled the territories under its control. While chapter five highlights the spreading of the maps throughout the society and more particularly from right-wing movements, embodying three different expansionist visions of the land of Israel, be it secular, religious or linked to the settlers, chapter six shows how the left-wing and human rights organizations also deployed maps to tell their geopolitical vision including proposal for territorial compromises, even retracing alternative Arab topography of hundreds of erased villages in the search for historical justice, like the NGO Zochrot, relying on the work of Palestinian historians and some critical Israeli historians.

Chapter seven deals with the significance of international borders with neighboring states and the Green Line with the Palestinians. Despite all the technical skills, the boundary-making of Israel shows the limits of the capacity of any government to try to reunite a territorial expansionist ideology with a technocratic solution delineating borders. This very important chapter probably lacks some visual illustrations and maps which may have shown the applied Zionist ideology on the neighboring states' sovereign territories (the Syrian Golan Heights, the West Bank which had been under Jordanian control, the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, and the south of Lebanon). Chapter 8 comes back to the dire Palestinian situation and restrictions of access to resources after the Oslo Accord (1993) due to Israel's monopoly over the tools to implement it. Chapter 9 concludes with the idea that surveying, mapping and planning are crucial to establishing the legitimacy and functionality of a future state like Palestine. Moreover, their attempts to map their land contradict Israeli mapping and reveal silences and omissions that will continue to haunt the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Resulting from a transnational seminar held for four years in the Lebanese, Jordanian and Jerusalemite branches of the French Institute of the Near East, the second book *Penser la Palestine en Réseaux* (*Thinking Palestine in Networks*) offers a cross-border reflection on the Palestinian area, starting from the concept of network. The ambition here is to get away from an overhanging vision as much as to escape a state-centered perspective. To do this, the editors, the anthropologist Véronique Bontemps who has been leading a seminar on Palestine in Paris for ten years, as well as Nicolas Dot-Pouillard, Jalal

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## About the Journal

al-Husseini and Abaher al-Sakka, all three well-known political scientists, explain in introduction the ambivalent relation of the notion of network, straddling social science analysis tools and practices of social mobilization. This last aspect brings to light a double critique, that of democratic centralism and that of partisan structures as the exclusive mode of practicing politics. Consequently, the work consists in "thinking the networks which think themselves in networks" (p.14) (present translations by D. Meier) thus showing the exchanges which occur between the theoretical and the political. Faced with this practical and disciplinary polysemy, the introduction sets out a minimum definition: networks are seen as "the expression of social relations which go beyond codified political, institutional and economic relations" (p.15). A liminal concept, the network is therefore considered here as both a model of action and a category of analysis. Equipped with this double-focal lens, the contributions then unfold a fine series of field surveys giving pride of place to ordinary practices in the family, economic, virtual or religious fields of Palestinian society. In doing so, the network concept intends to link what borders separate and isolate: The Occupied Palestinian Territories, the State of Israel, the refugee camps in neighboring countries and of course the Palestinian diaspora which spans all continents.

The book, elegantly presented by the young publishing house Diacritiques Editions, is divided into two parts, each of four investigative articles written mainly by young researchers. In the first section dedicated to militant networks, Elsa Grugeon opens the volume with a catchy title: "Al-Aqsa 2.0. Abolishing borders and challenging the constraint on the Internet" which starts from the observation that the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, are today cut off from a significant part of the Palestinian community and from the Muslim community. And the author asks the question: "in what way do the internet and new media form a resource for overcoming borders and territorial constraints as well as for mobilizing?" (p.27). She then shows how young Palestinians living in East Jerusalem promote a commitment, understood as an intermediation mission but also as a militant act, around the Al-Aqsa mosque as an icon of Palestinian territoriality in Jerusalem and as an observation of the logics of closures / openings to its access. In addition to the notorious importance taken by social networks in recent years, she recalls that the role of the internet is to establish links between those who live near this holy place and those who are distant from it, beyond local and international borders. Amusingly, she notes that the Arabic lexical field of the word "link" refers to the Islamic term *ribât* which designated the ascetic and warlike posture of the defenders of Islamic territory on its fringes in the early days of Islam. These border guards or *murabitûn* are today embodied by young Palestinians, guardian of the links of the Al-Aqsa site with the rest of the world.

The mobilization potential of networks is also measured with non-Palestinians labeled "international" living in Palestine by Clio Chaveneau's survey. Internationally, Nicolas Dot-Pouillard investigates the case of the networks mobilized for Palestinian rights in France. He thus shows how this "French passion" that is Palestine has been largely dominated over the long term by "the left of the left" in a "horizontal, flexible, informal, grafted or connected" mode of mobilization" (p.119) and whose transnational dimension deserves to be linked on a global scale which would make it possible to testify to a political, aesthetic and international appropriation of the Palestinian cause by multiple leftist groups far beyond the borders of Palestine.

Other chapters detail the social aspects of networks such as that of Minas Ouchaklian on the networks of Fatah militants as resources in power struggles, or of Mariangela Gasparotto on the networks of new arrivals in Ramallah who bring to light the spatialization of the hierarchies and statutory inequalities. The more transnational angle devoted to the second part is well embodied by the articles of Jalal al-Husseini, Marion Slitine and Najla Nakhlé-Cerruti, respectively centered on the Palestinian diaspora, on the networks of contemporary art and theatrical practice in Gaza. All three illustrate the ways of reinventing a national imagination that is deployed beyond territorial borders by using the means available in the global sphere. If the decline in the capacity to mobilize for the right of return or against the recent American decisions to transfer the US embassy to Jerusalem seems obvious, this disenchantment, Jalal al-Husseini tells us, does not signal the disappearance of the Palestinian diaspora but rather its withdrawal into "networks woven across borders by refugee families" (p.205). For her part, Marion Slitine shows that the strong localism which continues to mark the practices of contemporary Palestinian art must be understood as a form of resistance and an affirmation of identity at the crossroads of a growing globalization of this artistic sector and increased fragmentation of the Palestinian territories. With Larissa Sansour's emblematic installation showing a cosmonaut planting the Palestinian flag on the moon, one could conclude, with Appadurai, that the circulation of images, works, or men across spaces is continually eroding the multiple borders of nation-states. And raises the question of the birth of a new post-national space.

In sum, both books provided some complementary tools to think about the Israel-Palestine space as a territory, a representation and a place of living. While the first book highlighted the various dimensions of the social construction of cartography and their implications, the second one shows the importance of networks as resourceful tools to apprehend the social realities and imaginaries of nowadays Palestine, beyond its strictly territorial grounding.

### 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 metaphorical-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 visibilize, problematize, and discuss how these borders are changing and how they affect all other borders, physically, of the mind, of social groups, and across cyberspace.

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.

### Open Access and Distribution

*BIG\_Review* is an open-access publication. It is available online for free to readers worldwide. You may share it with anyone. Unless otherwise stated, all works are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License \(CC BY-NC 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/).

We distribute each issue to a recipient list of more than 1,000 scholars and policy makers located in Canada, the United States, Mexico and in over 60 other countries around the world. We also promote the content on social media, including paid promotion.

### Fee for Publishing Academic Work

We are able to share peer-reviewed academic work around the world for free (open access) in part because we charge a \$250 (Cdn) fee to the author(s). Authors



should receive support from their research funds, grants, and supporting institutions to cover this fee. The fee allows author(s) to publish work that is both refereed (by experts from our international [Editorial Board](#), listed on the inside cover) and shareable with friends, family, and on social media. The fee only applies once to academic articles and essays that have been approved and prepared for publication. There are no fees for submissions that are not published, and there are no fees for book or film reviews or for any artistic submissions (paint, poetry, story, etc.). Our fees are a small fraction of the fees charged by most established academic journals, which typically charge several thousand dollars to publish an open-access article.

## Print Copies Available

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).

## Privacy Statement

The names and email addresses shared with this journal will be used exclusively for the stated purposes of this journal and will not be made available for any other purpose or to any other party.

## Partnership with BIG\_Books

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

**Front pages:** full page = \$500 (Cdn); half page = \$250; quarter page = \$125

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**Inside back cover:** full page = \$500 (Cdn); half page = \$250; quarter page = \$125

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.

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

The original publication of DOI 10.18357/bigr11201919259 from *BIG\_Review* 1(1) was subsequently modified: an improperly reproduced map was replaced.

# 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, copy-editing and production are provided by *BIG\_Review*.

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Each new publication is widely distributed to a recipient list of some 1000 scholars and policy makers located in Canada, the United States, Mexico and in over 60 other country around the world.

## Fee for Publishing Academic Work

We are able to share peer-reviewed academic work around the world for free (open access) in part because we charge a \$250 (Cdn) fee to the author(s). Authors should receive support from their research funds, grants, and supporting institutions to cover this fee. The fee allows author(s) to publish work that is both refereed and shareable with friends, family, and social media. The fee only applies once to academic articles and essays that have been approved and prepared for publication. There are no fees for submissions that are not published, and there are no fees for book or film reviews or for any artistic submissions (paint, poetry, story, etc.). Our fees are a small fraction of the fees charged by most established academic journals, which typically charge several thousand dollars to publish an open-access article.



## 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.

**Endnotes** may be used for substantive observations but not for the primary purpose of citing sources (though endnotes may include citations). Endnotes must appear separately at the end of the body of the manuscript. The use of footnotes is unacceptable and may result in the manuscript being returned to the author for revision.

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).

All academic article and essay submissions must include two documents: a) an anonymized version (for prospective blind reviewers); and b) a separate copy of the title page alone with all author contact and affiliation information.

The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided to the editor).

Submissions are not guaranteed approval. *BIG\_Review* reserves the right to reject submissions on any ground.

To submit academic work, follow the steps at [Submit page](#).

## Artistic Submission Requirements

Our electronic platform permits a wide range of media, from print to visual, video, animation, and interactive.

**Prose** (short stories, creative essays, film and literature reviews, artistic/critical commentaries) should be double-spaced and use a 12-point font. Length may vary. Accompanying photos and artwork are welcome.

**Visual art** (photography, painting, etc.) and other visual art must be high-resolution, BMP, JPEG, or PNG, including separate captions.

**Poetry** formats may vary (length, layout, font, font size, etc.). Accompanying photos and artwork are welcome.

All submissions must be previously unpublished and not simultaneously before other publishers for consideration, unless other arrangements are made with our editors. Submissions are not guaranteed approval. *BIG\_Review* reserves the right to reject submissions on any ground. To submit artistic work, contact our [Chief Editor](#).

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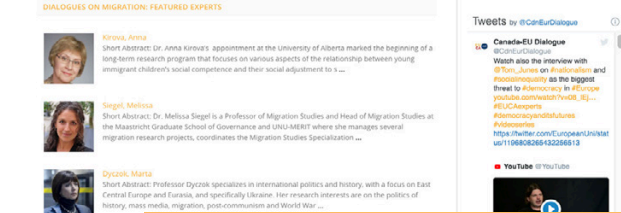
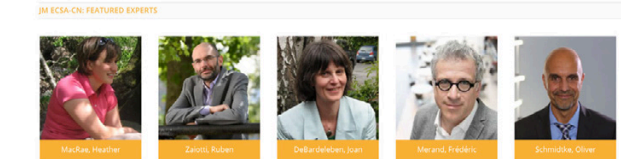
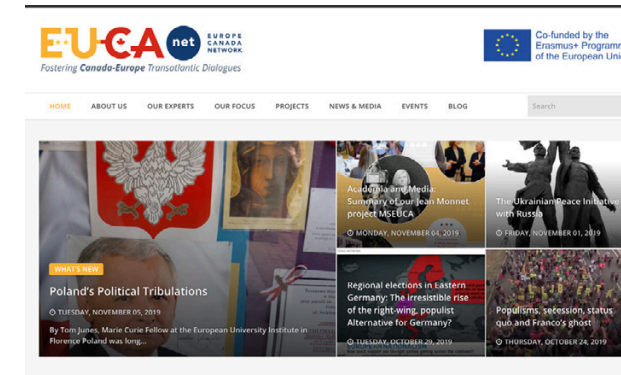
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Authors are permitted and encouraged to post their work online as it can lead to productive exchanges, as well as increased exposure and citation of work (see [The Effect of Open Access](#)).

Artists may discuss alternative copyrights with the managing editor.

# Connect with the Canadian - European Network

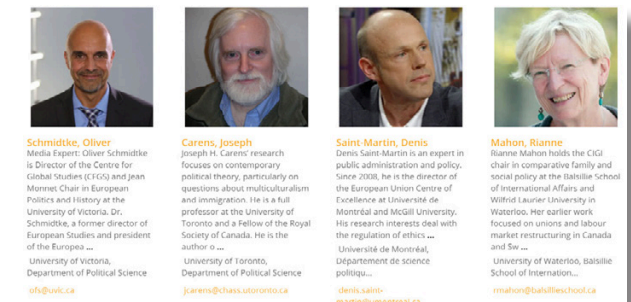


Canada and Europe share a wealth of common political, cultural, economic and environmental experiences. Experts in academia and beyond can and should contribute greatly to debates on the opportunities and challenges that Canada and Europe face.

Witnessing the rise of populism and fake news, EUCANet is focused on sharing knowledge that is built upon evidence, transparency, and accountability.

Connect with EUCANet to add your voice to public debates on border governance, migration policy, democracy, populism and other issues approached from a transatlantic perspective.

Visit [www.EUCANet.org](http://www.EUCANet.org) to list yourself as an expert available for media engagement, publish your insights on our blog, or find resources and media strategies to help you get started.







## The Globe in Perspective

The Centre for Global Studies (CFGS), founded in 1998, fosters research, reflection, and action on complex issues of local, national, and global importance. Located at the University of Victoria, CFGS is a collaborative community of scholars and leaders that is uniquely positioned to bridge academic research and student mentoring with innovative knowledge mobilization and effective community engagement.

As a truly interdisciplinary research centre exploring global and Indigenous perspectives, CFGS fosters exploration, discussion, and collaboration in new and unexpected ways. CFGS is an international community, purposefully designed to foster exchanges that lead to collaboration and innovation.

*"CFGS provided a wonderful space to reflect deeply on my various projects. The breadth and generosity of the community enriched my reflections. The immediate gains are obvious but the long-term impact of sustained thought and collaboration are the greatest benefits that I take away with me from this experience."*

CYNTHIA MILTON, 2018-2019 CFGS VISITING RESEARCH FELLOW  
PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR  
ON LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AT THE UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL  
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CFGS research considers the nexus of the local and global - how local concerns have global effects and how global issues manifest at the local level. Fellows and researchers are exploring issues vital to people, places, policy, and the planet, and are making an impact around the world. Research foci include:

- *Borders and migration in the 21st century*
- *Environmental and social policy, and ecological governance with a strong emphasis on water*
- *Indigeneity and reconciliation from global and local perspectives*
- *Social justice and participatory democracy*
- *Governance as an integrated process at and across scales*

## Connect with Us

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Facebook: CentreForGlobalStudies  
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Website: [www.globalcentres.org](http://www.globalcentres.org)  
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One of the central objectives at CFGS is to create a community of scholars and scholarship. The CFGS hosts conferences, workshops, and speakers that promote critical citizenship in a complex and rapidly changing global environment and respond to defining events as they unfold. These events bridge the divide between academia and the community, as well as inform policy, decision makers, and citizens on important issues.



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We collaborate on projects across faculties and departments at UVic, as well as with communities, practitioners, partners, and universities around the globe. These projects bring together diverse groups of people to communicate our research through events, publications, and collaborative networks. We make our boundary-pushing research accessible to policy makers, researchers, and the wider community.

## RESEARCH FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE WORLD

### Fellowship Program

The Centre awards fellowships to graduate students, international scholars and faculty researchers with an overarching aim to build a sophisticated and transdisciplinary network. These fellowships provide office space, a stipend for students & visiting scholars, and a course administrative release for faculty ranging from several weeks to a year.

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ANITA GIRVAN, FORMER GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOW

CFGS offers fellowship opportunities for UVIC graduate students, UVic faculty, visiting researchers, and visiting graduate students. More info at [www.globalcentres.org](http://www.globalcentres.org).





# BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION REVIEW

Volume 2 | Issue 2 | Spring / Summer 2021

## ARTICLES

**Borders, Citizenship, and the Local: Everyday Life in Three Districts of West Bengal**

By Shibashis Chatterjee, Surya Sankar Sen, and Mayuri Banerjee

**Unsustainable Borders: Globalization in a Climate Disrupted World**

By Simon Dalby

**Cross-border Life in an American Exclave: Point Roberts & the Canada-US Border**

By Pierre-Alexandre Beylier

**Teaching Borders A Model Arising from Israeli Geography Education**

By Tal Yaar-Waisel

**Les frontières marocaines à l'épreuve de la pandémie Covid-19**

By Saida Latmani

## POETRY SPECIAL SECTION

**A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred and Political**

Edited by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and Natasha Sardzoka

Featuring poetry by Agi Mishol, João Luís Barreto Guimarães, Maram Al Masri, Grażyna Wojcieszko, Yekta, Gili Haimovich, Daniel Calabrese, Prisca Agustoni, Marilena Renda, Giselle Lucia Navarro, Gjoko Zdraveski, Tatev Chakhian, Fabiano Alborghetti, Indré Valantinaitė, Luca Benassi, Nurduran Duman, Stéphane Chaumet, Ren (Katherine) Powell, Tomica Bajsić, Franca Mancinelli, Tiago Alves Costa, Emna Louzyr, Dragan Jovanović Danilov, Violette Abou Jalad, Tiziano Fratus, Francesca Cricelli, Rafael Soler, Lali Tsipi Michaeli, and Tareq al Karmy

## ARTWORK

**Bucolic Borders from North Africa to Central Asia, 2000-2017 (portfolio)**

By François Cayol

**Borderlanders: People from the In-between Spaces (portfolio)**

By Daniel Meier and Hussein Baydoun

**Borders & Personal Mythologies: An Interview with Emeric Lhuisset**

By Elisa Ganivet

## ESSAY

**The Dutch-German Border: Open in Times of Coronavirus Lockdowns**

By Martin van der Velde, Doede Sijsma, Maarten Goossens, and Bas Maartense

## And FILM REVIEWS and BOOK REVIEWS

By Aileen El-Kadi, Dhananjay Tripathi, Simon Dalby, and Daniel Meier

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