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IDENTITIES AND METHODOLOGIES OF BORDER STUDIES: Recent Empirical and Conceptual Approaches

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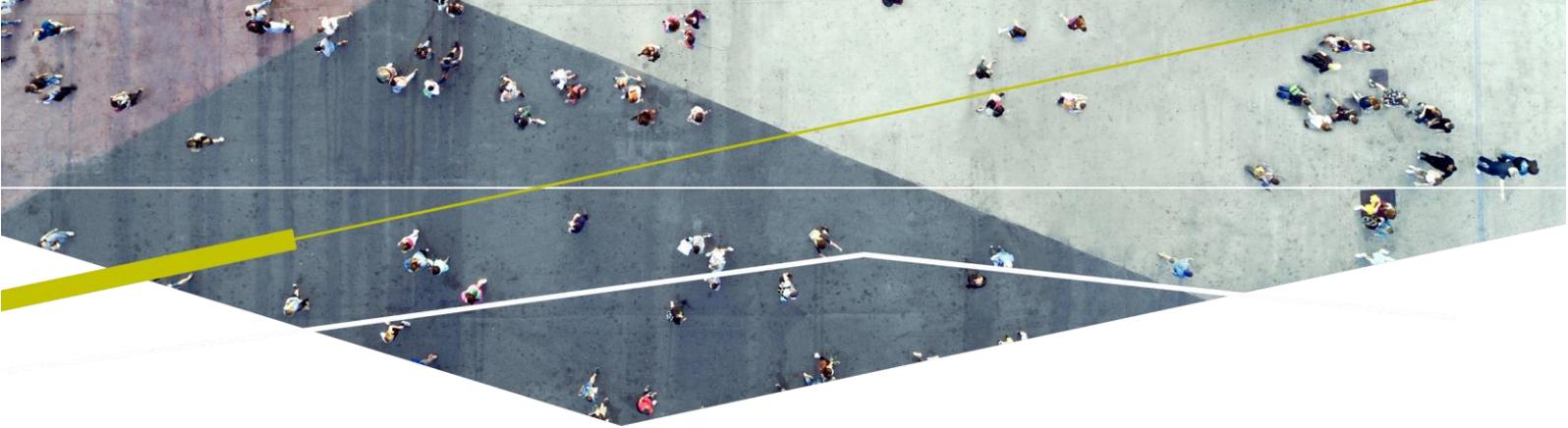
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UniGR-Center for Border Studies

CENTRE EUROPEEN D'ETUDES SUR LES FRONTIERES
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EN The UniGR-CBS is a thematic cross-border network of approximately 80 researchers within the university grouping University of the Greater Region (UniGR) conducting research on borders, their meanings and challenges. Due to its geographical position in the “heart of Europe”, its expertise and disciplinary diversity, the UniGR-CBS has the best prerequisites for becoming a European network of excellence. For the creation of a “European Center for Competence and Knowledge in Border Studies”, the Interreg VA Greater Region program provides the UniGR-CBS network with approximately EUR 2.6 million ERDF funding between 2018 and 2022. Within this project, the UniGR-CBS aims at developing harmonized research tools, embedding Border Studies in teaching, promoting the dialogue on cross-border challenges between academia and institutional actors and supporting the spatial development strategy of the Greater Region.

FR L'UniGR-CBS un réseau transfrontalier et thématique qui réunit environ 80 chercheuses et chercheurs des universités membres de l'Université de la Grande Région (UniGR) spécialistes des études sur les frontières, leurs significations et enjeux. Grâce à sa position géographique au « cœur de l'Europe », à sa capacité d'expertise et à la diversité des disciplines participantes, l'UniGR-CBS revêt tous les atouts d'un réseau d'excellence européen. L'UniGR-CBS bénéficie d'un financement d'environ 2,6 M € FEDER dans le cadre du programme INTERREG VA Grande Région de 2018-2022 pour mettre en place le Centre européen de ressources et de compétences en études sur les frontières. Via ce projet transfrontalier, le réseau scientifique UniGR-CBS créera des outils de recherche harmonisés. Il œuvre en outre à l'ancrage des Border Studies dans l'enseignement, développe le dialogue entre le monde scientifique et les acteurs institutionnels autour d'enjeux transfrontaliers et apporte son expertise à la stratégie de développement territorial de la Grande Région.

DE Das UniGR-CBS ist ein grenzüberschreitendes thematisches Netzwerk von rund 80 Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftlern der Mitgliedsuniversitäten des Verbunds Universität der Großregion (UniGR), die über Grenzen und ihre Bedeutungen sowie Grenzraumfragen forschen. Dank seiner geographischen Lage „im Herzen Europas“, hoher Fachkompetenz und disziplinärer Vielfalt verfügt das UniGR-CBS über alle Voraussetzungen für ein europäisches Exzellenz-Netzwerk. Für den Aufbau des Europäischen Kompetenz- und Wissenszentrums für Grenzraumforschung wird das Netzwerk UniGR-CBS von 2018-2022 mit knapp 2,6 Mio. Euro EFRE-Mitteln im Rahmen des INTERREG VA Großregion Programms gefördert. Im Laufe des Projekts stellt das UniGR-Netzwerk abgestimmte Forschungswerkzeuge bereit, verankert die Border Studies in der Lehre, entwickelt den Dialog zu grenzüberschreitenden Themen zwischen wissenschaftlichen und institutionellen Akteuren und trägt mit seiner Expertise zur Raumentwicklungsstrategie der Großregion bei.



Identities and Methodologies of Border Studies: Recent Empirical and Conceptual Approaches

Abstract

EN In recent decades, Border Studies have gained importance and have seen a noticeable increase in development. This manifests itself in an increased institutionalization, a differentiation of the areas of research interest and a conceptual reorientation that is interested in examining processes. So far, however, little attention has been paid to questions about (inter)disciplinary self-perception and methodological foundations of Border Studies and the associated consequences for research activities. This thematic issue addresses these desiderata and brings together articles that deal with their (inter)disciplinary foundations as well as method(ological) and practical research questions. The authors also provide sound insights into a disparate field of work, disclose practical research strategies, and present methodologically sophisticated systematizations.

Border Studies, boundaries, methodologies, ethnographic methods, practice, migration

DE Die Border Studies haben in den letzten Jahrzehnten an Bedeutung gewonnen und einen spürbaren Entwicklungsschub erfahren. Dieser äußert sich in einer stärkeren Institutionalisierung, einer Ausdifferenzierung der Erkenntnisinteressen und einer an Prozessen interessierten konzeptionellen Neuorientierung. Wenig Aufmerksamkeit erhielten jedoch bisher Fragen nach den (inter-)disziplinären Selbstverständnissen und methodologischen Grundlagen der Border Studies und den damit verbundenen Konsequenzen für das Forschungshandeln. Das Themenheft adressiert diese Desiderata und versammelt Artikel, die sich mit ihren (inter-)disziplinären Grundlagen sowie method(olog)ischen und forschungspraktischen Fragen auseinandersetzen. Die Autor*innen geben darüber hinaus fundierte Einblicke in ein disparates Arbeitsfeld, legen forschungspraktische Strategien offen und stellen methodologisch versierte Systematisierungen vor.

Identitäten und Methodologien der Grenzforschung. Aktuelle empirische und konzeptionelle Ansätze

FR Les Border Studies ont gagné en importance au cours des dernières décennies et ont connu une poussée de développement notable. Cela se traduit par une institutionnalisation plus forte, une différenciation des intérêts de recherche et une réorientation conceptuelle axée sur des processus. Cependant, peu d'attention a été accordée jusqu'à présent aux questions concernant l'auto-compréhension (inter)disciplinaire, les fondements méthodologiques des Border Studies et les conséquences qui en découlent pour la recherche. Ce cahier thématique aborde ces desiderata et réunit des articles qui traitent de leurs fondements (inter)disciplinaires ainsi que de questions méthodologiques et pratiques. En outre, les auteurs donnent des renseignements fondés sur un domaine de travail disparate, révèlent des stratégies de recherche et présentent des systématisations sur le plan méthodologique.

Identités et méthodologies des études des frontières. Approches actuelles empiriques et conceptuelles

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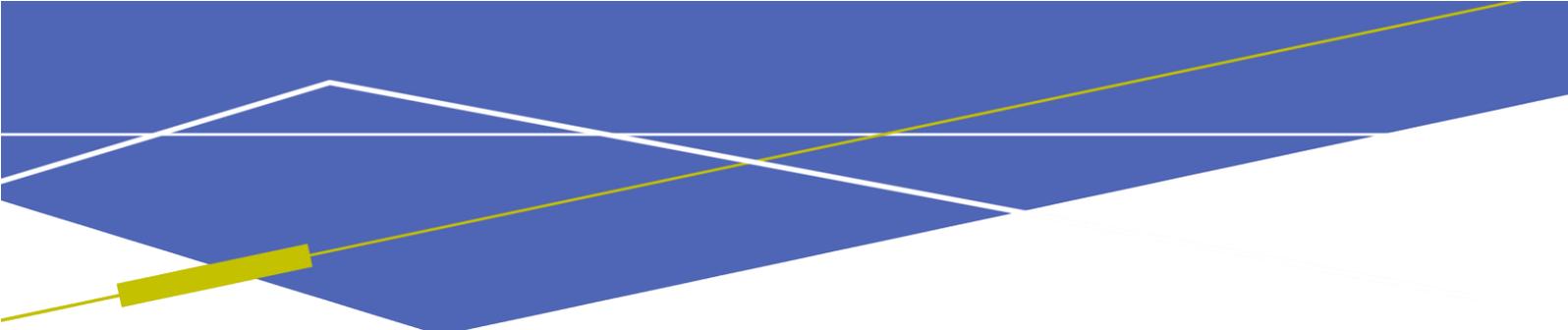
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Foreword

Jussi P. Laine

President of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS)

Borders remain vitally important features of the world we live in. The recent political and societal developments in Europe, but also more globally, have affirmed that borders have not disappeared anywhere under the pressures of globalization and the ever more networked and interconnected processes that fuel it. Rather, borders have come to acquire a central position in the social and political transformation of the world and our daily lives. The various border-transcending dynamics of globalization as well as regional integration have deeply changed the power of borders, modifying the dialectical relation between their fixed institutional nature and constantly changing, fluid processes of bordering within and between societies. However, despite the mounting attention paid to borders and the various practices and processes that have maintained them in recent academic writing, outside academia borders continue to be treated in a rather simplistic manner, particularly so when the resilience of our societies is being put to the test. Be it the question about immigration or the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic for that matter, the closure of borders has been offered as a solution for the perceived chaos. While the actual effectiveness of such a move can be debated, it has certainly reinforced the perceived role of borders as barriers and protective frontlines to undesirable influences and threats from the insecure exterior, the outside.

The response has come in the form of policies that see the reinforcement of territorial, often state borders as the appropriate solution to the various ills affecting the body of national societies. It is ironic that the very complexity of borders has motivated a general tendency to simplify the realities they refer to in order to fit them into convenient social and political imaginaries of crisis, struggle, and security. It therefore appears that the increased production and accumulation of academic knowledge has only been put to practical use occasionally. From this perspective, the theme of this special issue on identities and methodologies of Border Studies could not be

more timely and relevant. Instead of taking the confrontations of the current era as a challenge, this special issue puts them forth as a long-overdue opportunity for a self-examination within the field of Border Studies. The papers of the issue, all stemming from research originally presented at the Association for Borderlands Studies 2nd World Conference in 2018, underline the importance of the inherent plurality of Border Studies by assessing the various theoretical, methodological, and empirical foundations of the field in its current form and it in its own right. The palpable fact that the institutionalization of the field is dependent on the very same factors that also challenge its very existence is what brings the papers of this issue together. In all, they draw our attention to the applicability and operability of the inherently interdisciplinary nature of Border Studies, to the lack of systematic and comparative reflections on the methodological foundations within the field, and to the challenges in grasping the continuously expanding and diversifying definition of the core research object, the border.

While it is exactly this diverse, multi-faceted, and complex array of approaches and methodologies where the strength of Border Studies lies, the question must be given a serious thought whether to border Border Studies or at least to agree upon some sort of a key focus and concepts towards which to gravitate. The by now well-established and largely shared notion that borders are inherently complex constructions is a valuable one, yet undeniably insufficient in itself in advancing Border Studies towards greater relevance and practical reach. Broadening both the analytical and conceptual frames has been instructive and has illuminated the processual and multi-faceted nature of borders. Yet it is this same realization that many studies have concluded instead of making any serious efforts to address the incipient 'so what'-question. The evident complexity of borders cannot be the end point of Border Studies but should instead be considered as a starting point,

as a challenge that needs to be systematically tackled. In order to address the multiple issues and challenges borders pose, it is necessary to develop strategies not only for embracing this complexity or pushing the boundaries of our understanding but also to discover ways of making use of the increased knowledge and making it matter.

There seems to be a rather broad scholarly consensus concerning the need to study borders from an interdisciplinary perspective. Indeed, borders are too complex as constructions to be properly analyzed and understood from the perspective of a single discipline only. However, rather than studying just borders per se – even when acknowledging their proliferated and multi-form nature – the need for interdisciplinarity is best emphasized if we extend our analytical gaze to include also the various processes and phenomena that transcend borders or that are transformed, diverted or even prevented by them. The authors in this special issue rightly point to the need to go beyond interdisciplinarity as a mere trendy buzzword and question what – and I would add also how – specific disciplines and approaches can contribute to an integrated understanding of borders. Surely, Border Studies has undoubtedly developed beyond the limits of traditional academic disciplines over the last decades and many scholars have sought synergies with like-minded scholars from other disciplines to broaden their analytical perspectives. In addition to the benefit of the subsequent more holistic approach to the study of borders, these interactions have also helped many academics to move away from the margins of their own discipline to the core of the progressive field of Border Studies. That said, it must be recognized that this movement in favor of interdisciplinarity is far from being fully accomplished and many obstacles and resistances remain. While the exchange of ideas, the borrowing of concepts and theories, and the engagement in a wide-ranging dialogue with other social sciences or the humanities have led to positive outcomes, there is an evident lack of attempts to treat interdisciplinarity more systematically and efforts to go beyond the low hanging fruit. The often-used pick-and-choose approach to interdisciplinarity has led to somewhat shallow and superficial regurgitation of concepts and theories from other disciplines without really understanding how they have evolved and been utilized, or without properly addressing at times heated debates about their applicability within their home discipline.

The inherently permeable and malleable nature of Border Studies has certainly allowed the field to expand and become more receptive to new concepts and theories. While indeed the very strength

of the field lies in its malleability, the authors of this special issue make an important contribution to the debate by reminding us also about the flip-side of witnessed development with regards to the identity and acknowledgement of the field. That is, what is Border Studies? While bordering border studies would be a counterproductive endeavor, it should not discourage us from thinking what holds these studies of borders together and make them Border Studies. A more clearly definable and agreed upon identity might be advantageous in consolidating the status and reputation of the field and fostering engagements with key stakeholders and audiences not only outside the field but also outside academia altogether. Such an identity might also strengthen the border scholars' own commitment to their cause in the current academic climate, where – despite the common rhetoric – many opportunities remain crammed in disciplinary silos. After all, it is only the enduring and thorough commitment to their field that allows scholars to develop a research practice that is consistent with the thoroughness of methodological sophistication and complex theorization that scholarship entails. While the various overlaps with various cognate fields have proven to be stimulating and fruitful, at the same time a certain lack of focus has prevented critical discussion, confrontation, and the questioning of the relevance and added-value of new ideas, explanations or understandings. The new findings and other advancements, no matter how novel and insightful, are not always built on anything even partially agreed on, whereby the accumulation and deepening of knowledge has become overshadowed by the rapid horizontal expansion of the field. Consequently, opening Border Studies to a great variety of fields and perspectives and its eminently interdisciplinary nature thus appears to be both an asset and a limiting factor for its future development. This becomes evident also in the collection of papers that follow. They illuminate this conundrum by bringing together conceptual and empirical accounts that assess the theoretical, methodological, and empirical foundations of Border Studies as a field of its own right. While this is certainly no easy feat, it is a feat that must be taken on.

ADDRESS

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

JUSSI P. LAINE (Dr.) is an associate professor of multidisciplinary Border Studies at the Karelian Institute of the University of Eastern Finland, holding also the title of Docent of Human Geography at the University of Oulu, Finland. He is the President of the Association for Borderlands Studies and serves also on the Steering Committee of the International Geographical Union's Commission on Political Geography. By background Dr. Laine is a human geographer, yet in his approach to borders he combines influences from international relations and geopolitics, political sociology, history, anthropology, and psychology. Within Border Studies he seeks to explore the multiscalar production of borders and to bring a critical perspective to bear on the relationship between state, territory, citizenship, and identity construction. Most recently, Dr. Laine has published works on border mobility, migration reception, the ethics of borders, and ontological (in)security.

Border Studies: A Long-Overdue Self-Examination

Christian Wille, Dominik Gerst, Hannes Krämer

While borders gained new meaning in the discussion about a “borderless world” and cross-border European integration processes in the 1990s, the recent rebordering processes, in particular, have now made borders again more relevant, both at a political and a social level. These processes include the terrorism of the 2000s with its security narratives and the migration movements during the 2010s, which together led to a forced digitization of the border regimes, a (temporary) reintroduction of border controls at internal borders and the sealing off of external borders in the sense of a “fortress Europe.” In addition, the emerging euroscepticism and renationalization processes that culminated in Brexit and most recently put the Schengen area to the test during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wille and Weber, 2020) must also be brought to the fore.

These events have not only continually expanded and challenged the Border Studies research programs, but have also served as an impulse for structural and conceptual development. Thanks to its growing importance, the multidisciplinary field of work is undergoing an increase in institutionalization, which has also manifested itself in Europe since the 2000s in the establishment of research institutions, specialist networks, courses of study, and teaching modules as well as in its establishment within scientific associations. Examples of this include the Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION (since 2013) at the European University Frankfurt (Oder), the UniGR Center for Border Studies (since 2014) with its partners in Germany, France, Belgium, and Luxembourg, the “Cultural Border Studies” section (since 2016) of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft KWG e.V., or the tri-national Master in Border Studies (since 2017) at the Universities of Luxembourg, Lorraine, Saarland, and Kaiserslautern.

In addition, Border Studies are characterized, on the one hand, by progressive differentiation,

which refers to the disciplines involved and their respective area of research interest: “As a research field, border studies now encompass a wide range of disciplines besides social geography: political science, sociology, anthropology, history, international law as well as humanities – notably art, media studies and philosophy.” (Scott, 2017, p.6f.) At the same time, tendencies towards a progressive integration of disciplinary approaches and interests can be seen. In order to systematize the internal differentiation and the associated plural identity of Border Studies, we propose differentiating between three central veins, which incorporate different disciplinary perspectives, influence each other, and partially overlap in their shared interest in border areas and identities or security and mobility practices. These include *Geopolitical Border Studies*, which developed primarily in the wake of the globalization debate in the 1990s and which analyze the political-territorial dimension of borders (e.g. Amilhat Szary and Giraut, 2015; Konrad, 2015; Newman, 2007; Paasi, 1999; Wastl-Walter, 2011).

Also worth mentioning are *Cultural Border Studies*, which, despite their roots in cultural studies and in Kulturwissenschaften, have only become increasingly visible in Europe in the last decade. Scott (2017, p.7) stated in 2017: “In the contemporary practice of border studies, literature and art tell us as much about borders, borderlands and border crossings as do ethnographic or historical investigations.” In doing so, he addresses the symbolic-social dimension of borders through approaches of both popular culture and high culture (e.g. *border aesthetics*, *border poetics*, *border arts*; e.g. Amilhat-Szary, 2012; Anzaldúa, 1987; Fellner, 2020; Sadowski-Smith, 2008; Schimanski, 2017; Schimanski and Wolfe, 2017; Sheren, 2015) as well as everyday cultural approaches (e.g. *border experiences*; e.g. Auzanneau and Greco, 2018; Boesen and Schnuer, 2017; Brambilla, 2015a; Martínez, 1994; Wilson and Donnan, 2012; Wille et

al., 2016; Wille and Nienaber, 2020). Finally, there are *Critical Border Studies*, which are informed by post-colonialism and have been developing a special sensitivity to the power and hegemonic relationships of borders since at least the 2010s (e.g. Brambilla and Jones, 2020; Hess and Kasperek, 2010; Jones, 2019; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009, 2012; Rumford, 2012; Salter, 2012). They prefer participatory methods and are guided by an activist spirit that also connects them to Cultural Border Studies.

Starting in the 2000s, a reorientation in the conceptual and empirical examination of borders can be observed in the veins outlined above. Border researchers overcame the idea of fixed and set borders in favor of the view that borders are both products and producers of social processes: "This more process-based understanding of bordering shifts the focus from existential research questions (i.e., borders are this or that; borders are things that function like this or that) to studies of border's processes of emergence or becoming." (Kaiser, 2012, p.522). This approach is therefore not aimed at the border as an object that is ontological, linear and localized on the edge, but at the (spatially, temporally and socially floating) processes of (de)stabilizing borders – and thus at their social production and processing methods, such as those that take place in and through social practices, materialities and discourses: "borders are not only to be found in border areas but are "located " in broader social practices and discourses in societies." (Paasi, 2009, p.230). With the bordering approach, this processual shift has established itself as a "major border studies paradigm" (Scott, 2017, p.8) and locates borders in the context of their societal practice. In Border Studies, the bordering approach is experiencing different heuristic interpretations, empirical applications, and further conceptual developments (in detail Gerst et al., forthcoming). The latter include, for example, expanded conceptions of bordering processes, which, for example, point to the multiplicity of borders and the aspects that are effective in them, and require multiple approaches to border (de)stabilizations; or texture-oriented considerations that understand border (de)stabilizations as effects of the complex interplay of activities, discourses, objects, bodies, and knowledge (Andersen et al., 2012; Brambilla, 2015b; Gerst et al., 2018; Haselsberger, 2014; Rumford, 2012; Weier et al., 2018; Wille, forthcoming).

Despite the developments in Border Studies, which are reflected in the increased institutionalization, delineated differentiation, and conceptual reorientation of the multidisciplinary field of work, the question remains unanswered of how certain disciplines can contribute to an integrated understanding of borders, how knowledge can be pro-

ductively linked together and how Border Studies are related to other scientific areas (for a review see: Gerst et al., forthcoming). In addition, there is a significant lack of systematic and comparative considerations regarding the methodological foundations of Border Studies and the associated consequences for border research (also Gerst and Krämer, 2019). The number of case studies on borders and border regions is indeed growing steadily and theoretical and conceptual considerations are being further advanced and developed. However, methodological and practical research aspects and their interrelationships remain insufficiently examined: Which epistemological perspectives are used in Border Studies? How is the choice of research methods justified? To what extent is the scope of empirical work assessed by reflecting on data types and their explanatory power? How are considerations about the research process and the role of researchers included? Which assumptions about the use of theories and their heuristic potential guide studies? Etc.

This thematic issue addresses some of the desiderata mentioned and aims to contribute a long-overdue self-examination of Border Studies. Thus, various identities and methodologies of Border Studies are presented in detail in the articles based on recent empirical and conceptual approaches. Dominik Gerst and Hannes Krämer begin by reconstructing various methodological perspectives and proposing a specific heuristic consisting of four border gazes. The aim of this distinction is "[...] to provide an overview of the diversity of border-analytic positions and their methodological foundation, and, in doing so, to address a gap in the research field's self-analysis." (Gerst and Krämer in this issue). The authors thus present a methodological attempt at organization that offers suitable criteria for bringing together geographically distant, but research-practical and epistemologically close research projects. In the following article, Ulla Connor ties in with the "processual turn" in Border Studies and takes a critical look at the prominent term 'practice' and states: "[...] the meaning of the term 'practice' in Border Studies [...] remains implicit in most of the studies. [...] As a research category, the term 'practice' or 'bordering practice' should be clearly distinguished from everyday meanings and explicitly reveal its related assumptions to be subject of critical discussion in the research community." (Connor in this issue). The author proposes connecting the concept "practice" with sociological practice theories and thus to theoretically and conceptually strengthen the process-oriented research perspective in Border Studies. In this context, she also advocates ethnographic methods, which are the subject of the following

articles.

Annett Bochmann's contribution advocates an archaeological ethnography in Border Studies, which attempts to decipher the complexities of state borders: "State borders are not simply the result of national regulations and (global) discourses and orders; instead, borders are the result of the usage and application of these discourses in public life as well as the local accomplishments of people's practices." (Bochmann in this issue). The author's methodological proposal to investigate this nexus combines ethnomethodologically informed ethnographies with an archaeological-genealogical discourse analysis inspired by Foucault. Sarah Kleinmann and Arnika Peselmann also work with an ethnographic approach in their case study, in which they are interested in the (re)production processes of cultural contact zones. In their study of the effective cross-border cooperation practices, discursive, physical, and material aspects as well as power relationships are taken into account and developed through participatory observations: "We [...] propose participant observation as a tool to examine the situational (re)productions of contact zones by discursive and bodily practices as well as material arrangements." (Kleinmann and Peselmann in this issue). Ulrike Kaden also pursues a praxeological perspective in a broad sense when she turns to cross-border cooperation practices in her article and focuses primarily on the aspect of knowledge. For this, she proposes the documentary method with which implicit knowledge is to be discovered: "Instead of following the cooperation partners' interpretation of ideas and everyday routines [...], attention is paid to how their practice is accomplished [...]. This includes, for example, examining the ways in which cooperation partners illustrate their everyday routines, how they make specific arguments, and how their responses draw on particular narratives, concepts, and references." (Kaden in this issue) Using this approach, the author shows how cooperation practices are linked to varied and sometimes contradictory ideas of local cross-border relations.

In their article, Simon Sperling, David Niebauer and Laura Holderied address border politics and the question of how these can be grasped and examined. They locate border politics at the intersection of various topics and approaches in critical border and migration research and present a differentiation that "[...] aims at systemizing existing positions and developing an analytical heuristic for studying border politics as border struggles." (Sperling et al. in this issue). The authors differentiate between three analytical dimensions that are intended to connect different research approaches: "We hope to inspire the design of in-

dividual research projects and to build connections within the multi- and interdisciplinary field of Border Studies" (ibid.). The author of the subsequent article also creates connections between various disciplinary approaches and develops an architectural approach for this. Chiara Dorbolò uses "the power of architecture as a critical tool to challenge the political state of affairs" (Dorbolò in this issue) and uses various fictional interventions to show how architecture can destabilize the dominant narratives on borders and migration. In her article, Birte Wassenberg examines the role of Border Studies in contemporary history and shows that borders as objects of investigation are largely related to area studies and European integration history. The author also asks what contribution historians can make to Border Studies and suggests opening contemporary history to multi-scalar and integrative research designs: "From a methodological point of view, contemporary historians could [...] adopt a Multi-Orientated Scale Approach to European Integration and cross-border cooperation and European Integration (MOSAIC), which reconstructs the development of multiple local cooperation histories in order to reinterpret them in the general framework of the history of European integration, like a mosaic made up from many individual pieces." (Wassenberg in this issue). Such an approach should make it possible to write a new decentered history of European integration as a historical contribution to Border Studies.

This compilation of articles aims to unite promising conceptual and empirical perspectives of research on borders, bring them into conversation with one another and provide impulses for a broader debate about (inter)disciplinary self-perceptions and methodological orientations in Border Studies. The articles, which are largely based on presentations at the second World Conference of the Association for Borderlands Studies in Vienna and Budapest in 2018, are intended to contribute a long-overdue self-examination of Border Studies. The editors of this thematic issue would like to thank the authors for their contributions. Many thanks also to Jussi Laine from the University of Eastern Finland, who framed the thematic issue and its concerns within the larger field of Border Studies from the perspective of the Association for Borderlands Studies. Special thanks go to Rebekka Kanesu from the University of Trier, who carefully checked the manuscript and prepared it for open access. To Lingotransfair GbR we would like to extend our thanks for the linguistic support of the texts and their consistently professional collaboration. We would also like to thank the members of the section "Cultural Border Studies" (Kulturwissenschaftliche Gesellschaft KWG e.V.) for the stimulating professional

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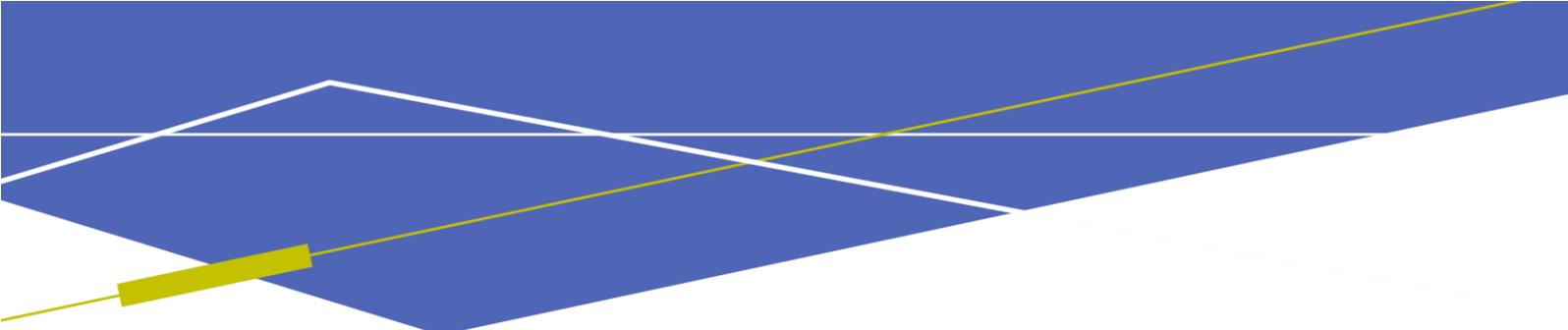
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The Multiplication of Border Methodologyⁱ

Dominik Gerst, Hannes Krämer

The present contribution distinguishes four methodological perspectives within the interdisciplinary field of border studies: seeing at the border, seeing across the border, seeing into the border, seeing like a border. The central features of these perspectives are worked out and compared with each other based on selected empirical studies. The aim of the paper is to offer an alternative account of the diversified field of border studies, which follows neither a holistic grand theory of borders nor a regional scientific enclosure.

Border methodology, methods, border studies, complexity

Sur la diversification de la méthodologie de la frontière

La présente contribution distingue quatre perspectives méthodologiques au sein du domaine interdisciplinaire de l'étude des frontières : regarder la frontière, regarder au-delà de la frontière, regarder dans la frontière, regarder comme une frontière. Les caractéristiques importantes de ces perspectives seront développées ainsi que présentées et comparées sur la base de diverses études empiriques. L'objectif de cette contribution est ainsi de proposer une systématisation alternative dans le domaine diversifié de l'étude des frontières, qui ne suit ni une théorie principale holistique de la frontière ni une limitation aux sciences régionales.

Méthodologie de la frontière, méthode, étude des frontières, complexité

Über die Diversifizierung der Grenzmethodologie

Der vorliegende Beitrag unterscheidet vier methodologische Perspektiven innerhalb des interdisziplinären Felds der Grenzforschung: Auf die Grenze sehen, über die Grenze sehen, in die Grenze sehen, wie eine Grenze sehen. Es werden die zentralen Merkmale dieser Perspektiven herausgearbeitet und anhand von verschiedenen empirischen Studien vorgestellt sowie miteinander verglichen. Das Ziel des Beitrags ist es damit auch einen alternativen Ordnungsversuch des diversifizierten Felds der Grenzforschung anzubieten, der weder einer holistischen Großtheorie von Grenze noch einer regionalwissenschaftlichen Einhegung folgt.

Methodologie der Grenze, Methode, Border Studies, Komplexität

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Introduction

There is an increasing interdisciplinary interest in the topic of borders and borderlands, and as such the field of border studies has been growing quite fast in the last years. Despite more case studies on different borders across the world and the increasing complexity of theoretical and conceptual thoughts on borders and bordering, there is a significant lack of systematic reflections on the methodological foundations and consequences of border research. In recent years, however, there has been a slowly growing interest in methodological questions (e.g. O'Leary et al., 2013; Brambilla, 2015; Cooper, 2015; Nail, 2016). In this context, we systematically analyze the methodology of border research.

Methodology is fundamentally concerned with questions about basic research attitudes and positions of observation, and is therefore more than a purely technical elaboration of research processes. Methodology thus comprises "the tasks, strategies, and criteria governing scientific inquiry, including all facets of the research enterprise" (Gerring, 2012, p. 6). The term links questions about ontological, epistemological, and methodological dimension of borders. As a "hinge [Scharnier]" (Strübing and Schnettler, 2004, p. 9) between these aspects, it bundles general reflections on *doing border research* and provides a foundation for basic procedural questions. Methodology provides information on the conditions of production and the validity of scientific research results on the topic of borders. Thus, the methodology of border research is not only influenced by the scientific or epistemological conceptualizations of border, but also by the concrete research processes. In combining theory and empiricism, border methodology asks about the conditions of the possibilities of scientific research on borders. Interdisciplinary border research is a multiparadigmatic and multiperspectival research field (Wilson and Donnan, 2012), which benefits from various disciplines with their respective method(olog)ical fashions, epistemological viewpoints, and ontological determinations of what *border* can be; this includes, for example, political science as well as regional studies, sociology as well as historical studies, ethnology as well as geography (see the contributions in this issue). Taking this diversity seriously, in this article we suggest relating implicit and explicit methodological assumptions and to reconstruct specific perspectives to come to terms with a heuristic distinction of *border gazes*. We seek to examine from which methodological perspective borders are analyzed. Based on a review of shared literature in the field of border studies and related fields of re-

search, we identify four paradigmatic methodological perspectives, which we will discuss in more detail below. The aim of the following systematization is to provide an overview of the diversity of border-analytic positions and their methodological foundation, and, in doing so, to address a gap in the research field's self-analysis.

Four methodological *border gazes*

Within the interdisciplinary field of border research, four methodological perspectives can be identified: *seeing at the border*, *across the border*, *into the border* and *like a border*. Accordingly, researchers approach the phenomenon from a bird's eye view, which means that they look at the border and understand the border as a distinct line separating territorial units. In contrast, *seeing across the border* means to focus on cross-border relations and processes. When *seeing into the border*, one is interested in the multidimensional extension of the border itself. Borders are thus conceived of as in-between phenomena; for example, by using concepts such as *border region*, *border space*, *borderland* or *frontier*. Finally, studies regarding processes of separation and connection such as the border should be mentioned. The primary concern here is to focus on the border itself, which raises awareness for the complex constellation of borders.

To be clear, these *border gazes* represent different analytical approaches, which could be underlined with empirical detail. Nevertheless, they offer a direction covering the diversity of methodological positions.

Seeing at the border

A widely-spread methodological positioning within border studies emphasizes *seeing at the border* from a bird's eye view. In this sense, the border is understood as a more or less clear demarcation, limitation or caesura, often conceptualized as a line: "The line has been the dominant thinking tool of border studies" (Salter, 2012, p. 736). Such an understanding focuses on the differentiating power of national borders by emphasizing what separates rather than what unites or what lies in-between. Accordingly, borders are seen as separating an inside from an outside; for instance, they separate a political entity, a nation, or a population from another (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). The modern nation-state with its conception of binding sovereignty and territory serves

here as a principle of order: "Ultimately the significance of borders derives from the importance of territoriality as an organizing principle of political and social life" (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999, p. 594).

At least two different forms of the relationship between border and state (territory) are addressed here. On the one hand, against the background of a globalized world organized by nation states, the separation of individual territorial units and their significance for geopolitical orders is relevant (Schofield, 1994). This becomes particularly clear in the discussion of border policies of larger systems of order such as the European Union, NATO, and ASEAN. By focusing on both sides of the border, political as well as cultural and migrant dynamics are considered. From this perspective, the border is usually a caesura which distinguishes systems of knowledge and order as well as regulates access. Borders are then conceived as obstacles to mobility, as a state mechanism of selection and sometimes exclusion for people, goods, and ideas, as they regulate the crossing of borders as "sorting machines [Sortiermaschinen]" (Mau, 2010).

On the other hand, this geopolitical perspective is complemented by the concept of the border as a demarcation from an often-unspecified outside. From this perspective, borders are rather conceived as mechanisms of inclusion that mark the order of a (common) inside. Accordingly, border demarcations often appear as edges that signify the end of respective state territories, their sovereignty, and their identity. From this perspective, cross-border connections such as trade agreements or forms of security policy cooperation are conceived as a deviation and a transgression of the separating border, and are discussed in this special role, for example, as border (de)stabilizing mechanisms (Longo, 2018). This can sometimes also refer to super- or supranational units, as research on the European Union (EU) as an *area of security, freedom and justice* shows. In marking a European identity, "a clear boundary for Europe as a political community" (Deger and Hettlage, 2007, p. 12, own translation) should be defined. From this perspective, borders mark the end of a national territory or a union of states. They are usually also ascribed the status of a periphery (Müller, 2014). In this way, the focus is not on their border-specificity, but on their significance as the demarcation of an order.

Such a *border gaze* is primarily interested in borders as spatial phenomena. The idea of a geopolitical conception of borders is attributed in its historical foundation to the biologist and geographer Friedrich Ratzel. He is considered the founder of anthropogeography and a pioneer of political geography. Ratzel assumes an organic relationship

between state and border, where the border is understood as a kind of skin, as a "peripheral organ" (Ratzel, 1974, p. 434, own translation), which delimits a dominion, but is permeable enough to allow relations to the outside world. Ratzel examines the limiting capacities of spatial conditions such as rivers, mountain ranges, and lakes, which unfold their effect as a *natural border*, as an interplay of political order and spatial physical condition.

Even if there are only few studies today that rely on such an essentialist view of borders in its purest form (Eigmüller, 2016, p. 61), and even if the talk of *natural borders* in Border Studies has been declined in favor of processual, constructivist, anti-essentialist concepts of borders (Newman, 2001), Ratzel's border methodology of seeing at borders from the outside is still widespread. Above all, such a perspective is found in studies on topics such as geopolitical orders, security, or collective identities. In methodological terms, seeing at the border positions an exploratory point of observation at a critical distance from events. It emphasizes the power of demarcation of border-related social relations and not so much the interrelations. These studies are characterized by disciplinary approaches to the phenomenon of the border. Although these are supported by a variety of research methods, they are mainly based on more macrological methods.

One criticism levelled at such a position is that it is more interested in statics and less in dynamics and the processuality of borders (cf. Salter, 2012). This criticism is certainly justified, but studies from this methodological position do – at least on a diachronic, rather than a synchronic, level – take a close look at the change of boundaries. More recent approaches within Border Studies (cf. the following chapters) criticize this methodological position for its fixation on territorial border dimensions and essentialist spatial concepts in the sense of a container approach ("territorial trap", Agnew, 1994), or nation-state actors ("methodological nationalism", Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002).

Seeing across the border

In seeing across the border, cross-border relations and processes come into view. Here, the border does not appear as a barrier, but rather as a permeable structure that facilitates border crossings. This is expressed, for example, in descriptions of the border as a "semi-permeable membrane" (Heintel et al., 2018, p. 5, own translation). Accordingly, the connecting and not so much the separating property of borders is emphasized. The difference between this method

and the perspective of seeing at the border can be noted in the underlying understanding of borders: instead of a border *of* nation states, a border *between* nation states is assumed here.

From this perspective, mobilities in various forms as well as forms of cooperation gain increased attention and are analyzed as cross-border movements and relations. On the basis of these movements and more or less stable relations across the border, conditions, direction, and purpose for crossing can be analyzed. A separate research field of Cross Border Studies has recently been developed, one interested in "issues of cross-border mobility, global institutional restructuring, complex cultural transformations and cross-border histories" (Amelina et al., 2012, p. 1). Migration-oriented transnational studies (Nieswand, 2018) and the field of cross-border cooperation (Medeiros, 2018) represent well-known paradigms; of interest are also translocal border crossings such as the export of ideas (Czarniawska and Sevón, 2009) and tourism (Wachowiak, 2006), and local cross-border (everyday) practices such as border commuting (Wille, 2012). In general, research from this perspective is driven by the diagnosis of a constantly advancing globalized and networked world.

This perspective on border transgressions is often justified by a criticism of a *methodological nationalism*, which describes the analytical essentialization of the nation-state as a quasi-natural unit, bound to a clear territorial division of the world along nation-state societies (cf. Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002). Additionally, Thomas Faist (2012) mentions two more methodological challenges of transnational studies: On the one hand, he argues for a consideration of the plurality of social membership categories and against an essentialization of the national (or, in the context of migration studies, the ethnic-national) as the dominant social category. On the other hand, he understands the positionality of researchers, since both scientific concepts and research funding are subject to transnational asymmetries (ibid., p. 52f). Consequently, seeing across the border is characterized by the attempt to overcome a "container methodology" (Amelina et al., 2012, p. 4), which no longer starts from clearly delimitable territorial units. Boris Nieswand speaks of a "methodological transnationalism" and states:

"Methodological transnationalism should not be about denying the relevance of nation states, but only about contextualizing their significance in a larger frame of reference" (Nieswand, 2005, p. 48, own translation).

Analytical questions that become important when seeing across the border are those relating to the

scale of cross-border activities as well as their processuality. The view across the border raises awareness for a multitude of phenomena with levels of different scales (Bürkner, 2019). Concepts such as the distinction between small- and large-scale border traffic, or, the concept of "multi-level cross-border governance" (Gualini, 2003) point in this direction. Closely linked to the scalar location of cross-border processes and relations is the general processuality of such border crossings. For example, Martin van der Velde and Ton van Naerssen (2011) outline a border research interested in (im)mobilities, using the example of migration movements into and within the EU. They claim that, in addition to people's decisions to move and the nature of the borders to be overcome, the focus should be above all on cross-border trajectories that bridge the distances between "place of origin" and "place of destination" (ibid., p. 221). The figure of the "border crosser [Grenzgänger*in]" (van Houtum and Eker, 2015, pp. 42ff; Schulze Wessel, 2017) is also relevant to the across-the-border methodology. Smugglers serve as an interesting empirical example here, as their border-crossing practices raise questions of (il-)legality, border-crossing infrastructures and bridging economic asymmetries at borders (Bruns and Miggelbrink, 2012).

The majority of the studies addressed here are characterized by the fact that, when seeing across the border, the border itself is lost sight of. Paradigmatic for this is the dictum of a "borderless world" that became popular in the 1990s (cf. Ohmae, 1990). A small part of the studies addressed here, however, point out that everyday transmigratory practices may transcend the border, but may make it tangible (Balogh, 2013). Transgression can be accompanied by experiencing differences in regulations; for example, in terms of language and currency use, or in the adaptation of behavior to divergent national road traffic regulations. The interpretation of these and other local phenomena refers to the concept of "transnational social spaces" (Pries, 1996), just as approaches in the field of cross-border cooperation emphasize that cross-border cooperation and forms of cross-border governance create "cross-border regions" (Perkmann, 2003) in the sense of political-territorial and administrative units.

Seeing *into* the border

In the perspective of seeing into the border, the border itself is under scrutiny again, however, not as a clear demarcation, but as a multi-dimensionally extended phenomenon: as a "border area" or "border region" (Stokłosa and Besier, 2014), a

"contact zone" (Kleinmann et al., 2020) or a "frontier" (Turner, 2015). These concepts raise the awareness for in-between phenomena which can be interpreted as representing the border or as being produced by it. This is one of the core subject areas within Border Studies, as classic, spatially-oriented border research is largely understood as borderland studies (Opiłowska et al., 2017).

In particular, cultural and social science approaches point out that border areas may be characterized not only by their degree of territorial, political, and administrative autonomy, but also by the formation of specific borderland identities. Research then distinguishes between forms of borderland integration on the basis of cross-border interactions of so-called "borderlanders" (Martinez, 1994). In her book "Borderlands/La Frontera" (Anzaldúa, 1987), which has become well-known beyond border research, Gloria Anzaldúa shows the extent to which the border inscribes itself in its subjects and thus produces hybrid identities. Besides that, temporal aspects are also taken into account in the perspective of seeing into the border; for example, in the description of border regions as historical memory spaces (Stokłosa, 2019). In a widely-known paper, Baud and van Schendel (1997) offer an account of five historical stages of a border region as they distinguish between an infant, adolescent, adult, declining, and defunct state of border regions. Identifying the "life cycle" of a borderland may show "how borderlands change over time" (Baud and van Schendel, 1997, p. 225).

One fundamental research interest, therefore, is whether border regions can be described primarily by their dichotomous structure in the sense of a neighborhood relationship (cf. Newman and Paasi, 1998) or whether they represent "third spaces" (Bhabha, 1994, which are defined primarily by features that characterize the space in-between as an order in its own right. The multidimensional reality that unfolds in this field of tension, which becomes apparent when seeing into the border, is shaped by the clash of subjective border experiences and cross-border processes including regionalization and Europeanization (Banse, 2013). In line with the field of tension between border perceptions and border structures, two methodological strategies can be identified: On the one hand, research tries to trace the subjective meaning-making of the border region by means of narrative and discourse analysis (e.g. Meinhof and Gałasiński, 2005; Doevenspeck, 2011). On the other hand, historiographical or quantitative surveys aim to describe the degree of integration of the border region or the border region as a historically grown reality in its own right (e.g. Roose, 2010). Only a few studies, however, build a bridge between these two approaches:

Banse's (2013) "thin description" approach, Sidaway's (2007) "semiotic border analysis," and the strategy of "situational interdisciplinarity" (Wille et al., 2016) aim at a holistic description of borderland reality in different ways.

Seeing across the border requires a methodological attitude that is sensitive to both the persistence of differences within the border region, and establishing characteristics of an in-betweenness. This can be seen, for example, in special forms of interviewing, in which photographs are used as narrative incentives to give space to the idiosyncratic narratives and categorizations of the borderlanders (cf. Meinhof and Gałasiński, 2005). In addition, many borderland studies follow a comparative design. In this way, not only are particularisms of specific border realities captured, but also certain borderland motives (e.g. security, communal cooperation, etc.) which are connected to larger processes such as Europeanization or globalization. Thus, the question of where the borders of border regions lie, i.e. where specific borderland phenomena lose their impact or cease to exist, also comes into focus. It is not only for this reason that classic border region research has repeatedly made so-called "twin cities" its subject (Langenohl, 2015; Joenniemi and Jańczak, 2017). This is where clear distinctions between border and non-border regions are most likely to be made insofar as these borders coincide with the borders of urbanity.

Seeing *like* a border

Finally, we identify a fourth methodological gaze, which we describe as seeing like a border. A prominent reference here is Rumford's (2014) expression of "seeing like a border," which describes a methodological attitude that is directed against a state-centered "seeing like a state". Accordingly, the ability to interpret (and thus to look at) a territorial border and its regulatory functions no longer lies with the state and its actors. Rather, modern borders require a multi-perspective approach that favors the diversification of the border and its practical implementation as well as border-related meaning-making by a multitude of actors. For

"there is no longer a societal vantage point or privileged political position from which we can reliably know where all borders are to be found, what forms they take, what purpose they serve and who is involved in maintaining them." (Rumford, 2014, p. 16f.)

Such a methodological perspective of seeing like a border is also expressed in Mezzadra's and Neilson's (2013) influential book, *Border as*

Method, in which the authors present border not only as an object of research, but as an "epistemological viewpoint" (ibid., p. 13). Finally, this gaze is shaped in the context of critical and cultural border studies, where there is an "epistemology of/from the borders" (Brambilla, 2015, p. 26), performing a shift from "thinking about borders" to "thinking from the borders" (Mignolo and Tlostanova, 2006, p. 214). Here, the border becomes both access point and starting point for a "theorizing *in* the borders" (ibid., p. 219, emphasis in the original).

Seeing *like* a border does not mean to take the border as a political, territorial, and social fact, but to problematize it with all its conditions, manifestations, and effects. With Parker and Vaughan-Williams we can translate this into a maxim of research practice: "to problematize the border not as taken-for-granted entity, but precisely as a site of investigation" (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 728). This calls for a decentering of the border that fundamentally creates awareness for the spatio-temporal variability of the border (Brambilla, 2015) and suggests approaches that provide a situational understanding of local and everyday border work (Jones and Johnson, 2016).

Various approaches indicate that the border must be understood as a complex interaction of differing elements. "[B]orders are increasingly 'messy'" is how Rumford (2014, p. 16) sums up this idea. Against this background, borders are described as multidimensional "boundary sets" (Hasselsberger, 2014), as heterogeneous "border-scapes" (Brambilla, 2015), as "assemblages" (Sohn, 2016), as "border regimes" (Hess and Kasparek, 2010; Hess, 2018), as "bordertextures" (Weier et al., 2018) or as "social institutions" (Cooper and Perkins, 2012). Seeing *like* a border means to take an analytical border-internal view, i.e. to decipher the order of the border itself (and not primarily the ordering effects and functions of the border). For this purpose, it is necessary to uncover the logic of connection and relation that make borders a conglomerate of practices, discourses, narratives, objects, affects, and knowledges (Gerst et al., 2018; Wille, forthcoming).

At the same time, seeing *like* the border also means to follow an external view. Building on the critique of a "territorialist epistemology" (Lapid, 2001), which reduces borders to their spatial dimension, and on a critique of a view that conceives borders as producing supposedly clear binary distinctions (we/them, here/there, in/out), the idea of the border as a *line in the sand* is rejected (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012). Rather, awareness is raised to the fact that the border no longer only marks the edge of territories or a phenomenon in-between, but that it can become

"littered across society" (Rumford, 2014, p. 16) in many places, such as airports, shopping malls, employment agencies, refugee camps, etc.

In the sense of a processual understanding of borders, the focus is on a variety of mobilities, movements, and flows. The question here is not whether these movements are prevented or encouraged by the border – as is the case in the perspective of seeing across the border – but to what extent the border is constituted by them. If movement and not stasis is the basic mode of the social, the crucial question arises whether borders themselves are set in motion or are moved by people, and thus how they generate processes of circulation (Nail, 2016). This can also be described as a conflicting dynamic; for example, when migration movements are not simply rejected at the border, but when the modern border regime reasserts itself with constant reciprocal references to migratory practices, and at the same time migratory practices continuously adapt to these changes (Hess, 2018).

In addition to an awareness for relational complexities, spatio-temporal variations, and movement-induced border configurations, power-analytical questions become visible. When seeing *like* a border, fixed (state) power constellations can no longer be taken for granted. Instead, power becomes a necessary part of border analysis in its ramified and micro-physical modes. Along with processes of technologization and spatial dislocation, nation-state borders appear as part of a security dispositif at the core of which governmental state control regulates and conditions the formation of political subjectivities (Pötzsch, 2015). Amilhat Szary and Giraut, therefore, speak of "mobile borders" (Amilhat Szary and Giraut, 2015, p. 13) in order to grasp the spatial instability and at the same time the technologized power apparatus of the border. In the context of critical analyses of borders and migration regimes, more recent approaches emphasize the necessity of countering the reification of the border as a state power apparatus with a more complex understanding of the relationship between borders and power, taking into account migrants' power to act (Hess, 2018).

In its pluritopical and plurivocal orientation, the methodological perspective of seeing *like* a border draws attention to contradictions, paradoxes, non-simultaneity, and incongruities of the border. It becomes clear that borders can be materially dismantled but symbolically continue to exist as "phantom borders" (von Hirschhausen et al., 2015). These borders could be interpreted by some as a protective wall and by others as an insurmountable fortress. Processes of debordering are always accompanied by processes of rebordering; old borders do not meet new borders with-

out contradiction. Such a methodological position does not determine the focus of observation in advance, but tries to be open to possible contradictions and conflicts. One possible way of implementing a "border-analytical indifference" (Gerst and Krämer, 2017, p. 3) is to follow the relevancies of borders starting from the border itself and thereby focusing on the relationship between the drawing of borders and the formation of order (see also Gerst and Krämer, 2020). In light of an understanding of complex and disperse borders, the necessity of omitting ontologically fixing enclosures of the border and instead taking them seriously both in their "ontological multidimensionality" (Brambilla, 2015, p. 26) and their "constant state of becoming" (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2012, p. 728) becomes apparent. According to Sohn, border analysis from this perspective does not aim to define the border, but to understand it "in relative and provisional terms" (Sohn, 2016, p. 187).

Conclusion

Our contribution aimed to identify the diverse methodological orientations in the field of border studies and to question their differences and similarities. We have identified four different methodological *border gazes* (*at, across, into, like*) and outlined their foundations and scopes. Depending on the methodological viewpoint, different aspects of borders come into view and are associated with different conditions and effects. As de-

scribed at the beginning, this undertaking can also be read as an alternative attempt to organize the diversified field of border research. This paper does not represent either the desire for a holistic grand theory of borders nor offer regional locations that serve as the organizational criterion, but focus on the question of how border research is actually conducted. Methodological similarities thus bring together geographically distant but methodologically and epistemologically close projects, and provide a common base for the discussion of individual research projects. At the same time, the heuristic differentiation of *border gazes* may serve as an orientation for the choice or location of one's own border research. These methodological perspectives, therefore, do not attempt to mark clear-cut paradigms so that choosing one border gaze would mean excluding the others. Rather, a methodological multiperspectivity may be an adequate option considering the varied ways borders today shape reality. However, whether consciously or unconsciously, all research follows a basic methodological orientation, without which it would not be feasible. In short, in the words of John Gerring:

"While one can ignore methodology, one cannot choose not to have a methodology. In teaching, in research, and in analyzing the work of colleagues, scholars must separate the good from the bad, the beautiful from the ugly. In so doing, broader criteria of the good, the true, and the beautiful necessarily come into play. Social science is a normative endeavor" (Gerring, 2012, p. 8).

NOTES

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ADDRESSES

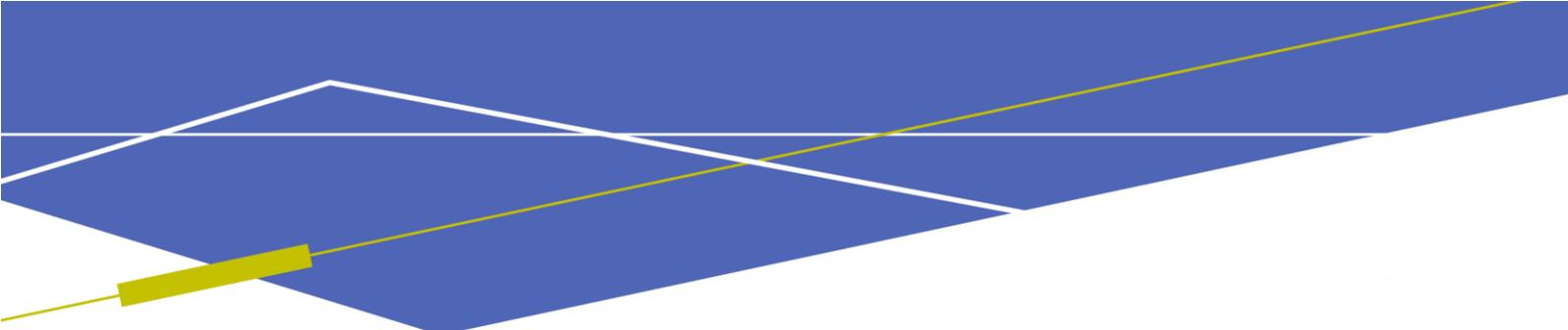
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Border or Bordering Practice?

Changing Perspectives on Borders and Challenges of Praxeological Approaches

Ulla Connor

In Border Studies, the ongoing discussions on methodological and theoretical questions have led to the development of transformed approaches and vocabulary for border research. This contribution highlights the shift from 'border' to 'bordering practice' and questions its sources in the scientific context, such as the cultural turn and the related practice turn. Despite the popular use of the term 'practice' in Border Studies, sociological practice theories are not at the center of the development of dynamic concepts for studying borders. The article emphasizes the compatibility of sociological practice theories with the practice and process orientation in Border Studies. It gives a short overview of praxeological thinking in sociology and identifies methodological challenges for Border Studies targeting the development of praxeological research perspectives for borders.

Border Studies, bordering practice, sociological practice theory, praxeological approach

Frontière ou pratique de la frontière ? Changer les perspectives sur les frontières et les défis des approches praxéologiques

Dans les études sur les frontières, les réflexions sur les questions méthodologiques et théoriques ont abouti à l'élaboration d'approches et d'un vocabulaire transformés pour la recherche sur les frontières. Cette contribution met en lumière le tournant de la « frontière » à la « pratique de la frontière » et interroge ses sources dans le contexte scientifique tel que le « cultural turn » et le « practice turn ». Malgré l'utilisation populaire du terme « pratique » dans les études sur les frontières, les théories sociologiques de la pratique ne sont pas au centre du développement des concepts dynamiques pour les études des frontières. L'article met l'accent sur la compatibilité des théories sociologiques de la pratique avec l'orientation de la pratique et du processus dans les études sur les frontières. Il donne un bref aperçu de la pensée praxéologique en sociologie et identifie les défis méthodologiques pour les études sur les frontières visant à développer des perspectives de recherche praxéologique.

Border studies, pratique de la frontière, théorie sociologique de la pratique, approche praxéologique

Grenze oder Praktiken der Grenze? Neue Perspektiven und die Herausforderung praxeologischer Ansätze

In den Border Studies haben die Diskussionen über methodologische und theoretische Fragen zur Entwicklung neuer Ansätze und Begriffe für die Grenzforschung geführt. Dieser Beitrag hebt die Bewegung von der „Grenze“ zu den „Praktiken der Grenze“ hervor und fragt nach ihren Quellen im wissenschaftlichen Kontext wie etwa dem „cultural turn“ und damit verbundenen „practice turn“. Trotz der populären Verwendung des Begriffs „Praxis“ in der Grenzforschung stehen soziologische Praxistheorien nicht im Zentrum der Entwicklung dynamischer Konzepte zur Untersuchung von Grenzen. Der Artikel betont die Anschlussfähigkeit von soziologischen Praxistheorien mit der Praxis- und Prozessorientierung in der Grenzforschung. Es wird ein

kurzer Überblick über das praxeologische Denken in der Soziologie gegeben und methodologische Herausforderungen identifiziert, die auf die Entwicklung praxeologischer Forschungsperspektiven für Grenzen abzielen.

Border Studies, Praktiken der Grenze, soziologische Praxistheorien, praxeologischer Ansatz

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Introduction

Border studies is one of the fastest-growing fields of research in current social sciences, with contributions from authors from many different disciplines. While the multidisciplinary heterogeneity of the field has always been part of the self-describing discourses of Border Studies, recently the object of study itself seems to have become more dynamic and multifaceted (Brambilla et al., 2015; Gerst et al., 2018). Simply speaking of 'borders' is, for a range of authors, no longer enough. Instead, the emergence of a more dynamic vocabulary in Border Studies addressing the research object is highly visible. 'Bordering', 'bordering processes' or 'bordering practices' are the used terms in current research to "express the multi-level complexity of borders" (Brambilla et al., 2015, p.1). Despite the disciplinary heterogeneity of the border research field, the use of these more dynamic terms seems to refer to common reflections on the conceptualization of borders in research. They are part of the developments addressed in this thematic issue, such as the "overcoming of simplistic geopolitical perspectives" or the "decentralization of the border", as well as the conceptualization in multi-scalar processes. Inquiring into the origins of the practice and process terms in Border Studies could therefore lead to insights into recent principles of thinking and theorizing the border. Furthermore, the contextualization of the term 'practice' in social sciences seems to be a necessary step in the reflection on its own fundamentals. One of the aims of this contribution is to show that the practice-process vocabulary is not only the consequence of internal developments of Border Studies, but also related to other disciplines such as sociology. This will lead to insights into consequences, challenges as well as benefits of this specific terminology for the field of border research.

For this purpose, this contribution takes three steps. First, it highlights the "shift from the concept of the border to the notion of bordering practice" in Border Studies (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.3). Instead of emphasizing a kind of shifting border reality, this contribution addresses this move as an epistemological shift with consequences on the terminological and heuristic level. The focus therefore lies on the background within the scientific context as well as the critical discussions in the field of border research itself. The main question is how these developments have led to changing perspectives and approaches in studying borders. Against this background, one of the theses is that the turn toward practices and processes is the consequent avoidance of criticized forms of thinking. Second, this contribution aims to broaden the field of vi-

sion through the introduction of sociological practice theories (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002). These theories offer an elaborated sociological counterpart to the dispersed ideas around the border-practice vocabulary in Border Studies. They can therefore support the analysis to make implicit ideas in Border Studies visible and to strengthen the practice-process perspective. Third, this contribution addresses the question of how Border Studies can benefit from the insights in sociological practice theories. The aim is not to propose an overall theory, but to come back to the epistemological level to identify some methodological challenges for praxeological border approaches. In this respect, this contribution will provide some ideas of how sociology as a specific discipline can contribute to an integrated understanding of borders.

Border Studies: shifting from 'border' to 'bordering practice'

The shift from 'border' to 'bordering practice' has several backgrounds in the context of social sciences. As it is not the substitution of one term for another, this shift has epistemological implications and is therefore more than the result of debates on terminology. More precisely, it represents a specific way of thinking and approaching border phenomena in current research. Interestingly, this move and its related ideas are not a feature of Border Studies alone but concern the general recent developments in the social sciences. One of these transitions has been the retrospectively discovered shift in the ways of addressing social phenomena in research, named the 'cultural turn' (e.g. Bachmann-Medick, 2006). Authors in the field of social sciences employ the term to describe a specific transformation of research questions and perspectives especially visible in the changed understanding of culture. As Jacobs and Spillman (2005, p.2) put it, this understanding of culture has been established "by contrast with (...) more static, overgeneralized, functionalist understandings current in the mid-twentieth century." After the cultural turn, the term culture no longer refers to "cultural systems such as art, media, or science". Instead, 'culture' becomes the vanishing point of a specific way of researching social phenomena, providing orientation in analytical thinking. Through the lens of the cultural turn, authors highlight the importance of "meaning-making processes" and the related "focus on cognitions, categories, and practices more than values and attitudes" in social everyday life (Jacobs and Spillman, 2005, p.2). As a result, studying so-

cial phenomena as cultural processes, production, and practices has become the main line of thought in the thinking of the cultural turn, neglecting concepts such as the individual or the system (Jacobs and Spillman, 2005, p.2). These main orientations of the cultural turn are visible in the transformed understanding of borders within Border Studies, as detailed here.

In Border Studies, these transformations have pushed theoretical ideas in research on different levels. Firstly, toward a renewed focus on processes, dynamic practices, and the performativity of border activities (Kaiser, 2016, p.523; Salter, 2014, p.8). Secondly, they have changed the general attitude of researchers in the direction of a more critical understanding of the research activity and its connections to power relations (Laine, 2015, pp.30-31). These two tendencies are especially notable in the discussion of the line-based image of the border since the late 1990s. The 'line' constitutes the imaginary center of a problem-oriented discussion within Border Studies addressing specific images of territorial borders, their shortcomings, and the related claim of rejecting them in research. Border scholars identify the shortcomings of these ideas with different arguments: firstly, they claim that the image of the line risks a naturalization of borders as universal phenomena without history (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p.3). The line underexposes the social construction processes that bring borders into being and depicts them as unquestioned existing entities, dividing "reified territorial units" (Pötzsch, 2015, p.217). Secondly, linear thinking in linear demarcations may demonstrate borders as stable and more or less fixed realities and not as "the sum of social, cultural, and political processes" (Johnson et al., 2011, p.61). Authors highlight the inadequacy of the image to take historical changes and dynamics as well as heterogeneous activities in border areas into account. On the one hand, some authors consider the empirical findings that border phenomena are not restricted to the geographical location at the periphery of the state, but could possibly be everywhere (Balibar, 1997, p.379; Paasi, 1999, p.670). On the other hand, case studies have repeatedly pointed out how political borders move geographically, historically and in their functions or meanings (e.g. Anderson, 1996, p.2; Auzanneau and Greco, 2018, p.10; Bös and Zimmer, 2016, p.158; Popescu, 2011, p.151). Thirdly, the line-focused thinking lacks self-reflecting tools to question its own relation to power politics and ideological thinking (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p.3,15). Research risks the symbolic perpetuation of linear territorial demarcations as part of power politics and thus thinking within state-centered categories and principles. In short, the questioning of

the line has sensitized authors to the shortcomings of stable and naturalized images of the border in research, as well as to the ethical consequences of their usage, not only in the scientific but also the social context.

As a result, these reflections on theoretical orientations of Border Studies have been the starting point for developing dynamic concepts and thinking tools. One of the main features of this alternative thinking is the conceptualization of borders as "ongoing process" (Wilson and Donnan, 2016, p.17) or in a "constant state of becoming" (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.2). This "*processual shift*" (Brambilla et al., 2015, p.1; Konrad, 2015, p.4) emphasizes historical transformations to stress the dynamic character of border realities, while it also asks for adequate thinking tools on the theoretical and methodological level that are able to depict borders as processes. The main orientations in this move, visible in the line-focused discussion, lead to answers tending to an understanding of territorial borders in principles of the cultural turn. Instead of 'border', 'boundary' or 'frontier' as ontological things and clearly demarcated entities, thinking in terms of 'bordering' or 'bordering practice' appears as one of the logical consequences of the rejection of stable and reified concepts. Consequently, approaches in Border Studies move closer to constructivist thinking, bringing the focus to the ways of producing and not only on the product. This means the conceptualization of the research object as multifaceted institutionalization processes or as "broader constructions" related to culture and everyday life (Laine, 2015, pp.30-31).

More precisely, the above cited border researchers focus on a change of perspective toward the activities that create borders and thus make them visible as processes. The shift in terminology from 'border' to 'bordering' is therefore often complemented by "bordering practice" (Brambilla et al., 2015, p.1; Houtum et al., 2005, p.1; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.3). This increased interest of border scholars in practices is closely linked to the "practice turn" (Schatzki et al., 2001) in social sciences (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p.197). However, as a consequence of the multidisciplinary of the research field, speaking of a completed "practice turn" does not concern the overall field of border research. Additionally, the authors who consider this turn have developed a heterogeneous appropriation of the term 'practice' and complicate the search for a common understanding of the practice-ideas. In many cases, the term appears according to the common meaning of everyday practice, focusing, for example, on the activity of people living at the border or crossing it. The terms "everyday practice" or "daily life practice" are used to delimit and charac-

terize the activities and the field of research (Considère and Perrin, 2017, p.17; Donnan and Wilson, 1999, pp.154-155; Newman, 2011, p.41). In addition, some authors employ the term to address aspects of making borders, such as “material practices” (Donnan and Wilson, 1999, p.58), “temporal practices” (Hurd et al., 2017, p.4) or “spatial practices” (Hafeda, 2016, p.400, Houtum et al., 2005, p.3). A set of approaches expands this direction on the heuristic level, giving the term “practice” the character of a research category; for example, to describe border realities as dynamic processes, and thus as a tool for conceptualization (Parker and Adler-Nissen, 2014; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014). This complex conglomerate of different uses of the term and related assumptions demonstrate its apparent flexibility, while also showing how complications may arise from searching for similar concepts.

However, a closer look at those studies that explicitly introduce the ‘practice’ term within an analytical reflection on borders may reveal some common ideas. The main characteristic of these approaches is the consideration of the border as a “product of social practice” (Kolossoff, 2005, p.625). The border in this regard becomes the effect and consequence of what people do, directing research toward ongoing activities (Auzanneau and Greco, 2018, p.12,16). In these approaches, the idea of a border as a “taken-for-granted entity” is the critical starting point in the investigation (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.4). Against ontological thinking, some researchers ask for dynamic aspects, rejecting everyday ideas as well as state-centered categories. This means that neither the opinions or interests of individuals, nor state and nations as ‘actors’, are points of reference in the investigation (Houtum, 2005, p.674). Instead, authors highlight the term ‘practice’ to conceptualize borders as actively produced in contingent processual activities (Schiffauer et al. 2018, p.13). ‘Bordering practice’ in this regard, means “activities which have the effect ... of constituting, sustaining or modifying borders” (Parker and Adler-Nissen, 2014, p.50). These activities may possibly be intended or unintended and are investigated as “implicit and explicit bordering and ordering practices” (Houtum et al., 2005, p.2). Authors with this orientation replace the question of ‘what’ a border is and focus instead on the ways of bringing borders into being. The conceptualization of border practices as practical construction processes is therefore one of the main principles in these approaches.

As a second main principle, authors focus these dynamics specifically as meaning-making processes. Against the idea that common systems

of rules and symbols intersubjectively guide bordering activities, practice-based thinking highlights the situated production and incorporation of knowledge (Wille, 2014, pp.63-64). Instead of focusing merely on explicit discourses, they prefer “a more empirical and more interpretive approach to the notion of practice that emphasizes how actors act and how they give meaning to their actions” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p.197). The idea is that border activities are not meaningful by themselves, and several authors increasingly focus on the ways of how bordering becomes meaningful (Salter, 2014, p.12). In this perspective, the production of meaning is constantly involved during interaction with others, giving a sense to practices and their continuation. Researching practices means, in this regard, considering “the set of shared understandings and disagreements, implicit social and cultural norms, skills, competencies, informal knowledge, attitudes and embodied dispositions” (Côté-Boucher et al., 2014, p.198). For these approaches, making sense of border activities is a key to understanding the continuously ongoing reproduction of border realities.

Overall, the emphasis on meaning-making processes as well as the critical line-focused discussion constitute two of the main aspects of why the terms ‘bordering’ or ‘bordering practice’ became popular in Border Studies to replace the ontological ideas of fixed and stable edges of populations or states. The employment of the term ‘practice’ to conceptualize dynamic border processes provides insight into the related assumptions and research orientations influenced by the cultural turn. That is, firstly, thinking of the border as social construction and secondly, its conceptualization as changing processes. Furthermore, the focus on meaning-making processes is another characteristic of the dynamic border thinking expressed in the practice-related vocabulary. It orients research on the one hand toward a self-critical attitude, challenging thinking of the border in terms of taken-for-granted entities and reflects on the ways of knowledge production. On the other hand, it highlights the border process as practices of meaning production itself, questioning the shared understandings and forms of knowledge operating in the border construction.

Broadening the field of conceptual tools: sociological theories of practice

In sociology, the practice turn has led to a wide-ranging reinterpretation of a specific thread of approaches from social sciences developed in the second half of the last century (e.g. Reckwitz, 2003). The discovery of these approaches as 'sociological practice theories' claims a common core and opens the discussion about their main principles of thinking. Despite the continuing development of practice-oriented approaches in Border Studies, the explicit employment or mention of sociological theories of practice is rare (e.g. Côté-Boucher et al., 2014; Wille, 2014; Wille and Connor, 2019). This neglect is remarkable, considering the apparent benefits of the 'practice' term within Border Studies. This contribution highlights the connectivity between the sociological practice theories and the search for practice-process perspectives in Border Studies. What the sociological discourse can provide is an elaborate focus on thinking in relation to the practice term on the conceptual and epistemological levels. Accordingly, it supports the identification of practice ideas in border research and gives them a context for comparison in similar approaches. The term 'practice theories' in sociology addresses an ensemble of heterogeneous approaches in studying the social with different backgrounds and intentions. Accordingly, a single perspective with consistent categories and coherent theorizing principles does not exist. The wide range of studies referred to as practice theories includes, for example, the work of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, Harold Garfinkel, Judith Butler, Bruno Latour or Theodore Schatzki (Reckwitz, 2002, pp.243-244) (referred to in the following as the 'first generation'). Despite their heterogeneity, especially in the German scientific discourse there have been several attempts at finding a common core of these different approaches. As Reckwitz points out, one main common background is their close relationship to the cultural turn (Reckwitz, 2002, p.244). Practice theories share a common skepticism toward the capacities of previous theoretical programs such as functionalism or structuralism, as well as the capacities of theorizing in general (Alkemeyer et al., 2015, p.11; Schmidt, 2012, p.11). Similar to the development later in Border Studies, their starting points emerged in the critical discussion of specific ideas in social theory. Practice theorists criticize the overgeneralization of social reality and thinking in more or less stable dichotomies, essentially 'action and structure, experience and discourse, body and mind' (Brockmeyer et al., 2018, p.7). Questioning common and theoretical assumptions has, to date, been one of the main activities in praxeological research, aiming at alternative forms of thinking and describing social phenomena.

Thus, practice theories do not focus on the development of closed and purely analytical systems or models. Instead, what researchers find today in the discussion of the first generation of practice theories are thinking tools for the development of a specific 'research program for the material analysis' (Reckwitz, 2003, p.284). Practice theory in this regard is a specific 'methodology' (Schmidt, 2012, p.31) for the empirical approach to social phenomena and not a 'theory' in the classical sense. It identifies a specific way of conducting research, putting the object in perspective, and describing it. As Schmidt outlines, instead of developing sophisticated theoretical systems, practice theories highlight the importance of empirical data in their approaches. The empirical data in praxeological research can be considered the touchstone for implicit and explicit theoretical assumptions and concepts determining the direction of the research process (Schmidt, 2012, p.31).¹ The research process thus typically moves back and forth between conceptual ideas and empirical data, developing an analytical *and* empirical understanding of the research object. As a result, the praxeological perspectives primarily employ an open set of concepts, heuristic frames, and loose theoretical assumptions with a low level of generalization (Hirschauer, 2008, p.172). While praxeological methodology puts the theoretical and empirical work on one level in the research process, at the same time it promotes a critical understanding of the research activity itself. In this regard, the methodology in question guides a critical questioning of taken-for-granted characteristics of social phenomena and simultaneously reflects the fact that research and its implicit assumptions are always part of the studied object itself (Schmidt, 2012, p.12).

Although the term practice is not the center of argumentation in the first generation of practice theories, several authors have pointed out practice as their common orientation (Hillebrandt, 2014; Reckwitz, 2002; Schmidt, 2012). As "arrays of activity" (Schatzki, 2001, p.11) they represent the main focus in research, neglecting a range of other popular concepts. The starting point for praxeological theories is not the individual, social structures, or institutional actors. Instead, as Schatzki points out, they are essentially "flat". Practices in this regard are not only considered as the "central element in the constitution of social phenomena", they are also "laid out on one level" (Schatzki, 2016, p.31). Praxeological approaches avoid thinking in causalities, rational actors, or macro-phenomena such as the state or globalization. They try to understand social phenomena through their realization in practices, looking for insights beyond public narratives or everyday explanations. The guiding questions in practice the-

ories are, for instance: how and why do social situations take place? What enables their realization? How do actors qualify their situations, themselves, or others? The answers to these questions in praxeological approaches follow an analysis of the characteristics of practices highlighted through the focus on specific aspects. Three of the main aspects are the orientations on the body, materiality, and process, elaborated in the following section.

Practices as bodily movements: When authors from practice theories center activity in their approaches, they do not follow the classical line of action theory in the Weberian sense. Instead, they highlight practices as “bodily doings and sayings” (Schatzki, 2002, p.72) or ‘meaningful, meaning-carrying, skillful bodily movements’ (Schmidt, 2012, p.55). The body and the incorporated knowledge in form of a ‘practical sense’ (Bourdieu, 1980) is an important part of the praxeological conceptualization of social phenomena. Analogously to the turn in Border Studies toward meaning-making aspects in bordering, practice theories focus on the symbolic production and the bodily preconditions involved. Thinking and acting are thought of as equally physical activities, which largely take place spontaneously and unconsidered. Their analysis provides answers to the question of how actors make their activities meaningful and intelligible. Praxeological approaches emphasize socialization experiences, as the bodies of the practice are usually already formed bodies that have learned how to work, behave, or react (Schmidt, 2012, p.205). Furthermore, they highlight the common construction of meaning in interaction through speech and bodily expressions (Meyer, 2015, p.97). Practice in this perspective is the situated and bodily (re-)production of meaning-creating or meaning-bearing activities, often describable as collective ordering, or categorization processes. For the study of borders, in the terms of Didier Bigo, this means considering the permanent ongoing collective work of passing on and diffusion of the ideas that ensure the intelligibility as well as the supposed naturalness of borders. The ‘incorporation of the territorial myth’ (Bigo, 2011, p.2) is one of the most important preconditions for reproducing bordering practices and therefore an empirical question for praxeological approaches.

Practices as materializing and materialized activities: Some authors from the field of Border Studies have already highlighted the material aspects of bordering when focusing on, for example, walls (Brown, 2010) or the setting of border crossing points (Muhle, 2018; Schindler, 2018). Beside the body dimension, materiality is another important principle for praxeological thinking. As bodies, things carry practice when the material settings

constitute, change, or prevent social situations (Latour, 2014, pp.124-125). Therefore, the material aspects of practices play an active role in the constitution of social phenomena and are more than just a ‘background’. Praxeological studies conceptualize material practices as an interplay between enabling material objects and the corporeal knowledge of their application, without one dominating the other (Hillebrandt, 2014, p. 82). The focus on such bodily or material aspects widens the perspective on the research object and integrates aspects that were often neglected in previous studies. Focusing on the ‘silent’ aspects of practice is furthermore one of the starting points in the empirical analysis of praxeological approaches aiming to find new insights on familiar social phenomena (Schmidt, 2012, p.17). In this regard, border-making is especially a material practice, and walls or crossing points are not considered as stable realities, but part of a practical process of (de-)stabilization. If borders can potentially be ‘everywhere’, it is because referencing them is made possible socially. They can be made relevant in different contexts and these practices usually leave material traces. Thinking in terms of materiality means paying attention to the many artifacts that appear in the process of bordering: documents, passports, buildings, maps, uniforms, spatial arrangements; they all contribute to practices of making credible the assumption of an existing border and its implementation. From a praxeological point of view, they take part in the mutual confirmation or questioning of the border in ongoing social interaction.

Practices as dynamic processes: Both, the bodily and the material focus, are part of the descriptive tools in practice theoretical approaches, which enable thinking of social phenomena as processes. Practice theories conceive the social as a stringing together of reproducing practices in the continuous state of becoming (e.g. Shove et al., 2012). They assume that situations and their meaningfulness are gradually established by means of ordering performance and practical achievements (Schmidt, 2012, p.33). This perspective on practices as “ongoing accomplishment” (Garfinkel, 1967, p.vii) challenges the supposed stability of social relations and inquires about the conditions for successful social situations. The process-orientation implies two main assumptions regarding the practice term: firstly, the relationality of practices, and thus their embeddedness in former, simultaneous, or future practices (Schäfer, 2013, p.369). Secondly, the ‘repetition’ of practices as Hilmar Schäfer points out (Schäfer, 2013, p.311). In practice theoretical thinking, this repetition is neither purely stable or identical nor unstable, but rather an ongoing shifting of practices (Schäfer, 2013, p.321). Practices

reproduce social phenomena in traditionalized and routinized ways without being mechanical. Their forms and twists are the object of the empirical and detailed description that follows unfolding social situations. The dynamic conceptualization of practices as well as the related typically anti-essentialist perspectives of practice theories (Hillebrandt, 2014, p.30) demonstrate the large overlap in interest of these approaches and the practice-process tendency in Border Studies. However, compared to approaches in Border Studies, practice theories may provide a more sophisticated idea of coherently thinking and researching processing practices.

In conclusion, the praxeological methodology includes a set of principles and orientations for studying social phenomena understood as specific practices. The research focus of practice theories is not the individual or social structures but the relational sets of elements such as bodily performances, incorporated knowledge, interaction processes, or material aspects. In this regard, practice theories develop primarily methodological and analytical assumptions and neither a classic 'theory' nor a mere empirical understanding of the social. The term 'practice' takes account of a specific research perspective that allows researchers to think of social phenomena as processing forms of social organization.

Methodological challenges for praxeological approaches in Border Studies

The developments in Border Studies and sociology described above refer to the common background of the cultural turn and their related critique of older approaches, particularly those of thinking in terms of inflexible and reifying concepts. The turn to the vocabulary of practice and process is one of the propositions in research to find alternative approaches for studying social phenomena. Border studies emphasizes the dynamic and heterogeneous character of borders through the term 'bordering practices'. However, when compared to sociological practice theories, the question of how the practice and process orientation could be transformed into coherent descriptive tools and concepts is often underexposed. The scientific discourses in and about practice theoretical thinking have developed a range of definitions for the term 'practice' and its understanding. In contrast, the meaning of the term 'practice' in Border Studies, for example, remains implicit in most of the studies. Some authors use the term according to the everyday

meaning, and some use the term as a research category with a more detailed terminological reflection. As a research category, the term 'practice' or 'bordering practice' should be clearly distinguished from everyday meanings and explicitly reveal its related assumptions to be subject of critical discussion in the research community. In the understanding developed here, 'practice' would be a categorical tool with the analytic purpose of describing social reality as dynamic processes. In the light of the principles of praxeological thinking as outlined above, bordering practice can be conceptualized in a first step as the *relational and shifting forms of the material, bodily and meaningful production of borders*. This definition is open to the different directions of specific research questions, whether they are asking about sustaining activities, or the social questioning of borders. Furthermore, it can be extended to further aspects such as the spatiality or temporality of bordering practices, as well as their entanglement with, for example, gender aspects, discrimination, and exclusion.

This contribution does not allow a detailed overview of the range and ideas of sociological practice theories or the development of a praxeological research approach for borders. Instead, the discussion of practice theories for the research on borders leads to the contouring of methodological challenges in praxeological Border Studies. These challenges are visible on the level of the development of dynamic perspectives, the question of research guidance, and the critical reflection on border practice research.

Dynamics of bordering: Border studies identified the need for dynamic concepts as addressed in the processual shift which transformed the vocabulary used from static concepts to dynamic terms (from 'border' to 'bordering practice'). Practice theories offer a direction for transforming this processual shift into an empirical-analytical understanding of border dynamics. They have developed conceptual tools for describing borders as ongoing processes such as thinking in terms of shifting activities of reproduction. Accordingly, a 'border praxeology' (Gerst and Krämer, 2017, p.3) provides a dynamic perspective when it transforms the thinking of 'the border' into a shifting "doing border" (Hess and Tsianos, 2010, p.255). Such a perspective challenges the supposed existence of borders as stable or identical entities when conceptualizing them as practical achievements. From this point of view, the forms of reproduction of borders are the central point of departure in research. They refer to the relational embeddedness of border practices in the social context and their contingent perpetuation, transformation, or negation. This raises, however, the question of how bordering practice could be de-

scribed as such processing activities. For example, considering material and bodily aspects, focusing on the analysis of interviews or documents would be insufficient. Rather, the emphasis on practices requires the use of ethnographic instruments, such as observation or participation (Kasperek 2010, p.112). As Hess and Tsianos proposed in their ethnographical approach to border regimes, it means the analysis of the border "in situ" to access border practices in their dynamics (Hess and Tsianos, 2010, p.248). In short, capturing and describing borders in their state of becoming, as open, vanishing, and incomplete activities is one of the main challenges for praxeological approaches in border research.

Research guidance: One of the principles of the understanding of borders after the cultural turn is avoiding a state-centered, reified, or overgeneralized perspective on borders. After having rejected ideas such as the 'line' or the 'power container' as part of previous thinking about borders, some authors propose alternative ways of studying the border. The focus on meaning-making processes and a more self-critical research approach are example orientations. A closer look at practice theories reveals that these theories emerge in the context of similar critical scientific discussions. The alternative approach in studying social phenomena in contrast to former structuralist, functionalist, or action-based thinking identifies methodological principles sharing the common practice orientation. The 'flat' categories guide empirical research without recourse to reified border images or macro-actors. The praxeological guidance of empirical research focuses on borders as a form of communication and interaction, as a "method" (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p.280) or an arranging and thinking of the world. It emphasizes sequences of actions in, for example, the social negotiation of claims or power relations, their bodily or material expressions and their meaning-making activities. Furthermore, it prevents border researchers from falling back to implicit thinking in terms of ideas of fixed borderlines, homogenous social entities or assumed cultural distinctions. Contrary to these rejected assumptions, the challenge lies in integrating the social efforts to depict and present borders, for example, as stable and natural phenomena in research. From this perspective, the popularity of the idea of borders as lines, thus their reification, is an empirical problem, as the symbolic or material stabilization of territorial boundaries is itself a border practice. These efforts are part of the social construction processes in which borders emerge and are therefore part of the research object.

Critical reflection: The praxeological methodology is a critical way of approaching research. In this

respect, Bourdieu's sociology is a good example when phenomena of violence are investigated up to the symbolic level in practices (Bourdieu, 2001a). Furthermore, critical reflection on implicit research assumptions along with their contribution to power relations is part of practice theories and 'common sense' thinking in particular is continuously questioned in these approaches (e.g. Bourdieu, 2001b). This questioning has been a useful source for finding new ways of describing social processes. Regarding Border Studies, this kind of critical thinking is not new and already guides the overcoming of state-centered or essentialist ideas in many studies (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.1). In the words of Parker and Vaughan-Williams, the critical questioning means not only to "decentre the border" but to be aware of the fact that "the border is not something that straightforwardly presents itself in an unmediated way. It is never simply 'present', nor fully established, nor obviously accessible" (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2014, p.2). Consequently, reflecting on the research perspective, its thinking tools, methods, and intentions should be part of the research process. This particularly concerns the move toward the practice vocabulary in Border Studies. The popularity of the term 'practice' within Border Studies should itself be questioned to prevent the tendency to consider 'practice' as a substitute for 'reality' and not as a specific research perspective that came up as a way of thinking in the second half of the 20th century. The focus on practice is itself a perspective with its own potentials and shortcomings and needs critical reflection.

Conclusion

The practice-process orientation in border research is one of the recent tendencies in Border Studies, providing insights in ongoing discussions in the matter of conceptualization, theorizing and methodology. As alternative ways of thinking have emerged in contrast to more ontological or stable ideas, authors have developed research directions using the practice term. Typical for the use of this term in Border Studies is, on the one hand, its applicability in different research designs and questions, leading to heterogeneous meanings and related assumptions. On the other hand, approaches using the term in a more sophisticated aspiration on the conceptual level to show that this orientation has more than only integrative effects. For example, as the outline of praxeological thinking shows, analyzing border practices consistently in a process-oriented perspective means the employment of a more restricted set of research methods, such as ethno-

graphic observation. Furthermore, it raises methodological challenges and multiplies potentially empirical questions during research: how does one gain access to practices? What are the differences between 'bordering practices' and other practices? Where is their beginning and end? Which material, bodily, and symbolic aspects and their interconnections can be identified?

This contribution emphasizes the compatibility of the developments in sociology and Border Studies. It provides insights into the potential of sociological practice theories regarding the necessary categorical and methodological work toward a dynamic perspective on borders. In Border Studies, the term 'practice' is already employed for a decentralization of the border. In praxeological thinking, this means that 'flat' thinking in processing activities without changing the termino-

logical level, such as the recourse to the 'state' or delimited 'cultures'. Rather, these categories raise empirical questions regarding the organizational social practices that produce them and are therefore involved in the researched phenomenon. Border practices are multi-scalar processes in the sense that scaling practices are part of them. They are 'complex' (Gerst et al., 2018) in their open and unfolding becoming, challenging researchers to delimit their object. The praxeological thinking tools encourage border research to focus on specific aspects, to cut dimensions, or sample; that is: to orient research. However, they also encourage researchers to open their field of vision to neglected facets and characteristics in the bordering process, offering a coherent research perspective.

NOTES

ⁱ As most of the authors in practice theories are theorizing and working on empirical data at the same time, I will refer to their work, in alternation, as "theories" or "approach".

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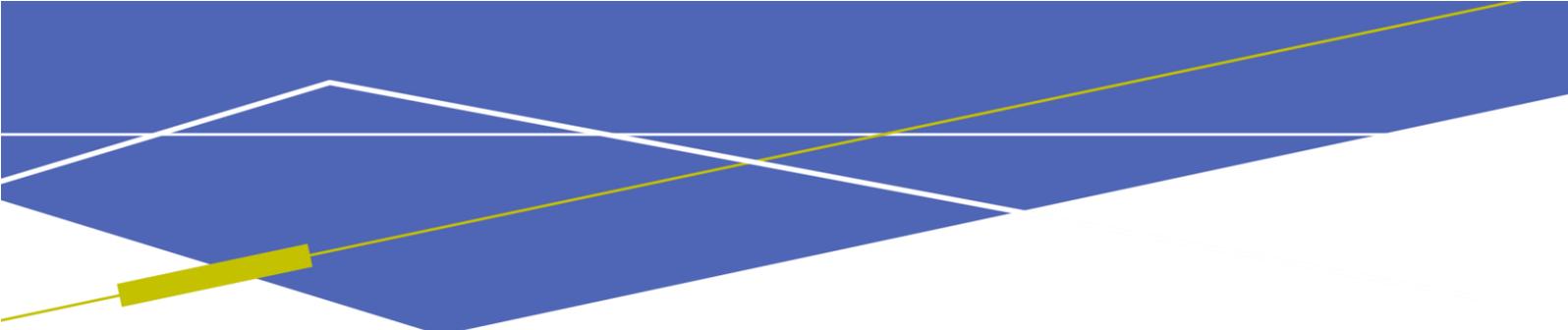
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State Borders and Archaeological Ethnography: (Checkpoint) Practice, Materiality and Discourse

Annett Bochmann

The article discusses the benefits of researching state borders with the help of an archaeological ethnography. When studying state borders, long-term research conducted in Asia shows that it is necessary to study public life including moment-by-moment organization of everyday events and activities. At the same time, however, it is important to consider the historical and political discourses that become part of these details. Based on these findings, the paper proposes an approach that combines an ethnography informed by ethnomethodology and a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis; two different perspectives with partly opposing theoretical and methodological conceptualizations. By applying an archaeological ethnography, researchers are enabled to capture state border complexities, to overcome a micro-macro division, and to study situational details of the social and the power-knowledge nexus at the same time. The discussion on this approach fills a research gap in border studies regarding missing epistemological and methodological reflections.

Political sociology, border studies, ethnomethodology, ethnography, discourse analysis, history, Asia

L'étude des frontières étatiques : pratiques, matérialités et discours (d'un point de contrôle)

L'article met en relief les avantages d'une ethnographie archéologique pour l'étude des frontières étatiques. Sur la base d'une recherche de terrain ethnographique menée en Asie, l'article montre que l'étude des frontières nécessite des analyses de l'espace public dans les zones frontalières avec ses pratiques situationnelles et performances locales et processuelles des participant.e.s. En outre, il faut tenir compte des discours historiques et politiques dont certains sont aussi visibles dans ces microanalyses. Partant de ce constat, l'article propose d'intégrer deux approches de recherche différentes : une ethnographie fondée sur l'ethnométhodologie et une analyse du discours inspirée de Foucault et une méthode archéologique. Ce sont deux perspectives différentes avec des conceptualisations théoriques et méthodologiques partiellement opportunes qui font l'objet de l'article. L'ethnographie archéologique s'avère particulièrement fructueuse car elle nous permet de saisir les complexités des frontières étatiques, de surmonter la différenciation micro-macro et de prendre en compte les détails situés du social ainsi que du nexus pouvoir-connaissance. L'article contribue ainsi à une discussion négligée sur la méthodologie et les problèmes épistémologiques dans l'étude des frontières étatiques.

Sociologie politique, étude des frontières, ethnométhodologie, ethnographie, analyse du discours, histoire, Asie

Zur Erforschung von Staatsgrenzen: (Checkpoint) Praktiken, Materialitäten und Diskurse

Der Artikel diskutiert die Vorteile einer archäologischen Ethnographie für die Untersuchung von Staatsgrenzen. Anhand von ethnographischen Feldforschungen in Asien zeigt der Artikel, dass die Erforschung von Grenzen Analysen des öffentlichen Lebens inklusive der situationellen Praktiken und lokalen, prozesshaften Herstellungsleistungen der TeilnehmerInnen in den Grenzgebieten benötigt. Gleichzeitig müssen historische und politische Diskurse, die teilweise auch in diesen Mikroanalysen sichtbar sind, berücksichtigt werden. Basierend auf dieser Erkenntnis, schlägt der Artikel vor, zwei unterschiedliche Forschungsansätze zu integrieren: eine ethnomethodologisch informierte Ethnographie und eine von Foucault inspirierte Diskursanalyse und archäologische Methode. Dies sind zwei unterschiedliche Perspektiven mit teilweise opportunen theoretischen und methodologischen Konzeptualisierungen, die im Artikel diskutiert werden. Die archäologische Ethnographie erweist sich als besonders fruchtbar, da sie es ermöglicht die Komplexitäten von Staatsgrenzen zu erfassen, die Mikro-Makro Teilung zu überwinden und gleichzeitig die situierten Details des Sozialen als auch den Macht-Wissens Nexus zu berücksichtigen. Der Artikel leistet damit einen Beitrag zu einer vernachlässigten Diskussion über Methodologie und erkenntnistheoretischer Probleme in der Erforschung zu Staatsgrenzen.

Politische Soziologie, Grenzforschung, Ethnomethodologie, Ethnographie, Diskursanalyse, Geschichte, Asien

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Maps, Discourse and Details of Public Life

“What the map cuts up, the story cuts across. It plays a double game. It does the opposite of what it says. It hands the place over to the foreigner that it gives the impression of throwing out. Or rather, when it marks a stopping place, the latter is not stable but follows the variations of encounters between programmes. Boundaries are transportable limits and transportations of limits; they are also metaphorai” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 129)

This article builds on Michel de Certeau’s conception of boundaries, transferring it to state borders. The quote indicates what borderland scholars agree on, namely that borders are not simple lines functioning solely as places of separation, prohibition, and exclusion. Rather, (state) borders and borderlands are viewed as zones of contact, interaction, and opportunity. Although state borders exist as maps in the global discourse, they not only mark insurmountable obstacles but also enable daily border crossings in public life. This article highlights that borders create and accomplish “the crossing” and situations of power and hierarchy. Discourses and history make state borders become a regime that does not necessarily dominate public life, but one which people refer to and situate in public life.

Based on observing people’s practices and mobilities in the borderlands, I noticed that when understanding state borders, an approach is necessary to combine microstudies on the social details of materiality, situations, and bodies with studies in history and politics. Capturing the social complexities of camp borders requires studying public life, including the details and moment-by-moment organization of everyday events and activities at borders but at the same time requires considering the historical and political discourses that become part of these details. That is why the article suggests approaching and analyzing state borders with the help of an ‘archaeological ethnography’ that combines two different theoretical and methodological streams: studies in ethnomethodology and a Foucauldian-informed archaeological methodⁱ. Integrating these different perspectives contributes to recent debates on how scholars can approach and understand state border complexities (Brambilla et. al., 2017; Gerst et al., 2018).

This suggestion corresponds to recent scientific discourses in border studies, acknowledging that borders need to be researched, not as ontological objects, but as social productions examining var-

ious processes and considering multiple scientific perspectives. Border(land) scholars highlight that state borders represent temporal processes that are done or undone, remade and resisted through people’s practices and performances (Doevenspeck, 2011; Jones, 2012; Doty, 2007; Rumford, 2008). Building on the work of these scholars, the article contributes to debate border methodologies. Although research on state borders has had an upswing with increasing numbers of case studies and theoretical as well as conceptual considerations, in contrast to other research fields, methodological issues are not treated with much caution. Additionally, this article calls for more research on another hitherto overlooked research area: studying the actual, locally produced, social accomplishments at concrete border situations and events. The arguments made in this article are based on ethnographies conducted in the Global South, which tend to be overlooked research sites in border studies, which is why conceptual approaches remain largely Eurocentric (Wilson and Donnan, 2012, p. 13).

My understanding of researching state borders derives from conducting extensive field research in refugee camps in the borderlands of Nepal-India in 2008 and Myanmarⁱⁱ -Thailand between 2011 and 2014, where I was confronted with studying human mobility beyond state borders. The topic of forced migration processes, camps, and state borders are inseparably interconnected. (1) State borders allow separation and interaction, but also protection, for people forced to leave their homes due to conflict and violence. (2) Negotiations of state borders are very relevant in public camp life. Camp mobility and economy is interlinked with state border crossing. (3) Global and international discourses, politics and power relations link these two research domains. Refugee camps and state borders alike are a consequence of the “national order of things”, where every person must belong to a territory and a people (Malkki, 1992, p. 25). While state borders are enforced to maintain the trinity of people-state-territory, refugee camps have an ambiguous relationship of exclusion and inclusion in the nation-state system and state bordersⁱⁱⁱ. These three dimensions are linked to people’s everyday life and global discourses, and therefore indicate the necessity of two methodological lines when researching state border phenomena.

The article focuses on checkpoint situations because the checkpoint represents an important technique of the social construction of the border regime and simultaneously becomes part of people’s public life in the borderlands. The checkpoint became dominant only during the modern period and represents the most dominant border regime spread globally (Nail, 2016, p. 202). Based on peo-

ple's practices at border checkpoints, the following research questions are addressed and answered: how are border regimes materialized and situationally, practically accomplished in everyday life? How do people deal with the border architecture in concrete situations, how are border objects situated in people's practices?

The article is structured in the following way. First, I discuss the current state of research and research gaps in the context of state borders. Moreover, I introduce three main assumptions on the production of state borders, which I developed during field research. Second, I present the background and approach of an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography as well as its dealing with context such as wider discourses or broader structures. Additionally, I outline what this approach lacks in making up a comprehensive understanding of borders, namely historical records, and global discourses. These are approachable with a Foucauldian understanding of archaeological methods, genealogy, and power-knowledge regimes that include the dimension of historical processes. Based on the context of the Thai-Myanmar state border, some considerations are made on what such an approach could focus on. The main body of the article discusses empirical data and the findings of the analysis of three different border/checkpoint situations: (1) the crossings of camp border checkpoints, (2) the crossings of checkpoints at the main roads and (3) mobility and checkpoints at the borderland river. My concluding remarks outline the strength of an approach called archaeological ethnography for researching state borders.

State Border, Borderland and Boundary

The arguments made in this article are linked to the various non-ontological understandings of state borders and concepts that scholars produced in recent decades (Nail, 2016; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2013). In terms of theory, it is widely accepted that state borders are not to be understood as natural, political, and fixed entities and demarcated territories representing the separation and division of political communities and authorities. Instead state borders are understood as products of historical change and have different meanings for different people, in different situations and times. Scholars view state borders as the political and historic product of social processes (Wilson and Donnan, 2012, p. 13). In particular, anthropologists have researched everyday lives at state borders to examine material and symbolic processes. From these studies, we learn

about the parallel dimensions of permeability and permanence of borders, how borders influence local culture and how to situate local culture into larger politics (Donnan and Haller, 2000). Most of these studies illuminate the dialectic relationship between border areas and their states and emphasize borders as constructed and negotiated (Wilson and Donnan, 2012, p. 7). The ontological question of what a border is, became the question of how borders are socially constructed: "it is the process of bordering, rather than the border line per se, that has universal significance in the ordering society" (Newman, 2003, p. 15). Also, in geographical debates on territoriality, the processual character of borders and the necessity of researching bordering processes are emphasized (Redepenning, 2015, p. 83; Jones, 2008). However, political geographers distinguish between boundary and borderlands. While "boundary" refers particularly to political territorial lines, dividing political units such as states (or camps) (Kristof, 1959, p. 270ff), "borderlands" or "frontiers" are "zones or territories flanking and straddling international land boundaries" (Grundy-Warr, 1993, p. 45). Kristof argues that a boundary has "no life of its own, not even a material existence [...] Also, the boundary is not tied inextricably to people – people teeming, spontaneous, and unmediated in their daily activities on, along, or athwart the border [...] it is far removed from the changing desires and aspiration of the inhabitants of the borderlands." (Kristof, 1959, p. 272).

The emphasis of the processual character of state borders suits to an ethnographic methodology, which also has become widely accepted in the interdisciplinary field of border studies (Wilson and Donnan, 2012). Borderland scholars also assume that multiple perspectives are essential for understanding border complexities (Rumford, 2012; Brambilla et. al., 2017; Gerst et. al., 2018). Until now, however, there were only few scholars who addressed methodological debates (Hess and Tsianos, 2010; Rumford, 2012; Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2013). Even though methodology determines the research process in all its interlinked stages, from the way questions are raised through to the processes of analyzing data and writing border studies tend to lack theoretical and epistemological reflection and grounding. Methodology relates to the researcher's methodical practices, the researcher's way of approaching and thinking about the social and the theoretical background on applied methods (Strübing and Schnettler, 2004; Roberts, 2006). This special issue as well as the article aims to contribute to a more methodological reflection on researching state borders.

Research scholars on state borders also pay attention to the territoriality and materiality of state

borders (Nail, 2016), though not much on the modalities of border crossings in an everyday context. There are some exceptions, however, such as Bruns, who focuses on the materiality at border crossing by observing smuggling practices at the Polish-Russian border. She shows how materiality is strongly connected to the organization of smuggling (Bruns, 2010, p. 123)^{iv}. Riike & Minca analyze crossings at terminal Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem, framing this checkpoint as a spatial political technology. As a result of studying interactions between commuters, security guards and the machines, they underline the relevance of the material agency, the machines, and their “decisions” (Rijke and Minca, 2019, p. 984). Critical border regime scholars focus on border control, the prevention of uncontrolled migration and the question of migrants’ agency (Hess and Kasparek, 2010) by illuminating the historical and current relevance of the creation of state borders and the consequences for people’s lives. Some of these scholars aim to study practices of “doing border” and highlight the necessary research of concrete sites and people’s practices (Hess and Tsianos, 2010, p. 255) and to combine it with discourse analysis (Hess and Tsianos, 2010, p. 253). Although I understand these studies, I would argue they seem to neglect the actual, situational performance of these state borders practices. Instead of analyzing people’s practices in order to understand border regimes, they reconstruct interviews with refugees (Hess and Tsianos, 2010) or instead study governance politics (Georgi, 2016; Ratfisch, 2015). How are border regimes materialized and situationally, practically accomplished in everyday life? How do people deal with the border architecture in concrete situations, and how are border objects situated in people’s practices?

These open questions are addressed in the following article with the help of an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography, that first of all orients toward the concrete materializations of borders, but also particularly toward concrete situations and events that happen at borders and especially at border checkpoints, as well as their entanglement with materiality. At the same time, the limits of this approach are discussed as well as the need for an additional methodology that orients toward a Foucauldian understanding of archaeology, discourse, and genealogy. Based on my ethnographies in the borderlands, I developed three assumptions regarding the production of state borders:

(1) Situations & Bodies: state borders are a product of situational and interactional negotiations and interaction processes between present participants.

(2) Materiality: state borders become visible through and are maintained by state border objects and artefacts.

(3) History, politics and discourses: state borders are a product of historical events, political decisions, and discourses.

As stated, the first two assumptions are approachable by ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic research. From an ethnomethodologically informed perspective, the order of state borders is understood as situational and a locally accomplished achievement of participants. Participants of particular situations (including checkpoint guards, military personnel, police, migrants, refugees, tourists, etc.) are able to interpret borders and regimes together with their counterparts and practice in collaboration certain ways of producing and using borders. A strong presence of the state or any border regime, however, does not mean that these situational and locally accomplishments are not possible. People must respond somehow to regulations, structures, or regimes. There are, however, archaeological records, physical objects, and artefacts such as border objects that are connected to the situational and interactional human activities and the discourses surrounding state borders. The last assumption was developed on the limits of the ethnomethodological ethnographic approach I conducted during field research. State borders have a history and there is a strong (historical) discourse surrounding those situationally achieved border practices that becomes part of it. Various documents produce state borders as an objective reality. People perceive state borders as (social) facts. Archaeologies circumvent, penetrate, and become part of these situational accomplishments of state borders. That is why I argue that we could benefit from combining an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography with an historical discourse analysis informed by a Foucauldian understanding of archaeology and discourse to capture the complexity of state borders.

Methodological Situationalism

The first two assumptions on state border production processes highlight the relevance of situations, bodies and materiality and interaction processes. These are approachable with the help of an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography. What does it mean to conduct an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography in context of state borders? First of all, ethnomethodological studies do not draw a sharp distinction between theory,

methodology, and methods; rather, they emphasize the interlinkages between them. This research approach focuses specifically on people's practices, events and situations and differs from a structure and agency centered, or individual mind-oriented, research approaches (Knorr-Cetina, 1981). An ethnomethodological perspective which is an empirically grounded and situated approach does not understand state borders via the discourses surrounding it, the social constructions or governing techniques of state practices, or as the subjective narrations or perceptions of border participants such as border guards or crossers. Rather, it investigates people's methods and practices for making their border surroundings reasonable and understandable. This allows us to locate the origins of scientific considerations among the ordinary world of people and their dealings and practices in everyday life (de Certeau, 1984). Using the notion of the local accomplishment of order, I accentuate an understanding of border structures and orders as a joint accomplishment of members or participants involved as a matter of course in their practical production. This is an ethnomethodologically informed perspective (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970; Lynch, 2007) that allows for the bringing in of a new point of view to the discourses regarding the social orders of state borders. In terms of methodology and theory, this means that this approach follows a methodological situationalism, taking social order to be realized in the very moment of social events (Knorr-Cetina, 1981, p. 15). Methodological situationalism contrasts with methodological individualism, where, for example, people's knowledge creates social order (Knorr-Cetina, 1981, 1988, p. 22). Methodological situationalism also contrasts with methodological collectivism where collectives, internalized norms, and moral obligations are the main mechanism of establishing social order. Garfinkel, however, explicitly agrees with Durkheim's statement that 'the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental principle' (Rawls, 2002, p. 9). The fundamental difference between these two theoretical lines is that ethnomethodology does not agree that the objective reality of social facts is the result of people's conformity and of institutionalized forms of constraints. Instead, social facts, such as state borders, are perceived as the ongoing accomplishments of people's daily activities, which can be experienced by the participants as an objectively determined reality (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 33). Thus, social facts or objectivity are understood as the product of orderly and endogenous local orders and are an achievement of the immortal ordinary society (Rawls, 2002, p. 9). That means that the production of state borders is not

the result of rules and regulations; instead, it is the result of the usage and application, the local, situational production and accomplishment of them. Therefore, the central point of investigation is how rules or structures related to state borders are realized, how they are used, and how they are made relevant if at all. How do people show each other what kinds of rules are applied in border situations? How do people establish borders as social facts?

Following an ethnomethodologically informed ethnographic research agenda requires living for an extended time in the borderland and participating in, observing, and registering naturally occurring interactions, social practices and events, and producing ethnographic field notes and audio-visual recordings^v. Thus, the following considerations are primarily based on long-term research focusing on people's mobility practices conducted at the peripheral Thai-Myanmar borderland area and Thai border towns. Protocols of participant observations and video sequences chosen from more than ten hours of audio-visual data recorded at checkpoints are the basis for the findings.

The specific and detailed analysis of events, social practices, and situations introduced in the following section lays out the tradition of ethnomethodology. As well, Max Gluckman and the Manchester school demand a systematic limitation and methodical focus on specific situations and events, in order to better grasp social complexities. They argue, if researchers do not limit observations systematically and purposely, and instead claim to see everything, then this results in methodologically careless work (Evens and Handelman, 2006). They also argue that the meticulous study of these micro-dynamics enables researchers to gain knowledge regarding the greater social context, such as macro-historical processes (Gluckmann, 1968, p. 2; Kapferer, 2005, p. 93). From such a perspective, however, events and situations tend to function solely as an illustration or exemplification of macro-processes or broader structures. In contrast, Ethnomethodologists approach the greater context or "macro-phenomena" only when they are an integral part of the social situation and participants of the situation refer to it (Schegloff, 1997; Sacks 1995). From this perspective, structures are not something researchers acquire access to through a detailed analysis; rather, participants of the situations have to demonstrate and make these macro-structures relevant and relate to this in public. This approach is limiting and methodologically strict, but there are good methodological reasons for this. The epistemological interest of Ethnomethodologists aims to capture the mecha-

nisms that constitute structures or macro- phenomena, and not the results and the consequences themselves (Hirschauer, 2014; Rawls, 2002). This enables researchers to demystify power relations, state borders, and their broader structural conditions, and to reconstruct how state borders are produced and come about: namely in people's practices. Still, with such an approach it is difficult to research the third assumption I make, namely that state borders, such as the Thai-Myanmar or Nepal – Indian state border, are a product of historical events, political decisions, and global discourses and make up a border regime that becomes part of everyday practices.

Historical Records and the Power of Global Discourse

In everyday life state borders become visible through, and are maintained by, state border objects and artefacts such as checkpoints. Checkpoints are materializations of borders and crossing through them makes people aware of borders – that they are living in borderlands and in a zone of human mobility regulation and restriction. Even though these are particular situations, crossing practices are part of public life in the borderlands and make up people's notions on state borders. State borders, and particularly passing through checkpoints, are a product of situational negotiations, interaction processes, and local arrangements between participants such as border crossers and border guards. However, the state border architectures as well as border situations and practices do not develop in a historical vacuum. The existence of checkpoint situations which are analyzed in more detail in the following section is also a product of historical events, political decisions, power relations and discourses. There are specific constraining and enabling conditions under which these characteristic border practices take place and are possible. What an ethnomethodologically informed approach is missing is an historical and archival analysis to grasp the broader state border situation, which needs to be included in a comprehensive analysis of border complexities.

Foucault provides adequate conceptual tools to include historical processes connecting them with power and knowledge in context of state borders (Nail, 2013; Topak, 2014; Walters, 2006, p. 199). Accordingly, a Foucauldian perspective denies an ahistorical nature of borders. Borders do not exist in a historically contingent form. Rather, historically different forms of knowledge and

practices that constitute borders themselves are an interest of analysis. Here, Foucault's concept of genealogy and power-knowledge regimes that include the dimension of historical process are especially relevant. Human history is understood as a sequence of contingent world interpretation stabilized only through power struggles (Foucault, 1993 [1972]). Thus, with Foucault, borders do not simply separate orders from each other, but need to be understood alongside the background on heterogenous power networks marked by ongoing struggles. Foucault's understanding is that power is not a property that institutions (such as states) possess; rather, it pervasively circulates and emanates (Foucault 1977, 2014, p. 95). Foucault underscored not only the complexity and fragmented character of power but also how power emerges from local arenas of concrete action and practices (Foucault, 1977, 2014, p. 94). Moreover, Foucault's genealogical perspectives emphasizes the processual character of discourses, practices, and power-knowledge complex. The focus of analysis is more on the package of measures, the framework of institutionalized materializations, that a discourse supports and implements in the world, such as laws, and architectural manifestations (Foucault, 1973, p. 33). The key idea of Foucauldian archaeological method is that knowledge is governed by rules that operate beneath the consciousness of individual subjects. These rules define a system of conceptual possibilities that determines the boundaries of thought and events in a given domain and period (Foucault, 1973). Thus, such a Foucauldian perspective gives more answers to the question: what kind of knowledge, utterances, and practices in regard to border checkpoints are possible? It focuses on the power relations and institutional configurations that regulate state borders. In contrast to the ethnomethodological understanding of context, the wider context of border situations is acknowledged as an enabling and constraining condition of the social. There is strong potential for a deeper connection between ethnomethodological understandings and the Foucauldian perspective with border objects and materiality as described by Foucault (1979) with the panopticon, but also its conception of power intertwined with micro-processes of social life and emerging within concrete local transactions (Foucault, 2014 [1977], pp. 93–102). Foucault understanding of power being locally achieved could be combined with the microscopic analysis of social interactions and situations (Knorr-Cetina, 1981, p. 22). For him, power is not a property that institutions such as states possess; rather, it pervasively circulates and emanates. Foucault highlighted not only the complexity and fragmen-

ted character of power but also how power emerges from local arenas of concrete local actions and practices (Foucault, 2014 [1977], p. 94). From this perspective, materiality and practices may become part of the discourse. Then discourse is not limited to what different parties say about state borders. Foucault stated himself that with his work he wants to provide a “toolbox” rather than a coherent methodological or theoretical program (Foucault, 1976, p. 45). That is why I understand a Foucauldian discourse analysis more as a way to work with his studies and books. These are an ensemble of conceptual recommendations to work on questions related to the genesis and effects of the power-knowledge nexus from which researcher are able to develop analytical power for concrete empirical research.

In the following section, I show the relevance of historical processes for a comprehensive understanding of the upcoming described border situations. With this, I give only some hints as to what a discourse analysis could look at, focusing on how techniques and institutions converged to create these state borders but also the historical processes, knowledge and institutional configurations that enable and restrict the described border situations. For example, we could consider the political relevance of European cartography such as Mercatorian mapping and the upcoming nationalism bound to territorial borders in this region. We could also consider the historical background of the powerful social linkages that exist in the Thai-Burmese borderland that cannot simply be destroyed by contemporary legal acts by central, national state regulations enforcing strict border control.

The described borderland is home to different ethnic groups including the Karen, Karenni, Mon Shan among others. There are strong historical, political, economic and social ties between the communities of neighboring states. Thus, links exist, beyond the boundaries of the nation state, including families, local authorities, and business-people (Lang, 2002, pp. 138ff.). On the Myanmar side of the border, the area was in the political control of ethnic groups and their armies, fighting against the central government and so was the flourishing trade and economic market established in collaboration with local Thai authorities (*ibid.*, pp. 138ff.). Thus, communities of ethnic groups controlled the border crossings and trade routes (Smith, 1994, p. 21). While central state authorities perceive these activities as illegal, local or regional authorities, and people who are involved in such activities, do not categorize them as such, particularly those people from Myanmar, because they did not feel represented by the central state. The close relationship between the ethnic groups beyond state borders has become

highly relevant during forced migration processes since the 1980s. Local Thai authorities and village leaders, mostly of the same ethnicity, sympathized with the forced migrants from the Myanmar territory and allowed them to establish settlements on the Thai side of the border in a relatively welcoming environment. The Thai government in Bangkok had a more distant relationship with Rangoon during this time. Local authorities dealt with the frontier (ethnic) groups at a local level. Unofficially, Thailand supported the non-communist, democratic opposition from Burma (Lang, 2002, p. 138). Additionally, the central Thai government’s liberal policy toward refugees further ameliorated the process via the non-enforcement of strict border controls. In the past, Thailand has also supported insurgent groups and indirectly allowed them to bring weapons and other goods across the border. It is not only ethnic groups, but also ethnic Burmans, who were involved in pro-democratic and communist activities and fled the regime to regions where ethnic, armed groups ruled and then crossed the border into Thailand. Mae Sot became a center for active pro-democratic organizations and opposition groups. The relatively liberal policy of the Royal Thai Government (RTG) changed in the 1990s for various reasons. One reason is that the RTG relationship with the central government of Myanmar improved and the states signed a major economic agreement (Steinberg, 2015). Still, no one can estimate the exact numbers of people who have crossed, and continue to cross, the border on a daily basis from Burma and Myanmar to Thailand (South, 2007). Despite the fact that central state policies changed, people continue to cross the borders, and border communities rely on crossing the border for their livelihoods (*cf.* Kyu, 2016, p. 26, Aung, 2016, p. 52, Brees, 2008). These recent historical considerations make the situational constraints and possibilities of the checkpoint situations more understandable.

Additionally, we need to consider the earlier historical records in these regions, relating to state border building. In earlier history, migration flows of ethnic groups into Siam (today’s Thailand) were welcomed because the pre-colonial state needed population “in order to enhance their position in relation to neighbouring polities” (Lang, 2002, p. 134). This increased the political influence for Siam in these regions. Additionally, nationalism bounded to territoriality, and territorial boundaries, developed in Siam only under the influence of, and during, the colonial times in Burma. Since the 1850s, Mercatorian mapping with conceptions of boundary and fixed lines of modern maps have become relevant for the elite and those in power. Before that time, cosmographic and profane maps reflected power

relations in the region (ibid., p. 132). “European mapping practices and the colonial alignment of boundaries” became accepted by those in power (ibidem: 132). State power was then territorialised (Vanderveest & Peluso 1995). Only when these borders were defined did the idea of one people and one territory take root in Siam. Lang summarizes that historically “the modern border was mapped in the context of regional imperial and colonial discourse and practices, both of which reformed the traditional state according to the techniques of modern statecraft and in the direction of centralized, territorial regulation” (Lang, 2002, p. 137). Also checkpoints as one major border regime object became dominant only during the modern period (Nail, 2016, p. 110). While these broader historical discourses say something about broader conditions of the borderland, they do not say much about the local production and accomplishments of state borders in everyday life. How are specific rules or structures related to state borders realized in situations, how they are used, and how they are made relevant – or not. How do people show each other what kinds of rules are applied in border situations? How do people establish state borders as social facts? To answer these questions, I discuss three different state border situations at checkpoints in the Thai-Myanmar borderland. I show that public life is not simply dominated by discourse. Not everything what people do is discourse. Still, particular artefact such as checkpoints are understandable through discourse, knowledge, and practices.

State Border Situations and Practices

Camp Border Checkpoints

National regulations and state policies in Thailand are quite clear: camp residents are not allowed to leave the refugee camps and visitors are not allowed to enter. The camps are expected to be an area of enclosure. Infrastructure surrounding the camps, such as barbed wire fence and checkpoints with red and white marked objects are stationed there to communicate this. The architecture of checkpoints reflect, maintain and support state regulations related to camp state borders. At the same time, the negligence of its infrastructure indicates that diverse aspects of permeability in these intended confinements are possible. Ordinary pedestrians (such as camp residents), motorbikes, vendors, ration trucks and

all kind of other vehicles, for example belonging to the military or aid agencies, pass camp checkpoints daily.

Border Guards

There are two different groups that are present at the checkpoints named here as border guards: a paramilitary group (called *Or Sor*) and the camp security. The camp security members are camp residents and are formally under the jurisdiction of the camp and section leaders, who are members of refugee representative organizations. Members of *Or Sor* are under the command of the camp commander, who is also the local Thai district officer. Many *Or Sor* members have been working in the camp for more than 20 years, and most of them speak the same language as the camp’s residents and are part of the same ethnic group. Consequently, relationships between *Or Sor* members and camp residents have been established; some *Or Sor* members are even married to residents of the camp. Through marriage they gain access to programs related to refugee status such as the resettlement programs. So, what we learn here is that border guards establish social ties, and relationships to the people they are assigned to control. Still, from the perspective of camp residents, the *Or Sor* represent local Thai authorities, and camp security represents camp resident authorities. The reciprocal perceptions of belongings and associations to a specific group remain quite clear. Also, the locality where members of the two groups usually reside is clear: on the left side the *Or Sor*, and on the right side the camp security. What, then, is happening when people cross a checkpoint?

Active Non-Regulation

Not much happens at the checkpoint when looking at the crossing practices of pedestrians and motorbike drivers^{vi}. No one slows when passing the checkpoint; there is no ritual, no exchange of glances between *Or Sor*, camp security, or pedestrians. The border guards do not prevent people from leaving or entering the camp. What is observable, however, is a mutual expectation by both the border guards and pedestrians that no practical control is to be found at the checkpoint. The most significant hindrance are the border objects and the gate, particularly visible when motorbike drivers who simply lower their heads in order to pass the gate. Pedestrians and motorbike drivers alike also clearly carry all kinds of products while passing through the checkpoint. Camp residents carry products from the jungle while passing the checkpoint even though it is strictly forbidden for residents to collect material from

the jungle. Thus, passing the checkpoint is primarily part of local regulations and underlines active non-regulation. Registration or regulation of camp residents is not practiced. This supposedly enclosed space is not an enclosed space with some openings, but an open space with some points of closure. The mechanisms of closure refer particularly to expatriates and aid agency staff members.

(Un)Realized State Regulation

When vehicles want to pass the gate, drivers usually stop, leave the car, and register themselves in a book at the checkpoint hut. During that time, a camp security member usually comes over to the checkpoint hut and opens the gate, but often the gate is already open, and so Jeep drivers only register and pass through the gate. The camp security usually observes checkpoint practices continuously but the *Or Sor* members show their presence only occasionally. Aid agencies vehicles are the target group for control and regulation measures at this checkpoint. The members of this specific group must register in the book. In this case state regulations are practices and realized. There are Jeep drivers, however, who do not need to register in the book: for example, the Thai vendors who sell food in the camp and pass through the checkpoint daily. This is also the case for camp residents who own Jeeps themselves and are engaged in businesses. They do not need to register in the book, and they do not even stop at the checkpoint when the gate is open. Instead, vendors and these camp residents pay *Or Sor* members on a monthly basis, which allows them to pass through the gate and to carry out their business. These local regulations, or locally established border structures, are made invisible to higher authorities as these passing are not documented but are part of local negotiations between the respective vendors and the *Or Sor* members.

Situational Performance of a Total Institution

The relatively relaxed border regime, including the usual camp orders and structures that go along with it, change when the Thai district officer or the Thai military from Bangkok visit the camp. During their visit, the checkpoint is closed and *Or Sor* members practice strict border control. These visits are announced beforehand via loudspeaker announcements, so that camp residents are warned. In these situations, motorbike and Jeep drivers stop traveling. Meanwhile, the shops in the camps close and Thai vendors do not travel to the camp. Camp residents and *Or Sor* members

are used to and prepared for these situations where the normal, ordinary social order of the border situation is suspended. These occasional strict controls can be described as situational total institutions, or the situational performance of a total institution (Bochmann, 2017).

Borderland River Checkpoints

A public transportation system at the Salween river has been established due to the absence of alternatives by camp residents along the borderland area^{vii}. I also used this system as an ordinary pedestrian:

“We stop at small informal “checkpoints” (?) where Karen or Thai soldiers or paramilitary groups are based. Our driver pays these people and he also stops to buy beer. We also stop at small ports where the boat driver pays Burmese soldiers. The Burmese soldiers do not look at us. The money transfer is done in a very calm and routine way, silently, with no verbal interaction.”

The described transfer of money is done in a calm and routine manner, with nonverbal communication – all boat drivers pay the same amount of money at the same stops. No paperwork is conducted – only fees are given and collected. Thus, these collaboratively established arrangements are normalized, institutionalized practices, routines performed without question. This system gives participants a reliable opportunity to be mobile and to transport food items and other goods. The paying of fees gives local authorities a reliable income and thus, a reason to accept these practices. These observations illuminate the extent to which these fees are useful for camp residents on the one hand, and for stabilizing state (b)orders on the other. The tax-like contributions paid to diverse local authorities on both the Thai and Myanmar sides of the river makes clear that the public transportation system at the Salween river, established by camp residents (but also used by locals), is based on locally established arrangements with different actors present at the riverside. These collaborative activities enable a reliable mobility and economic trans-border system that defies the rules of formal central state authorities. Analogously to the camp checkpoint, occasional interruptions of this running order – the public transportation of people and good – occur. The fact that state authorities occasionally destroy or interrupt the running order become part of the ordinary, locally established system (Bochmann, 2019).

Street Border Checkpoints

In contrast to these more informal river checkpoints with no specific border architecture along the Thai-Myanmar border, mobile and fixed checkpoints are positioned on the main roads to communicate that (state) border control is carried out. The architecture of these checkpoints materialize, maintain and perform state borders that are visible to everyone passing through them. When public vehicles stop at the checkpoint, usually only those who look Burmese (in contrast to Western- and Thai-looking people) are the target group of control. Several times, I observed the procedures of crossing by people with or without expired documents to show to border guards. These people have to pay fees to the checkpoint guards before the public transportation vehicle could travel any further. If they are not able to pay the fine, they are detained for some days or weeks in a nearby town and/or are sent back across the border to Myanmar. In case they are detained, they must pay fees to be allowed to leave the premises. For those sent from the border to Myanmar territory, most people usually return to Thailand immediately^{viii}. I also observed how people bypass checkpoints. They do this in collaboration with the public transportation drivers. In this case public vehicle drivers stop before the checkpoints, the passengers leave the car and walk another way with distance to the street and the checkpoint, while the driver passes the checkpoint. Afterwards, the driver picks up the same passengers again some distance after the checkpoint, who then pay a fee to the driver in exchange for this service. In the border town Mae Sot, this situation can be observed regularly as there are many checkpoints at the main roads and many people without proper documents. My translators also told me that they are able to pass the checkpoints even though their papers expired because they knew the border guards. Again, similar to the situation at the camp checkpoint, relations are established between border guards and checkpoint crossers. In this context, crucially, the checkpoint situation in Thailand could be considered problematic, yet it is normalized for many. Human mobility, immigration and working practices is a mass phenomenon in the Thai-Myanmar borderlands (Vungsiriphisal et al., 2011, p. 12, Brees, 2008). Borderland residents and local officials have had to deal with it on a daily basis in public life for decades. Local state, government, and police authorities, who usually control the checkpoints and detention premises in collaboration with local employers, establish such an ambiguous (illegal) mobility system (cf. Brees, 2008, pp. 380ff). The checkpoint situations show that there are state border regulations on mobility, which

can be characterized by locally and situationally established systems and negotiations. A fine-grained analysis of social practices and situations is necessary to understand these systems that are again linked to historical linkages of the borderland region.

The Archaeological Ethnography

Capturing the social complexities of camp borders requires studying public life including the details and the moment-by-moment organization of everyday events and activities at borders. At the same time, historical and political discourses that become part of these details need to be considered. An archaeological ethnography as indicated here is a research methodology that meets these research requirements. The strength of combining the two approaches of an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography and a discourse analysis inspired by Foucault's archaeological methods are discussed, the links and especially the ethnomethodologically informed findings are introduced. The article indicates an adequate combination with an archaeological methodology, but further research is necessary to combine the two research approaches systematically.

From an ethnomethodologically informed ethnography, we particularly learned that the passing of checkpoints is a product of situational negotiations, interaction processes, and local arrangements between participants such as border crossers and border guards. It is the task of border guards to put in practice what the checkpoint architecture aims to represent. Social relations, however, between border guards and border crossers are established, ones which enable, for example, a defiance of state border regulations. The case of the camp border checkpoint shows that border guards support pedestrians passing the gate as a hindrance and perform active non-regulation. Still, border crossers observe the Jeep driver's practices; this, but also the situational performance of the total institution, sustain the idea that people are living in and entering or leaving an enclosed space under the oversight of central state restrictions. However, the normal social order of the camp checkpoints marks that there are local systems that allow residents and other to defy intended regulations on state borders. This is also the case for the practices at the border checkpoints at the river where a local public system of mobility and economy has been established. Human mobility is restricted situationally but the suspension of the ordinary order is normalized in people's practices. This example and

the phenomena of established social relations between border guards and border crossers confirms that, when looking at state borders, we are in need of a methodology that focuses on the very moment of social events and interactions to see how state borders are performed, maintained or suspended situationally and locally.

Moreover, we learned that state borders become visible through, and are maintained by state border objects and artefacts such as checkpoints. Checkpoints are materializations of border regimes and crossing through them makes people aware of borders – that they are living in borderlands and in a zone of human mobility regulation and restriction. Even though these are specific situations, they are part of public life in the borderlands. Thus, in order to understand border complexities, we need a methodology that takes objects and artefacts seriously and includes them in its analysis. The checkpoint architecture and related state objects could even be understood as participants of border events themselves. From an ethnomethodological angle, it is not assumed that border objects act by themselves, as suggested by Latour (2006, pp. 485ff), but objects may become participants when human participants in the event situate them. The social meaning of an object as well as its function is achieved in the process of using it in a situation (Garfinkel, Lynch and Livingston, 1981; Goodwin, 2003). Thus, border objects do not have the required competences to make themselves relevant but need human actions to become participants of the border checkpoint situations. Checkpoint architectures transport the idea of mobility regulation or even restriction but require the integration of local and situational negotiations and interactions.

Only the brief historical notes on the Thai-Burmese borderland situation complete the picture of the border regime circle. The border situations are not reducible to an everyday accomplishment but are also a consequence of the modern “national order of things” where every person has to belong to a territory and a people (Malkki, 1992, p.

25). Also, modern concepts of cartography are part of a wider, very powerful, global discourse, and form institutionalized patterns of knowledge that are part of today’s understanding, practices, and knowledge of border structures. State borders are governed by these global discourses that define a system of conceptual possibilities, the way people speak about and experience borders and determine the contemporary thinking of borders that leave its marks in public life. The cases here show that the historical and social linkages of the borderland need to be integrated for a comprehensive understanding of border situations. Researching border situations and people’s practices needs to incorporate the border regime created by discourse and history.

The article indicates a genealogy, which is referred to as materiality. A border regime discourse is introduced in public life via the architecture of the checkpoints. Checkpoints were constructed and spread globally during modern times. The infrastructure of checkpoints has a discursive effect and control is performed and articulated situationally. The state border is communicated as a strict line via colonial powers and discourses but at the same time, permeability was historically practiced by the people in the region. Thus, not only materiality and architecture indicate a connection between people’s performances/practices and discourses. Also, colonial history creating a modern border regime and the history of its permeability indicate a discourse that is connected to and part of public life. It is part of the discourse that people are aware of living in a borderland and they know about the dynamic modalities of crossing checkpoints. By only analyzing global discourses and historical accounts, scholars do not get access to the ordinary world of borderland life and people’s everyday practices in the context of borders. State borders are not simply the result of national regulations and (global) discourses and orders; instead, borders are the result of the usage and application of these discourses in public life as well as the local accomplishments of people’s practices.

NOTES

ⁱ Archaeological ethnography is an emerging transdisciplinary field among archaeologists and anthropologists where different research topics are applied to. The conception of “archaeological ethnography” is defined by scholars very broadly (Hamilakis, 2011, p. 405). Hamilakis and Anagnostopolous propose for example that archaeological ethnography is a practice with some main elements and features (2009, p. 73), that basically refer to ethnographic research practices in general. For

example, they state that it is critically reflexive, meaning that it entails an interrogation of the position and the situatedness of the ethnographer or the researcher (*ibid.*, p. 74). It is a ‘total’ ethnography in the sense that it does not only deal with the past but also with the present and aims to observe as “many areas of social life as possible” (*ibid.*, p. 75). Participant observation is the main method. Moreover, archaeological ethnography is multi-sided, not restricted to one site, sensuous and sensory,

seeing the body of the ethnographer as an analytic insight, multi-temporal, not restricted to the Western modernist concept of linear time succession, and politically sensitive. But additionally, the archaeological ethnography, as understood by Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulou, is seen as a collective practice among more than one scholar, but also with people from the research sites (*ibid.*, pp. 76-82). The approach proposed in this article agrees with these important features. It is very much inspired by debates on archaeological ethnography, particularly on the case studies that effectively combine ethnographic methods with archival research (Castaneda, 1996; Hollowell and Mortensen, 2009). But these debates lack methodological and theoretical grounding. In their research they neither do explicitly refer to ethnographic methodologies nor Foucault.

ⁱⁱ There has been a lot of controversy about the name of the country. In 1989, the military regime changed the country's name from the Union of Burma to the Union of Myanmar, and later to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, underlining the "nation building" process of one religion, one language, and one ethnicity. Sakhong argues that while the name Burma refers to the plurality of the multi-ethnic, religious and cultural nation state of the Union of Burma, the term Myanmar refers to the ethnic Burmese and the Buddhists of the country (2013, p. 19). The background of this argument lies in the word 'Myanmar' itself. Burma is an anglicised name of the country used during colonial times; in Burmese, Burma was called Myanmar Naingantaw – which literally means the royal country of Myanmar, again referring to an old term from classical inscriptions (Steinberg, 2015, p. 3). In the following, the term Myanmar is used for events occur-

ring after 1989 and the name Burma is used for events occurring before 1989.

ⁱⁱⁱ Refugee camps are perceived as a threat to the normal order of the nation state system, but at the same time, are the necessary 'other' and support the 'normal' nation state order. Camps are a threat because they represent territories where people live that neither belong to the host nor the home state. These institutions are the same time the 'necessary other' that creates the normalcy of the global state system and stabilizes its images (Bochmann, 2020).

^{iv} Smuggling, or as I would call it, small-trade, is part of everyday life also at the Myanmar-Thai borderlands. The difference between smuggling and small-trade is the result of state regulation. From an empirical point of view, the border between legality and illegality is fluid.

^v The claim that it is possible to collect "natural occurring data" is controversial and much discussed (cf. Speer, 2002).

^{vi} These descriptions are based on observations at camp checkpoints located in rural, peripheral and difficult to access areas. I was working as a teacher in the camps. That is why people perceived me primarily as a teacher and not a researcher.

^{vii} The Salween is home to about seven million people, mainly indigenous people such as the Karen, Mon, Wa and Lisu. The river is often the only connection between their villages due to the rough surrounding terrain. Small boats transport goods and people. It is one of the world's longest free-flowing rivers.

^{viii} Other studies confirm this practice (cf. Jackson and Associates, 2012, p. 16).

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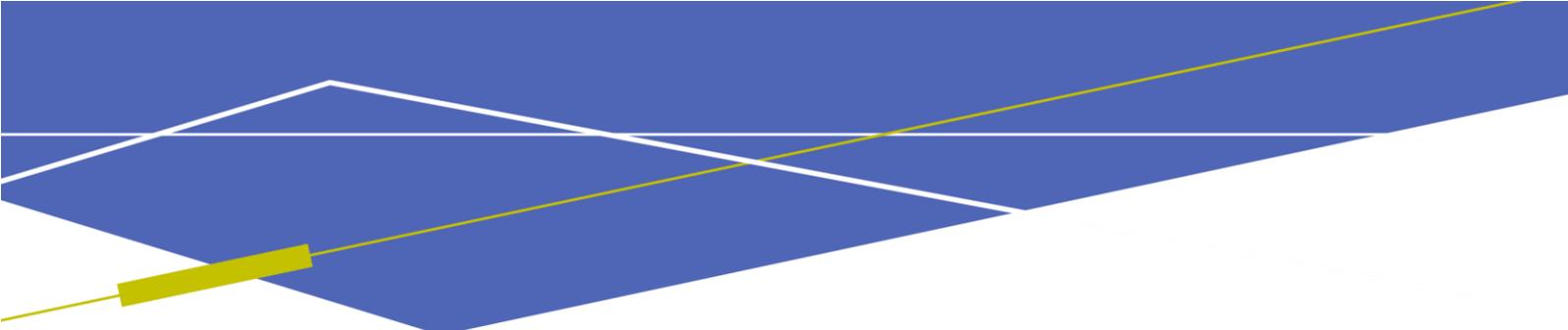
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ANNETT BOCHMANN is a post-doctoral researcher whose work focuses on political sociology, human mobility, governance, and (armed) conflicts. She has a particular regional interest in Asia and with forced migrants from Burma/Myanmar, having worked with refugees living in the Myanmar-Thailand borderland. Her book *Public Camp Orders. The Power of Microstructures in the Thai-Burmese Borderland* (Rowman & Littlefield, forthcoming 2020) analysis social micro structures and its relevance for governance, mobility/economy and temporality. Annett's interest on political sociology span several disciplines, including sociology, social anthropology and political science. She mainly researchers with qualitative research methods including video- and interaction analysis as well as discourse analysis. Annett Bochmann has conducted extensive ethnographies in Nepal/India and Thailand/Myanmar but also researched in Ghana and Germany. She held positions at the universities of Hildesheim, Mainz and Bielefeld. Currently she is working on the sociology of military, war and armed groups at the department of sociology at the University of Siegen.



Cross-border Collaborations as “Contact Zones”: Methodological Reflections on Ethnographic Studies in Border Regions

Sarah Kleinmann, Arnika Peselmann

The concept of contact zones (Pratt, 1991; 1992) serves to analyze social spaces constituted within particular historical settings and with deriving power relations. In our contribution, which is based on cultural anthropological studies in the German-Polish-Czech border region, we demonstrate how the contact zone concept can be employed as a heuristic for cross-border initiatives emphasizing the positioning of the actors involved. With a focus on methodical avenues to these social spaces, we first show how the ethnographic “tracking” strategy helps to constitute the research field and make it accessible for investigations. Secondly, we propose participant observation as a tool to investigate the situational (re)productions of contact zones by discursive and bodily practices as well as material arrangements. We also address methodological challenges that we are confronted with in a research field permeated by the dominant ordering structures of state borders.

Contact Zone, Cultural Anthropology, Cross-border cooperation, Eastern Europe, Qualitative Methods, Ethnography

La coopération transfrontalière comme zones de contact. Réflexions méthodologiques sur des études ethnographiques dans les régions frontalières

Le concept de zone de contact (Pratt, 1991; 1992) est utilisé pour analyser les espaces sociaux afin d'examiner leur situationnalité historique et les relations de pouvoir qui en résultent. Dans notre article, qui s'appuie sur des études anthropologiques culturelles dans la région frontalière germano-polono-tchèque, nous montrons comment le concept de zone de contact peut être utilisé comme une heuristique pour les initiatives transfrontalières en se référant aux positionnements des acteurs impliqués. Ces localisations sociales peuvent être dérivées du développement historique de la région frontalière et deviennent efficaces dans la pratique des collaborations transnationales. Au-delà des approches analytiques, la question quant aux approches méthodologiques de ces espaces sociaux se pose. En appliquant la stratégie ethnographique de “tracking”, nous voulons montrer comment le terrain de recherche peut être constitué et étudié. D'autre part, nous proposons à travers l'observation participante, comment une exploration des (re)productions situationnelles des zones de contact par des pratiques discursives et corporelles et des arrangements matériels peut être réalisée. Ce faisant, nous accordons une attention particulière aux défis méthodologiques qui découlent du terrain de recherche, qui est imprégné par des ordres dominantes. De cette façon, nous espérons apporter une contribution anthropologique culturelle et ethnographique à la discussion des méthodes dans l'étude des frontières.

Zone de contact, anthropologie culturelle, coopération transfrontalière, Europe de l'Est, méthodes qualitatives, ethnographie

Grenzüberschreitende Zusammenarbeit als Kontaktzonen. Methodologische Überlegungen zu ethnographischen Studien in Grenzregionen

Das Konzept der Kontaktzone (Pratt, 1991; 1992) wird zur Analyse sozialer Räume genutzt, um deren historische Situiertheit und die sich daraus ergebenden Machtverhältnisse zu untersuchen. In unserem Beitrag, der auf kulturalanthropologischen Studien im deutsch-polnisch-tschechischen Grenzgebiet basiert, zeigen wir auf, wie sich der Kontaktzonen-Begriff als Heuristik für grenzübergreifende Initiativen nutzen lässt, indem er auf die Positionierungen der daran beteiligten Akteur*innen verweist. Diese sozialen Verortungen lassen sich aus dem historischen Gewordensein der Grenzregion ableiten und werden im Vollzug transnationaler Kollaborationen situativ wirksam. Über analytische Zugänge hinaus stellt sich die Frage nach methodischen Annäherungen zu diesen sozialen Räumen. Durch die Anwendung der ethnografischen „tracking“-Strategie möchten wir zum einen aufzeigen, wie sich das Forschungsfeld konstituieren und praktisch beforschbar machen lässt. Zum anderen schlagen wir vor, wie durch die teilnehmende Beobachtung eine Erforschung situativer (Re)Produktionen von Kontaktzonen durch diskursive und körperliche Praktiken sowie materielle Arrangements möglich wird. Besonderes Augenmerk legen wir dabei auf die methodischen Herausforderungen, die sich gerade auch aus dem von dominanten Ordnungsstrukturen durchzogenen Forschungsfeld ergeben, wodurch wir einen kulturalanthropologisch-ethnografischen Beitrag zur Methodendiskussion in den Border Studies leisten möchten.

Kontaktzone, Kulturalanthropologie, Grenzübergreifende Zusammenarbeit, Östliches Europa, Qualitative Methoden, Ethnografie

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Introduction

The concept of the contact zone (Pratt, 1991; 1992) serves to analyze social spaces constituted within particular political, economic and social power structures. In our contribution, which is based on cultural anthropological studies in the German-Polish-Czech border region, we show how the contact zone concept can be used as a heuristic for current cross-border initiatives emphasizing the positioning of the actors involved. In our research these social positions derive to a large extent from the historical development of the border region and become effective in the execution of transnational collaborations.

With a focus on methodical avenues to these social spaces, we first show how the ethnographic “tracking” strategy helps to constitute the research field and make it accessible for investigations. We also propose participant observation as a tool to examine the situational (re)productions of contact zones by discursive and bodily practices as well as material arrangements. As researchers we do not stand apart from the contact zone we study – as participant observers, we are inevitably involved in its formation. This requires a reflexive approach on one’s own (self)positioning in contact zones as well.

Equally challenging is the national orders that are continuously established, particularly in the border context, and which can also influence scientific studies in the form of methodological nationalism: instead of borders themselves being an object of critical examination, national borders are often employed to territorially frame research objects. National borders are therefore not only reproduced, but also distort the view of alternative social boundaries.

The aim of this article is to highlight the potential of ethnographic research in border studies, particularly through its methodological openness and its inductive approach (Becker, 2006; Driessen, 1996; Peselmann, 2018; Kreisslová and Nosková, 2017). In the following paper we first give insights into the research project on which our methodological considerations are based. The introduction of the contact zone concept as a central analytical category for the study of these social spaces is followed by three methodological approaches before we address the challenges.

The research project, “Contact Zones. Cultural Practices

in the Czech-German-Polish Borderland”

Our methodical considerations on contact zones are based on the research project, “Contact Zones. Cultural Practices in the Czech-German-Polish Borderland”ⁱ. Our study focuses on interactions among different actors who participate in cross-border initiatives ranging from NGOs to collaborations on a communal level, but also to less formal exchanges. Non-governmental, cross-border cooperation, especially in this region, is an interesting field of research, since the region of Germany, Poland, and Czech Republic was overshadowed by Nazi violence and World War II, including the war’s social and political consequences. Moreover, in cultural anthropology, border regions are those that are often examined in terms of security policies and surveillanceⁱⁱ. But cooperations in the fields such as sports, history, or education are also relevant in this context. We argue that transboundary collaborations constitute a contact zone (Pratt, 1991; Pratt, 1992) in which negotiations of social positioning related to the changeful history of this borderland in the 20th century become visible.

The research was guided by the following questions: how do people establish and run joint initiatives within the given political, social, and material structures of the Czech-German-Polish borderlands? How do they deal with the changing and violent recent history of the region? How do they dissolve and transcend, modify, or reproduce borders while interacting in transboundary collaborations?

We therefore decided to focus on initiatives in the realms of cultural activities such as theater and cinema festivals, education and memorial culture, environmental protection, political collaborations, and leisure such as sports events. They all were carried out within the normative aspirations of “bridge-building” and enhancing cross-cultural interactions. Some prioritized this aim, while others addressed it as one among different motivations. Aside from a few exceptions, we mostly omitted joint infrastructural projects or joint business activities, knowing that these may represent an important desideratum for future studies.

To generate data, we applied ethnographic methods (Brednich, 2013; Breidenstein, 2013; Eisch and Hamm, 2001; Hess, Moser and Schwertl, 2013; Jeggle, 1984; Schmidt-Lauber, 2007), particularly participant observation at selected events such as film and theater festivals or sport events, but also in regular museum exhibitions and qualitative interviews with people involved in the organization of such transboundary contact

zones such as communal politicians or organizers of the above-mentioned festivities.

Cross-border collaborations as “contact zones”

To investigate cross-border collaborations, we employed the notion of contact zones with reference to U.S. literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt, who coined the term in the 1990s. Pratt has developed the contact zones-concept in the context of post-colonial studies and has since applied it in different historical settings. This includes the protest letter of an indigenous Andean to the Spanish king in 1613, as well as her university seminars, in which she tackled the history of the Americas from multiple cultural perspectives. She defines contact zones as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Still, she sees the “joys of the contact zones” (ibid., p. 39) like the moments of “mutual understandings, and new wisdom” produced in these encounters (ibid.).

In her studies such as in “Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation” (1992), Pratt moves “the position of analysis from the imperial center to the place where invasion, exploration, and colonization unfolded, to the contact zone” (Pratt, 2019, p. 7). These de- and re-centering practices are applied to many studies on borders and borderlands (Gerst and Krämer, 2019), and they mean to shift the research to the borders itself away from the governing centers which enforce border regimes. From the center’s perspective, border regions are often marked by a particular dialectic: they are seen as conflictive and peripheral trouble spots and at the same time have the potential to stimulate utopias of a harmonious and well-balanced transboundary exchange, including an acceptance and appreciation of difference. Studying borders at the borders means to understand instead how the border is (re)enacted by diverse actors through and within their everyday life practices.

When applying the notion of contact zone heuristically, one has to be aware of the wide expansion of the concept. This has led to its content flattening and changing. Pratt comments on this development: “Often in liberal thought the contact zone is idealized as something to aspire to, an edenic, harmonious place where people separated by deep differences successfully collaborate and cooperate, each side responsive to the other’s needs and interests. Often this vision is offered as

a predefined future, a script or program. This normative use of the concept is ideologically coherent, but it denies the critical and analytical force of the concept.” (Pratt, 2020, p. 9)

When Pratt speaks here about a normative usage of the term contact zones and “predefined futures, scripts and programs”, we can think of the many projects, initiatives and programs that have been installed to serve the overall aim of the European integration process and/or reconciliation after World War II and its consequences. As much as these endeavors are increasingly relevant, particularly considering nationalistic movements and right-wing parties on the rise, we uphold the analytical potential of the term against the generally positive connotations of the word “contact” (Rosner and Hall, 2004). This does not mean, however, that these normative “scripts” and the programs they result in should be excluded from methodological and analytical considerations. They have an enormous impact on the social, economic, and cultural lives in borderlands, including cross-border initiatives and projects. We regard them, therefore, as relevant forces that structure contact zones and need to be scrutinized. To investigate how people engage with these policies and how they shape cross-border collaborations, we propose ethnographic field methods, particularly participant observation.

We argue that while Pratt’s concept is a useful heuristic approach to address power structures which constitute human encounters in particular historical settings, there are little methodological considerations on how to approach these encounters. We propose several avenues to be applied, starting with the historization of borders in order to de-naturalize and de-essentialize their course and to emphasize their dynamic development. Instead of an *a priori* set research field, we suggest a classic ethnographic approach – the tracking strategy. This is defined as a field emerging along the researcher’s tracking of a particular relevant object – in our context, money-flow. In addition, we demonstrate how ethnographic field methods can also help to capture spatial and material aspects of a contact zone, a dimension which Pratt does not particularly touch upon. The challenges that come along with these methodic approaches – which are partially strengthened by the border context and its dominant ordering structures – will be addressed as well.

The historical becoming of a border(land)

Borders are arguably never given. They emerge, shift, and disappear in the course of time. Still, they

are often communicated as 'natural' or as existing "since forever'. These (political) narratives need to be critically examined by historicizing borders. The border between Bohemia and Saxony has been almost unchanged since 1459; its course through Central Europe was initially "based on natural border barriers, such as mountains, streams, ditches, watersheds or stone ridges" (Lozoviuk, 2012, p. 48), and was first marked by boundary stones in 1534. The course of the Czech-German border remained mostly unchanged throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Until the end of World War I, the Czech-German border constituted the frontier between the Habsburg Empire and the German Empire. In the course of the great changes in the political map of Europe after World War I, both monarchies ended. The first Czechoslovakian Republic and the Weimar Republic were founded there from then on. The relatively open and peaceful design of the border which made a "small border traffic" with "natural coming and going" possible (Eisch, 1996, p. 155) changed with the year 1933, and the increasing aggressive nationalism and expansionism of the NSDAP and the Henlein Party in the so-called Sudetenland. The interruption of the border course was caused by the German annexation and occupation of the border territories of Czechoslovakia following the Munich treaty in 1938. It was not until 1945 that the former border was restored. Compared to the German-Czech border, the contemporary German-Polish border is rather young. It was established in 1945 as a result of the Potsdam Agreement that restructured Germany's external frontiers after World War II. It was a shift to the West marked by the rivers Oder and Neisse. These actions were accompanied by the forced migration of the German minority in both countries living mostly along the borders.

Since 2007, the borders of the Czech-German-Polish borderland have been open and easy to cross (apart from refugees and non-EU citizens), but stayed mostly closed or strictly controlled during the period of the Cold War – although Eastern Germany, Poland, and Czechoslovakia were 'Socialist brother states'. Despite strict border surveillance there was also mobility and contact: between the GDR and the Polish People's Republic, visa- and passport-free border traffic existed from 1972 until 1980; even before that, Poles had commuted to work in the GDR. In addition, the border was by no means as hermetically sealed as it is sometimes seen today. For example, in the early 1960s, there were reports from the people's police ("Volkspolizei") in Görlitz describing how children and young people in particular were able to get from the GDR to Poland across the frozen Neisse River, or how Polish border guards traded

with German border residents. In our interviews in the Czech-German Ore Mountains, various people also referred to smuggling between the GDR and the ČSSR.

Given the violent history of the Czech-German-Polish borderland, the need to build bridges and to overcome hate and revenge was – after 1989/90 – articulated on a local and national level, and, of course, by EU politicians. Financial means to fund cross-border cooperation and to strengthen the establishment of so-called Euro-regions were provided (Kappus, 1999). The border is made by different actors, human as much as material, legal, or political. Cross-border initiatives must be considered as part of this enactment. To get a methodic grip of these assemblages we propose the ethnographic approach of tracking strategies.

Constituting the research field

By focusing on the historical formation of a border and a borderland – in our case the Czech-German-Polish one – the particular conditions which frame cross-border contact and collaboration are demonstrated. Borders and borderlands can be regarded as the junction of (inter)national border regimes and policies on the one hand and local, everyday live practices on the other. When establishing our research field, we tried to acknowledge this entanglement: to find out about cross-border collaboration, we started to go through the official lists of EU-funded cooperation located in one of the three Euroregions that are situated along the Czech-German-Polish border. Money flows are based either on EU regional policies to support rural areas and accelerate the process of European integration or from other institutions like the Czech-German Future Fund aiming at a "bridge building" between people of the two states. This enabled us to achieve a better understanding of how people in geopolitically marginal(-ized) areas make use of the border situation. Transboundary cooperation provides, as we learned from our interlocutors, an effective tool to gain agency for organizing one's own everyday life and for opening up spaces of possibilities.

Establishing a research field can be done by following objects, ideas, people, or, in our case, money and policies on their way through different contexts. This is a research approach promoted by the U.S. cultural anthropologist George E. Marcus. He presented his "tracking strategies" for the first time in his widely recognized publication "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography" (Marcus, 1995)

The mobile and multi-sited approach is meant to make translocal relations visible and to subvert the differentiation between a mostly theoretically conceptualized “world system” and empirical studies dealing with local ways of living: “any ethnography of a cultural formation in the world system is also an ethnography of the system” (Marcus, 1995, p. 99).

Anthropologists Cris Shore and Susan Wright have integrated this tracking-method into their approach of an “anthropology of policy” (2011). Shore and Wright question the notion of policy as a top-down and linear organized process (Shore and Wright, 2011, p. 8) and contrast it with their understanding of policy as a contested field negotiated among socially diverse positioned actors: “policy as a continuous process of contestation across a political space that could extend from local residents to interest groups, local institutions and authorities, the media, national government and, in some cases, international agencies.” (Wright and Reinhold, 2011, p. 86)

Instead of asking how a given policy is implemented in reference to its initial purpose, they want to know how “do people engage with a policy and what do they make of it?” (Shore and Wright, 2011, p. 8). Applying George E. Marcus’ tracking strategy and Shore and Wright’s anthropology of policy our initial methodical approaches was to follow the funding to different contexts and to investigate how actors appropriated the policies behind it.

One example for this appropriation is a successfully running Czech-German ice-hockey youth project supported by the European Regional fund for regional development (Interreg). In our interview the German cooperation partner explained that he was very much aware of the advantages of living in a border region: “...because projects are supported and funded here which might not have been possible in inland Germany.”ⁱⁱⁱ The normative aim of the European integration is aligned here with the interests of local applicants who wish to build up a sports youth team but are lacking the necessary infrastructure. The next ice rink from their hometown is located just across the border in the Czech Republic. The successfully raised EU funding by Czech and German partners pays now for the transfer of the German teenagers to the Czech ice rink and resulted in a weekly joint training of young Czech and German players. The relevance of the border for the way some people organize their everyday lives or – as in this case – the physical education of their children, becomes visible here and demonstrates how the borderland can also be pictured as a space of possibilities. Cross-border contact was seen here as a worthwhile and much appreciated but was – at least in this case – not the initial reason for

starting the project. It is evident that it is not a normative approach that determines the actions of the actors – but the possibility of achieving one’s own goals with the structurally available support. Pragmatic instead of idealistic motives for cross-border activities are best demonstrated by the numerous joint infrastructural projects starting with joint sewage system to fire brigades etc. A field that is often overlooked in research on transboundary activities.

Nevertheless we were aware that following fundings limited the scope of collaborations to those who had reached already a certain level of formality and had sufficient personal resources and knowledge to handle the bureaucratic necessities of an application and the following administration. To find out about less formalized joint activities – which are nevertheless entangled with (inter)national border regimes – we needed further approaches such as media analysis of local newspapers, communal websites and most important long-term participant observation. Through this combination of different methods, we learned about less visible cross-bordering such as with Czech and German associations of small animal breeders (chicken, rabbits etc.) who announce their regular meetings just at municipal notice boards. Despite their relevance for many rural communities these transboundary interactions receive only little attention. Participant observation helps to broaden the scope of initiatives and of social milieus and to integrate them into the study.

Participant observation in contact zones

Participant observation, understood as the reflected physical presence of the researcher in the field (Cohn, 2014) is a way to understand how transboundary initiatives as contact zones are situationally enacted. This includes discursive and bodily practices as much as the material aspects of these spaces – for example, the temporal arrangements of national flags. Participant observation is the major instrument of ethnographic research to gain access to non-discursive practices of space production. One has to be aware, however, that due to their bodily presence researchers are co-constitutive of spatial construction. Not least for this reason, self-reflection is a central component of the ethnographic method. In short, generating data by an ethnographic approach is also a (self)reflexive act (Becker et al., 2013; Bourdieu, 1993; Lindner, 1981; Maase, 2001). During our research, therefore, we were aware that we did not only observe the (re)production of

contact zones but that we ourselves created and were part of them: a request for interviews or for joining people in their everyday lives with the aim to observe and eventually write about them constructs a complex border and/or boundary relationship and power structures between researchers and researched ones. This is a phenomenon widely discussed and written about in the field of anthropology (Abu Lughod, 1991; Berg and Fuchs, 1995). Out of this dilemma the so-called "Writing Culture Debate" was initiated in the 1980s by George E. Marcus and James Clifford (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) and addressed the matter of representation of research subjects in ethnographies and particularly the risk to essentialize the "others". Since the "others" are "never simply found or encountered – they are made." (Reuter, 2011, p. 24) This creates a high risk in a research field with an extremely dominant system of ordering – a national border – where processes of 'othering' are historically made and often politically fueled.

To lay open the conditions under which research data is generated is meant to discard the idea that we are able to present objective findings about the other. Ethnographic data is generated through interactions between the researchers and actors of the field and depends strongly on the specific social setting. In a self-reflexive approach, we therefore paid attention to how we perceived and how we were perceived and positioned by our interlocutors; our nationality as German citizens was not the only feature that people addressed, if they addressed it at all. Sometimes it was our regional origin (we were both socialized in Western Germany) when talking about experiences in the GDR, sometimes it was our age when talking about particular generations and their historical experiences in the borderland, and sometimes our (assumed) political affiliations were addressed when talking critically about nationalist movements and parties (such as the Polish PiS or the German AfD-party) and expecting consensus. We were likely also perceived as women^{iv} and as academically trained, privileged persons pursuing a research project. Particularly the latter created contact zones that sometimes implied specific expectations on behalf of the people we worked with. Not a few assumed that we would evaluate the process of a "growing together" or at least a "coming closer" of Germany and Poland or Czech Republic respectively – as this is the declared aim of many funded joint initiatives. This was not our research focus, however, particularly given our perspective on policies, as mentioned above. Some interlocutors, however, expected us to do so and were disappointed that we were not developing practical advice or policy papers^v. When articulating the researcher's positionality in the

field a "self-stereotyping" should be avoided, however: "Family history, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and religion among other distinctions, can be usefully woven into an ethnographic narrative, but only if they are not self-evident as essentialized qualities that are magically synonymous with self-consciousness, or, for that matter with intellectual engagement and theoretical rigor. Their usefulness must be articulated and demonstrated because such distinctions are not fixed points but emerge and shift in the contiguous processes of doing and writing about fieldwork." (Robertson, 2002, p. 790) Keeping this in mind, the perspective on positionalities helped us to be sensitive for the situatedness, temporality, and dynamics of contact zones and the diversity of identity and alterity constructions that came into play and that we will address next.

Pitfall in studying cross-border initiatives: methodological nationalism

It is not surprising when studying cross-border initiatives that discourses and practices such as in memory cultures are often nationally framed. The nation state paradigm – with its imagined national communities (Anderson, 1998) – is a dominant ordering system that can also have influence on scholarly endeavors. National borders can thus also become borders as objects of research (Risse, 2018). When U.S. anthropologist Robert R. Alvarez reviewed anthropological studies based along the Mexican-U.S. border from the time before World War II until the 1990s, he demonstrated how a specific conception of culture "as territorially contained units and communities as likewise bounded entities" had framed the disciplinary perspective on borderlands and how the idea of cultural and national "containers" influenced anthropological epistemologies over a long period of time (Alvarez, 1995, p. 449). He criticized an ahistorical approach to the Mexican-U.S. border based on the perception that the "border was a real and natural boundary" and "a historically and geographically continuous frontier" (ibid., p. 453). This reinforced images of "bounded communities belonging to either the Mexican or US side of the border" (ibid). The nation-state paradigm in anthropological borderland studies has been challenged and suspended by the research of native anthropologists stemming from the borderland, as Alvarez observed. Additionally, the focus on folklore and literary genres presenting local notions of identities and emphasizing cultural conflicts and inequality in the borderlands put ho-

mogenous conceptions of national identities in question. One prominent example is Gloria Anzaldúa's well-known piece "Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza" (1987). In another move to avoid territorialized understandings of culture, Alvarez describes an emphasis on migration processes which undermine naturalized container models^{vi}.

In a similar critique on the assumption that nation, state, and society are a natural social and political form of the modern world, Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller scrutinized and distinguished modes of what they called a methodological nationalism within social science (Glick Schiller and Wimmer, 2002, p. 301): a perspective picturing nation, territory, society, and culture as seamlessly interwoven (Beck and Grandes, 2010, p. 189).

When studying interactions in border regions the nation-state paradigm is an inevitable and constitutive part of the research field. However, instead of accepting the state border as a given and naturalized ordering system – how it is often presented with reference to linguistic and cultural differences but also to natural formations such as mountain ranges – we looked at its historical becoming as well as its (ir)relevance in people's self-positioning. Paying particular attention to the inherent and divergent logics of the different contact zones and to the identity and alterity constructions based on other national categories – political affiliations, professional hierarchies, generational issues, racial/ethnic boundaries towards minorities (Kroneberg, 2014), and social milieu – we tried to avoid the pitfalls of methodological nationalism. Negotiations of identities and alterities are constitutive for all contact zones. Therefore, we need to understand that subject constitutions, understood as the interrelation of attributions (subjectivations) and appropriations (subjectivization), are ambiguous, contradictory and fragile in everyday life (Baltes-Löhr et al., 2014, pp. 246ff). Christian Wille and Rachel Reckinger speak here about the "logic of disorder" as a major characteristic for borderlands which can be observed in space and identity constructions (Wille and Reckinger, 2014, p. 9).

National (self)attributions are (inadvertently) promoted by the logics of cross-border funding practices – demanding a "Czech", "German", or "Polish" cooperation partner. Still, there can be other boundary work observed which is relevant to understand the complexity of borders but cannot be grasped by a single perspective on formal state borders. Dominik Gerst and Hannes Krämer (2019) have developed an approach to integrate research traditions focusing on state borders with those taking social boundaries – drawn along cultural and socio-symbolic differences – into consideration (see also Jenkins, 2015).

Paying particular attention to migration processes helped us to overcome the culture container model. As an example: the founders of an art institutions situated in the Polish borderland hosting art projects for Czech, German, Polish teenagers, oppose clear national attributions: "If someone asks us: Are you Polish? Then we don't agree immediately because we have our ancestors [who partially immigrated to the region from Ukraine after the Second World War, other parts of the family originate presumably from Armenia; the authors] and we see it as a mosaic. We also lived in Germany for a long time and received a lot from the Czechs. So we see ourselves as a kaleidoscope of cultures and nations."

By referring to their own migration experiences and the one of their ancestors they dissolve a state bounded understanding of identity. In their artwork, which includes collective film productions with people from neighboring villages in Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland, they enforce the process of de- and re-territorialization (Schroer, 2006): the border region instead of the nation-state becomes the spatial framework for alternative doings of identity. Cooperation in which hierarchical differences play a more important role than national border demarcations can be observed at the cooperation between a Czech and a German fire brigade. As we have been told by the head of the Saxonian fire brigade, the "other" is not so much the Czech counterpart but the control centers at a higher level in Dresden and Liberec in the Czech Republic. The Swedish ethnologist Jonas Frykman underlines the importance of social practices for the formation of identities. Cultural identities should therefore be seen as the consequences of action and not only as the result of reflexive and interpretative processes of "meaning-handling beings" (Frykman, 1999).

The process of doing the region and regional identity can sometimes also be fueled by the rules and regulations set in power by the state centers – particularly when they inhibit certain joint actions such as in the realm of joint medical care. The frustration about a legislation that fosters national responsibilities over cross-border – in this case, lifesaving – solutions makes the region seem more like the default political body to organize everyday life in the borderlands.

The withdrawal from regional politics and the turning to the national centers seems therefore difficult to comprehend – at least from the perspective of a Czech mayor and a German mayor who regret the reserved attitude of their Polish counterpart regarding cross-border collaborations. They interpret his behavior with his political affiliation being a member of the Catholic nationalist PiS-party. At the same time, he serves them

as a negative counterpart opposite to their self-conception as polyglot, openminded and transnationally-oriented regional politicians.

Another alterity construction runs not so much along political but ethnic lines which are drawn by some white Czech and Germans towards Czech Roma of those many settled in the borderlands due to radical gentrification processes in the Czech urban centers since the 1990s. Even though they are Czech citizens speaking Czech some of our interlocutors identified them as “the others” ascribing them with mostly negative attributes such as disturbing, dangerous, and delinquent. Among others we encountered this kind of boundary work in the context of the shared town square “Gemeinsame Mitte” of the twin cities Bärenstein-Vejprty. Meant to bring together Czech and German citizens of both municipalities, some interlocutors disliked the idea, however, that the “Gemeinsame Mitte” is a popular hangout for young Roma.

Generational identity and alterity constructions become clear in statements suggesting that resentment on behalf of Germans towards their Polish neighbors can mostly be found out by the “older generation”, while the younger generation is much more open. There is, however, also a reverse perspective: “[...] there are already Czech citizens who distinguish themselves from the Germans. So you can feel that too [...] Those who, the older generation, I would say, experienced the Second World War, are more open to the German population than those who lived after the Second World War.”

It can also be said that transboundary contacts are not necessarily close to borders in a geographical sense. The Neisse Filmfestival, which screens mostly arthouse films, attracts cineastes from Prague, Berlin, and even Austria. It is a particular social milieu that feels drawn to this event while others, though they live in close vicinities to the venues, have less interest.

Visitors of arthouse festivals resemble each other not only in their passion for a specific type of entertainment but often also in their socioeconomic milieu. The same often counts for participants of cross-border sport events, activities at memorial sites or auctions for small animal breeding. This suggested social closeness helps to act within a field in the Bourdieuan sense accumulating capital and gaining distinction (Bourdieu, 1987). The boundary between different socioeconomic milieus equipped with different types of capital lies often across national frontiers and connects people in specific situations and contexts. Or to employ Marilyn Strathern’s concept of “partial connections” (Strathern, 1991): in contact zones we find highly situated, sometimes occasional, sometimes continuous, diverse, unexpected, he-

terogeneous social connections that do not necessarily have to correspond to the classical order patterns – and thus also not to implicit or explicit assumptions of researchers who themselves take on a partial perspective and are part of the partial connections in the field.

Conclusion

In our article, we have tried to demonstrate the analytical potential of the contact zone-concept for cross-border initiatives and to discuss it with ethnographic approaches in border studies. Based on our field research on cross-border initiatives and collaborations in the Czech-German-Polish borderland, our contribution suggests ways to combine the employment of the contact zone-heuristic and its analytical potential with ethnographic field methods.

Applying a multi-sited approach and anthropology of policy, we followed the appropriation of international policies on enhancing transboundary initiatives. Thus, we started to constitute our research field along money flows. In addition, long term participant observation in municipalities made less formal cooperation visible.

Describing these historically situated social configurations as contact zones, we were able to look at the “joys of the contact zones” (Pratt, 1991, p. 39) including also the possibilities of the borderlands when making use of the economic potential that lies in politically promoted joint activities. Likewise, the heuristic approach of the contact zone covers also conflicts in an area marked by a violent past and decades of closed borders with few exchanges on a civic society level. The simultaneously connecting and separating aspects of borders, their Janus-headedness (Van Houtum and Eker, 2015) can therefore be brought into focus through this approach.

As cultural anthropologists, we would particularly like to point out the potential of the ethnographic method. Through its use, the constitution process of contact zones including its spatial and material aspects can be highlighted. This is an aspect that Pratt – as written at the beginning – does not address in particular, although the spatial connotation of the concept of contact zones is immediately evident.

We are aware of the risk in adopting national paradigms and territorialized understandings of culture in methodological as well as in analytical approaches. We suggest to pay particular attention to the historical becoming of the border area as well as to the changing and sometimes also ambivalent identity and alterity constructions relevant to actors.

The impact scientific studies can have on the con-

struction of national, ethnic, or social “others” has been widely reflected in anthropological literature (Alvarez, 1995; Fabian, 1993). We therefore argue to make the process of generating data as transparent as possible and to scrutinize the particular social configurations between researchers and researched subjects (sometimes indistinguishable) as just one further contact zone.

We also argue for making the researchers visible in the text in the process of writing. Thus, it can also be made clear in the representation of the results that ethnographic data is situationally generated in the interaction of researchers and research partners (Massmünster, 2014).

It is remarkable, by the way, that the concept of the “contact zone” – like that of “partial connec-

tions” – has found application in the field of museology (Meyer, 2018; Clifford, 1997; Sternfeld, 2016). James Clifford, who together with George E. Marcus questions the practices and assumptions of ethnographic representation, sees museums as contact zones of painful conflict and prospective dialogue. Nora Sternfeld illuminates memorials at historical sites of Nazi crimes from this perspective. This different application of the concept, which does not address nation-state borders, again demonstrates the potential of contact-zone heuristics for the investigation of spaces that are permeated by conflicts and power asymmetries, but at the same time contain productive and cooperative (“joys”) elements.

NOTES

ⁱ The research project “Contact Zones. Cultural Practices in the Czech-German-Polish Borderland” was carried out at the Institute of Saxon History and Cultural Anthropology, Dresden/Germany (2015-2017).

ⁱⁱ See for example *Movements – Journal for Critical Migration and Border Studies* or Schwell, A. (2008) *Europa an der Oder: Die Konstruktion europäischer Sicherheit an der deutsch-polnischen Grenze*, Transcript, Bielefeld.

ⁱⁱⁱ This and other interview quotes are taken from interviews the authors conducted between July 2016 and July 2017 in the German-Czech-Polish border region.

^{iv} On stereotypes of German women cf. Surynt, I. (2014) *Hindernisse in der deutsch-polnischen Kommunikation*, in Hartmann, Kinga (Ed.), *Deutsche und Polen. Stereotype, Kommunikationskulturen, wechselseitiges Wissen*,

Sächsische Bildungsagentur/GAJT Wydawn, Görlitz/Wrocław, pp. 37–63.

^v On the different expectations and conflicts in the contact zone between anthropologists and the staff of a theater see Näser, T. (2019) *Filming in contact zones. Strategien der Aushandlung kameraethnografischer Begegnungen*, in Kleinmann, S., Peselmann, A., and Spieker, I. (Eds.), *“Kontaktzonen” und Grenzregionen. Kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektiven*. Universitäts-verlag, Leipzig.

^{vi} See also Kathrin Lehnert’s study on the disordering of borders caused by migration processes: Lehnert, K. (2017) *Die Un-Ordnung der Grenze. Mobiler Alltag zwischen Sachsen und Böhmen und die Produktion von Migration im 19. Jahrhundert*. Universitätsverlag, Leipzig.

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ADDRESSES

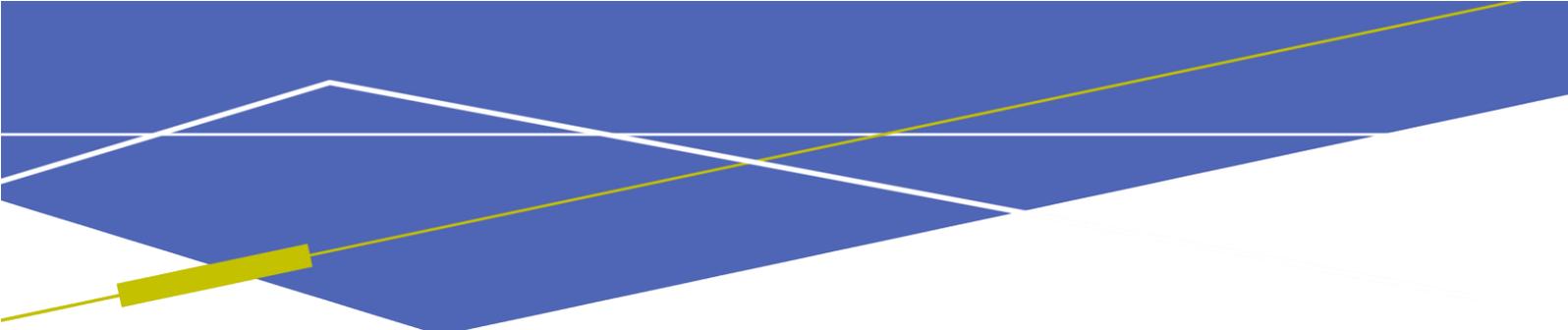
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Of Borderlands and Peripheries: The Promise of Cooperation

Ulrike Kaden

Under the Schengen Agreement, inner-European borderlands are assigned a new role: whereas the EU's outer borders are increasingly fortified, inner-European borderlands are considered to transform into spaces of encounter and cooperation. But while the creation of a passport-free zone has come to represent a hallmark of the European integration project, the debate on the 'European refugee crisis' and political calls for border closure facilitate exclusive ideas of state and space. Given that state bordering relies heavily on the reproduction of socio-cultural boundaries in everyday life, this paper takes an interest in scrutinizing the permeability of Europe's internal borderlines. The paper argues that the documentary method provides a promising approach to study how local cross-border practices are related towards the reproduction of borders. Focusing on cross-border urban development in the Polish-German borderland, the paper demonstrates how cooperation is situated in a field of tension in-between absolute and relational concepts of space.

Border studies, European integration, Schengen Agreement, cross-border cooperation, cross-border urban development, documentary method

Des zones frontalières et périphériques: La promesse de coopération

L'accord de Schengen donne un nouveau rôle aux frontières internes européennes: Pendant que les frontières extérieures de l'UE sont de plus en plus renforcées, les zones frontalières à l'intérieur de l'Europe doivent devenir des lieux de rencontre et de coopération. Bien que voyager sans passeport soit devenu un symbole du projet européen d'intégration, les débats concernant "la crise européenne des réfugiés" et les requêtes politiques pour un contrôle des frontières renforcent un concept exclusif de l'état et de l'espace. Ce papier prend en compte la perméabilité des frontières internes européennes et pour cela, il tient compte que des processus gouvernementaux de délimitation des frontières sont tributaires de l'activation de frontières socio-culturelles. La méthode documentaire est proposée comme une approche prometteuse pour analyser de plus près la relation entre les pratiques de coopération transfrontalière et les processus quotidiens de délimitation des frontières. En s'appuyant sur l'exemple du développement urbain dans la région transfrontalière germano-polonaise, le papier montre comment la coopération est marquée par le rapport de tension absolu et relatif des projets de territoire.

Études des frontières, intégration européenne, accord de Schengen, coopération transfrontalière, développement urbain transfrontalier, méthode documentaire

Von Grensräumen und Peripherien: Das Versprechen der Kooperation

Das Schengener Abkommen verleiht innereuropäischen Grenzen eine neue Rolle: Während die äußeren Grenzen der EU zunehmend verstärkt werden, sollen innereuropäische Grensräume zu Orten der Begegnung und Kooperation werden. Doch obschon passfreies Reisen zu einem Symbol des europäischen Integrationsprojektes geworden ist, stärken die Debatte um die ‚Europäische Flüchtlingskrise‘ und politische Forde-

rungen nach Grenzkontrollen exklusive Konzepte von Staat und Raum. Dieser Beitrag nimmt die Durchlässigkeit innereuropäischer Grenzen in den Blick und berücksichtigt dabei, dass staatliche Grenzziehungsprozesse auf die kontinuierliche, alltägliche Reproduktion sozio-kultureller Grenzen angewiesen sind. Die Dokumentarische Methode wird als vielversprechender Ansatz vorgeschlagen, um das Verhältnis zwischen grenzüberschreitenden Kooperationspraktiken und alltäglichen Grenzziehungsprozessen näher zu untersuchen. Am Beispiel grenzüberschreitender Stadtentwicklung im polnisch-deutschen Grenzraum zeigt der Beitrag auf, wie Kooperation durch das Spannungsverhältnis von absoluten und relationalen Raumkonzepten geprägt wird.

Grenzstudien, Europäische Integration, Schengener Abkommen, grenzüberschreitende Kooperation, grenzüberschreitende Stadtentwicklung, Dokumentarische Methode

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Introduction: Shifting perspectives on inner-European borderlands

Since the end of World War II, perspectives on inner-European borderlands have profoundly changed. This change has been noticeable in both political and academic discourse and has encompassed shifting frameworks of interpretation and representation. Minghi (2002), for example, notes how, in the aftermath of World War II, borderlands were associated with conflict and confrontation. Life in the vicinity of borders was shaped by restraint and caution, with borderlands representing ambiguity and uncertainty. This perception, however, gradually shifted from “conflict to harmony” (2002, p. 40) in the course of the second half of the 20th century. This shift can be explained by the fact that local cross-border collaborations played an increasingly important role in the development of meaningful bi-national relations. The economic and political integration of European nation-states further strengthened the idea of borderlands as symbols of peaceful neighborly relations and facilitated the development of cross-border mobility and encounter. Scott (2012) makes a similar observation, and emphasizes how inner-European borderlands have grown into symbols of integration. The transcendence of borders previously defined by hostility and sharp demarcation, he notes, has become a characteristic symbol of the European integration project: “Borders play an important role in the representation of European nation-states and the EU itself, as in the representation of the EU’s relations to its neighbours” (Scott, 2012, p. 89).

However, perceptions of borderlands have also changed in the academic debate. While the EU integration and enlargement project transformed the role and functioning of inner-European borders, academic debate facilitated a supranational perspective on political space and sovereignty (Scott, 2012, p. 85). Research on the European integration process and, more specifically, cross-border relations, has come to be defined by an understanding of borderlands as sites of promising opportunities. This perception of borderlands as resources appreciates the “freeing of borders from a single-minded interpretation as political-sovereignty lines” (Van Houtum and Eker, 2015, p. 41). It describes “the possibility to tell another, more liberating narrative of the same border” (Van Houtum and Eker, 2015, p. 41) and points out possibilities of re-writing established ideas of borders commonly defined as markers of political sovereignty.

This paper takes the idea of ‘integrative borderlands’ as a starting point to scrutinize the permeability and shifting nature of inner-European borders. Given that state-bordering relies heavily on the reproduction of socio-cultural boundaries in everyday life, inner-European borderlands continue to represent crucial sites of boundary-making processes. Against this background, the paper discusses how European spatial policy facilitates ideas of inner-European borderlands as arenas of encounter and takes a closer look at ‘cooperation’ as a local cross-border practice. Its aim is to bring attention to the question of *how* the practice of cooperation is accomplished, thus shifting the focus toward the reconstruction of tacit knowledge. Here, the paper demonstrates that the documentary method provides an important comparative, reconstructive approach to explicate diverging ideas of ‘border’ and ‘cooperation’. The analysis draws on fieldwork conducted in the Polish-German borderland, and focuses on the distinct field of practice of urban and regional development. Beyond notions of ‘cooperation’ as a means of fruitful, intercultural exchange, the paper shows how cooperation partners approach and cross borders in markedly different ways.

EU spatial policy: In-between policy discourse and planning practice

The changing perception of borderlands in both the political and academic debate is not confined to matters of representation and interpretation. Beyond ideas of borderlands as arenas of symbolic practice, the regions adjacent to political-geographical borders should also be looked at as political fields of action (Heintel and Waack, 2010). As distinctive state spaces, borderlands are subjected to political aims, socio-cultural negotiations, and citizenship concepts. Here, the development of neighborly relations between Poland and Germany serves as an insightful example. With both governments trying to revise the negative imaginaries associated with the neighborhood and, in particular, the shared borderline, the border came to be referred to as a “unifying element between neighbours” (Scott, 2012, p. 92). Noticeably, this symbolic redefinition played an integral role in political discourses in Poland and Germany after 1989 and can also be identified in academic work. Research on Polish-German relations (e.g., Matthiesen and Bürkner, 2001; 2002; Dürschmidt and Matthiesen, 2002; Bürkner, 2002) provides an intense study of the integrative

potential of the newly interpreted border and addresses the role of local cross-border encounters in shaping binational relations. In this regard, political and academic discourses draw on the symbolic redefinition of borderlands to facilitate cross-border relations and to counter populist and revisionist ideas of state bordering.

From bounded to networked spaces?

The idea of borderlands as promising sites of encounter and reconciliation has also found its way into EU spatial policymaking. This development is notable as spatial policy is a relatively new policy field for the EU. According to Richardson and Jensen (2003, p. 14), the European Commission and its General Directorate for Regional Development expressed a growing interest in revising territorial organization from the early 1990s onwards. A series of publications discussed spatial planning on the European scale, ranging from ideas to reorganize the Regional Development Fund to attempts at integrating the EU member states' spatial planning initiatives. This focus on European spatial planning initiatives has led to the "making of a new spatial policy discourse" (Richardson and Jensen, 2003, p. 7), and established 'territory' as a key category of the European integration project.

An important cornerstone of EU spatial policy has been the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), a strategic paper prepared by the Committee of Spatial Development (CSD) and officially presented in 1999. While the ESDP attempts to bring together the various EU spatial planning initiatives and to integrate its member states' spatial planning activities, it is also considered a means of informing spatial policymaking across Europe. Accordingly, one main aim of the ESDP is to "giv[e] direction to action" (Faludi, 2003, p. 2) and provide a framework which advances the coordination of ideas and strategies of spatial planning. While spatial planning on the European scale has notably grown in significance, the ESDP, however, does not entail a shift in competencies; instead, it can be defined as a strategic proposal which promotes a territorial interpretation of the European integration project and strengthens ideas of 'European space'—including its boundaries. By focusing on supra-national planning as a valuable opportunity for its member states, the ESDP facilitates the production of a European scale of socio-spatial organization.

The conceptual approach of the ESDP is of significance insofar as it represents the highly symbolic character of the European spatial policy discourse. This characteristic is further underlined

by the fact that the recommendations of the ESDP are centered on spatial imaginaries. The development of "spatial visions" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21), for example, plays a key role in the paper and demonstrates how the ESDP aims to introduce a transnational perspective in spatial planning strategies. Particular emphasis is laid on the "improvement of the links between international/national and regional/local networks" as well as the facilitation of "co-operation at regional, cross-border and transnational levels" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21). Apparently, spatial imaginaries are considered a useful resource to allow for meaningful socio-spatial practices: member states, in particular regional and local authorities within borderlands, are asked to develop "spatial visions and strategies" (European Commission, 1999, p. 44) to initiate cooperation across nation-state borders.

In sum, the ESDP's concern with the development of transnational spatial planning practices allows for two observations: first, the attempt to provide the European integration project with a strong territorial dimension and imaginaries of 'European space'. The focus on networked spaces, including the development of sub- and supra-national regions, could be understood "as an expression of a 'will to order' European space" (Richardson and Jensen, 2003, p. 14 emphasis in original) and, therefore, an attempt to reorganize established spatial concepts such as the nation-state. Second, the field of European spatial policy has come to be defined by a particular discursive strategy, with notions of connectivity, mobility, and fluidity informing the planning of ideas and practices. As such, European spatial policy promotes ideas of space in accordance with the vision of a "Europe of flows" (Hajer, 2000, p. 141)—a discursive concept aimed "to strengthen the global competitiveness of Europe and ease out uneven geographical development within Europe" (Hajer, 2000, p. 138). What becomes apparent here is that EU spatial policy, while not representing an independent EU policy sector, is set up to inform and organize EU policymaking in further sectors. This functioning of EU spatial policy has also been pointed out by Dühr et al. (2010, p. 19) who indicate that "European spatial planning tends more towards influencing and coordinating the spatial impact of other sector policies." However, what does this attempt at trans-nationalization mean for spatial planning strategies in borderlands, and how do ideas of transnational, networked spaces affect local practices in urban and regional development?

Cooperation as a spatial planning imperative

To gain a better understanding of how European spatial policy approaches borderlands, it is important to note that the ESDP handles 'space' with respect to its "economic potential" (European Commission, 1999, p. 22). The ESDP brings about a sharp distinction between competitive urban places and peripheral regions, whereby less urbanized areas are classified as either "rural" or "economically weaker regions" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21). Beyond blurring ideas of rural and peripheral, the ESDP draws on the notion of peripherality "to express the hinterland function of peripheral regions in relation to urban areas" (Jensen and Richardson, 2004, p. 85). Noticeably, this territorial perspective on regional economic disparities results in the conceptualization of accessibility and cooperation as spatial planning imperatives to overcome peripherality. To address uneven economic development, the ESDP promotes regionalization processes as a strategic handling of economically weaker and less densely settled areas. This approach not only forwards a strong differentiation of European regions along the lines of center and periphery, it also limits the focus to aspects of connectivity and fluidity.

The ESDP devotes special attention to the potentialities of borderland spaces. As the regions adjacent to state borders are associated with "peripherality" and "developmental disadvantages" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21; see also European Commission, Directorate-General for Regional Policy, 2011, p. 12), the ESDP recommends the establishment of cross-border cooperation programs. Moreover, authorities in borderlands are asked to develop "cross-border spatial visions and strategies" (European Commission, 1999, p. 44) to foster the European integration project. The ESDP even suggests that local authorities, by engaging in cooperation across borders, are enabled to "contribute their ideas to a spatial structure for tomorrow's Europe" (European Commission, 1999, p. 44).

Territorial cooperation, in this regard, is considered a useful strategy to handle economic disparities between European regions. The recommendation to create smaller town networks and shared infrastructures within borderlands exemplifies how EU spatial policy suggests that peripherality results from a lack of connectivity. As the issue of uneven economic development is largely reduced to a matter of networking, local and regional borderland authorities are considered to turn into strategic actors of the European rescaling process. This perspective on borderlands as economically less developed or geographically

marginal locales also indicates, however, the powerful significance of spatial imaginaries. While inner-European borderlands are defined by a variety of characteristics and range from densely settled, urbanized areas to sparsely populated regions, the notion of 'peripherality' implies that borders are spaces of still-untapped potential.

From a territorial perspective, this is where the significance of cooperation comes into play. Cooperation functions both as a distinct perspective on European space and as a strategic handling of cross-border relations. Regarding the proposed policy options set out in the ESDP, cooperation is even considered a key practice toward a more territorially balanced and sustainable EU (European Commission, 1999, pp. 19–21). This approach to borderlands implies that the development of cross-border cooperation structures between cities and regions, as well as the building of interlinked city clusters, is considered an important strategy to address disparities in economic, social, and cultural infrastructure. For borderlands considered economically disadvantaged and peripheral, cooperation is further regarded as a strategy to "develop functional complementarity" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21) and to allow, therefore, the maintenance and improvement of local institutions and services. The ESDP also specifies that "complementarity should not be focused solely on economic competition but also expanded to all urban functions, such as culture, education, and knowledge, and social infrastructure" (European Commission, 1999, p. 21). In all cases, cooperation turns into a powerful narrative that brings about a strong transnational focus and the idea of connectivity to local and regional spatial-planning actors.

The above observations, however, raise the question of how the ESDP's ideas and recommendations have found their way to regional and local borderland authorities. In particular, the EU's transnational cooperation programs have played an important role in transferring spatial concepts into a variety of funding programs. This approach has led to a situation where cooperation is practiced within "cross-border, interregional, transnational, transfrontier, transboundary, transborder, trans-European and supranational (...)" (Dühr et al., 2010, p. 30) contexts. Inter-regional cooperation programs between geographically separated regional actors and transnational cooperation programs across supra-national regional structures act next to Cross-Border Cooperation (CBC) programs between adjacent border regions. Here, CBC plays an increased role in applying the ESDP's ideas and recommendations at the local and regional scale. Dühr et al. (2010, p. 231), for example, suggest that cooperation projects es-

tablished through EU-funded CBC-programs have allowed for a “wide dissemination of the ESDP’s spatial concepts and ideas among planning practitioners across Europe”.

It is intriguing how EU-funded cooperation programs have come to inform the production of cross-border spaces. For example, access to funding through the Community Initiative INTERREG, which represents one of the most important resources for local and regional borderland authorities, is strongly related to the establishment of European cross-border regions (or Euroregions). Euroregions are defined by both the limitation of the territorial scope and the range of legitimate partners of cooperation. The funding guidelines thus demonstrate the ambivalent character of Euroregions, which may equally be considered ‘networked spaces’ and ‘bounded spaces’. As cross-border structures between local borderland authorities, Euroregions meet all criteria considered networked spaces. But as regional spaces confined by administrative and funding boundaries, Euroregions appear as bounded spaces. As the application for and the implementation of INTERREG program funding is organised along the political-administrative boundaries of ‘Euroregions’, the latter may also be considered “strictly bounded cross-border regions” (Celata and Coletti, 2015, p. 155).

Restrictive legislations, stubborn routines

The promotion of connectivity and networked spaces, however, does not necessarily indicate the declining relevance of bounded spaces. This consideration applies, in particular, to attempts at cooperation in the field of spatial planning. Dühr et al. (2010, p. 17 emphasis in original) have noted how, despite EU transnational policy discourses, spatial policy continues to be defined by state-centric practices: “Spatial planning is deeply rooted in the ‘nation-state mentality’”. This means that regardless of the numerous European policy programs on transnational cooperation, national and regional spatial policies only rarely engage with transnational issues (Dühr et al., 2010, p. 17). Yet, what are the reasons that lie behind this discrepancy between the EU’s transnational policy discourse and state-centric practices?

Integrating cross-border perspectives into planning practices appears to be a difficult undertaking. An important reason for this is that practices within the field of spatial, urban, and regional development are structured by national and regional spatial planning legislations. Planning routines are thus organized within the framework of established, bounded spatialities. Accordingly, plan-

ning actors are situated “in divergent political, legal, and, more broadly, cultural contexts”, and their practices are “silently acting in the domestic setting” (Jacobs, 2016, p. 69). Jacobs (2016, p. 69) even concludes that what has come to be known as ‘European spatial planning’ is, above all, a policy and academic discourse situated on the European scale. The discrepancy between the EU’s transnational policy discourse and state-centric practice has also been pointed out by Paasi and Zimmerbauer (2016). Regarding cross-border regionalization processes, the authors remark that, “in strategic planning, planners need to think increasingly in terms of open, porous borders despite the fact that in concrete planning activities, politics and governance the region continues to exist largely in the form of bounded and territorial political units” (Paasi and Zimmerbauer, 2016, p. 75).

However, while national and regional spatial planning legislations certainly have a restrictive effect, they do not fully explain the stability of established planning routines. The observation that legislations take bounded spaces for granted does not explain, for example, why planning practices are so resistant to change. Also, legislations provide little insight into whether and how actors within the field of spatial, urban, and regional development attempt to cross traditional boundaries. Two questions emerge from these considerations: First, given the contrast between the EU’s transnational policy discourse, on the one hand, and national and regional spatial planning practices on the other, how do urban and municipal developers in borderlands handle cross-border relations? Second, and regarding the symbolic dimension of spatial planning and development, how do urban and municipal developers imagine, conceptualize, and construct cross-border spaces? Both questions are vital to examine how local planning actors in borderlands approach the border, and whether and how they manage to accomplish cross-border cooperation projects with neighboring colleagues and institutions.

Approaching knowledge in cooperation practices

This paper argues that while cooperation has come to represent a powerful narrative of the European integration project and, in particular, EU spatial policy, cross-border practices are situated in a field of tension in-between ‘networked’ and ‘bounded spaces’. So how, then, is cooperation practiced under local conditions? To gain a better understanding of local cooperation dynamics, it is important to consider cooperation as a specific

form of socio-spatial practice. Cooperation is defined—as a socio-spatial practice—by both its symbolic and material dimensions and plays an important role in the reproduction of borderland spatialities. Additionally, the practice of cooperation can be considered alongside EU re-scaling processes and, in particular, sub-national regionalization processes. This approach recognizes the meaningful role of cooperation in shaping the spatial imaginaries of borderlands as well as European space. However, to come to a more accurate understanding of how cooperation practices are situated toward the border, it is important to examine *how* local cooperation partners actually engage in cooperation. How do cooperation partners handle and cross the border? How do they approach their neighbors and initiate cooperation projects? How are their ideas of cooperation situated towards established bounded spaces?

Seeking out patterns: the documentary method

Examining the *how* of cooperation requires a qualitative, reconstructive methodology. The reason is twofold; firstly, because reconstructive approaches focus on underlying patterns of social interaction and thus consider the significance of tacit knowledge; secondly, because reconstructive approaches allow for a reflexive research practice and therefore take the perspective and context of scientific practice into account (Przyborski and Wohlrab-Sahr, 2010, p. 25). Considering these observations, the documentary method of interpretation represents a promising approach to the study and analysis of cooperation practices. This method highlights the difference between explicit and tacit knowledge and aims to reach beyond the literal meaning of experiences and perceptions. As a reconstructive approach, the documentary method makes explicit that constructions of reality are embedded in everyday social interaction. Such constructions, argues Meuser (2011, p. 140), are usually produced through unconscious, non-explicit perceptions. However, access to tacit knowledge can prove to be a difficult endeavor. The documentary method tackles this methodological issue by differentiating between the analysis of communicative and conjunctive knowledge. Drawing on Mannheim's (1964) sociology of knowledge and Garfinkel's (1961; 1963; 1967) approach to ethnomethodology, the documentary method follows the distinction between the public meaning of perceptions and expressions on the one hand, and their non-public, milieu-specific meaning on the other (Bohnsack et al., 2010, p. 22). Reconstructing the

milieu-specific dimension of perceptions and experiences is therefore considered a strategy to explicate conjunctive knowledge, in which individual appearances are handled as “documents” of underlying interaction patterns. Each expression might thus be considered a document of a meaningful, underlying pattern. Consequently, the documentary method takes into account that interaction requires the production of inter-subjectivity (Bohnsack et al., 2010, p. 22). From this perspective follows a methodological approach that aims at identifying an underlying social pattern through a number of appearances (e.g., in interview passages) and vice versa.

The documentary method's distinction between communicative and conjunctive knowledge is also apparent in its reflexive character. Considering the methodological problem of objectivist claims, on the one hand, and subjective meanings, on the other, the documentary method contrasts common sense and scientific interpretation. Bohnsack (2010, p. 100), for example, indicates that “(...) there is no way to differentiate methodologically between the perspective of those under research and the perspective of the observer. As a consequence, there is no real methodological difference between common sense and scientific interpretation.” Therefore, the documentary method neither represents an objectivist nor a subjectivist research approach: while taking the actors' communicative knowledge as the basis of analysis, the analytical focus lies on the reconstruction of tacit knowledge. More specifically, this perspective implies that the documentary method tries to avoid both, the idea of the researcher as the privileged observer, and the descriptive reconstruction of communicative knowledge or common-sense theories. Explicating and studying the kind of knowledge that orients social interaction but is neither obvious to those under research nor their observers thus stands at the center of the documentary method of interpretation.

Continuous reinterpretation: the accomplishment of practice

However, what do the above considerations mean for the study of cooperation practices in borderlands? With its prioritization of ‘how’ questions, the documentary method entails an important shift in analytical perspective. This shift requires a move from the question of, ‘what is reality?’ to the question of ‘how is reality produced?’ (Bohnsack, 2011, p. 42). Instead of following the cooperation partners' interpretation of ideas and everyday routines (*communicative knowledge*), at

tention is paid to *how* their practice is accomplished (*conjunctive knowledge*). This includes, for example, examining the ways in which cooperation partners illustrate their everyday routines, how they make specific arguments, and how their responses draw on particular narratives, concepts, and references. In addition, the documentary method allows for a constructivist perspective on cooperation practices. By comprising not only “first-order observations” but also “second-order observations” (see Bohnsack, 2010, p. 102), scientific practice is considered as one observable practice of many. The constructivist approach also maintains the understanding that everyday and scientific practices are intermingled. This “reciprocal relation” (Giddens, 1984, p. 196; see also Lippuner, 2005, p. 27) between common-sense concepts and scientific theories can certainly be observed within the European integration project. Here, the documentary method allows one to scrutinize the production process of normative political concepts such as networked space, cross-border region, and also cooperation. Rather than taking these concepts for granted, the reflexive approach moves their role and functioning within everyday practices to the center. The latter also provides an important basis for the analysis of Polish-German cooperation practices within the field of urban and regional development.

The empirical approach was informed by the idea of identifying relevant local experts in the field of urban and regional development. Interviews were conducted with directors and senior executives of the respective municipal offices for urban development, heads of housing companies, and real estate agents. The use of a semi-structured interview approach with open-ended questions proved well-suited to provide space for both extensive narrations and reflections. Following the documentary interpretation of narrative interviews formulated by Nohl (2006), the interpretation process focused on narrative interview parts and shifted the focus towards the ‘how’ of narrations: how, for example, does an interviewee handle political-geographical concepts of cross-border urban spaces? Significantly, the interpretation process is informed by Schütze’s (1976) assumption that the interpretation of narrations makes the interviewees’ tacit knowledge available: interviewees, when starting a particular narration, experience an obligation to tell a coherent story so as to be understood by an outsider. Following the course of narration and the need for further detail, the interviewees are likely to unintentionally include aspects of their actions to tell a complete story. Argumentations, on the other hand, are related to the interviewees’ explicit knowledge. However, due to the analytical distinction, the interviewees’ narrations and argumentations could

also be seen as in contrast.

Central to the analysis of narrative interviews, a comparative sequence analysis highlights the variety of responses towards a given problem. The continuous comparison of subsequent and inter-related narrations is therefore dependent on cross-case comparisons and helps relativize the interviewer’s perspective on the same issue. Here, the comparison of passages across a number of interviews helped to identify respective regularities and allowed to reconstruct the interviewees’ characteristic orientation frame. While this interpretation step aims at studying the various ways interviewees handle and approach a particular topic, however, an additional analytical step is needed to systematize and refine the identified orientation frameworks. The latter were abstracted from their initial interviews and reconstructed in narrative passages of additional interview sections. This abstraction of orientation frames is restricted to a particular *tertium comparationis* and, therefore, to a single, thematically specific point of reference (Nohl, 2006, p. 56). As such, the documentary interpretation of narrative interviews allows for an analysis of how cooperation practices are defined by similarities and differences across a variety of cases.

Polish-German cooperation in urban development

The above analysis has shown that inner-European borderlands are affected by a diverse range of spatial planning approaches, ranging from the European to the local scale of socio-spatial organization. For local actors within the field of spatial planning, e.g., city or municipal planners and developers, this means negotiating overlapping and sometimes contrasting concepts of space. However, it is important to consider that spatial planning and development has both a material and symbolic dimension. Borderland characteristics, such as its accessibility and permeability as well as its residential and transportation infrastructures, cannot be reduced to visible and tangible manifestations. Rather, a borderland’s natural and constructed environment is also reflective of (and interlinked with) its symbolic significance for actors across all scales. Polish-German cooperation in the field of urban and municipal development demonstrates this interlinkage particularly well and shows how established spatial imaginaries continue to inform neighborly relations and cross-border routines.

When looking at the Polish-German borderland, it is important to consider the historical complexity of neighborly relations. Polish-German history is

informed by the three partitions of Poland in the late 18th century, German National Socialist practices of marginalization, displacement, and ethnic cleansing during World War II, and the definition of a new Polish-German borderline, the Oder-Neisse line, in the aftermath of the war. The border underwent further changes during the 1990s and 2000s, following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War, and Germany's reunification. With Poland's membership in transnational structures such as NATO (1999), the EU (2004), and the Schengen Agreement (2007), the Polish-German border finally lost its status as a multi-dimensional outer border. Nevertheless, its historical development has transformed the border into a symbolically charged site: not only has the borderland served as a symbolic demarcation between 'the East' and 'the West' for much of the 19th and 20th century (Thum, 2010, p. 37; see also Wolff, 2000), the border's status as a 'Cold War border' (Kennard, 2010, p. 93) also contributed to its decade-long functioning as an impermeable, material barrier. However, the 1990s and 2000s are not only marked by Germany's final recognition of the Oder-Neisse line or the latter's supranational integration. This time period is also characterized by the improvement of neighborly relations, and an expansion of Polish-German cooperation. This includes, for example, the establishment of four Polish-German cross-border regions during the 1990s and the development of numerous small-scale cooperation projects in the field of arts, education, environment, health, urban and regional development, and tourism.

The following discussion focuses on Polish-German cooperation within the field of urban and municipal development and takes a particular interest in the practices of local cooperation partners in adjacent borderland towns. The discussion draws on participant observation and expert interviews conducted during the years of 2013 and 2014 – right before the onset of what has come to be known as the 'European refugee crisis'. At the time, passport-free travel was still a matter of course, while nationalist calls for border closure found their way into public debate. The collected data allows insight into cooperation dynamics between Polish and German urban and municipal planners and explicates how the latter approach cooperation as a part of their professional practice. Two case studies – the town pairs of Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf as well as Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder) – exemplify the possibilities, problems, and challenges of joint urban and municipal development.

Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf

The Polish city of Świnoujście and the German municipality Seebad Heringsdorf are located on the Polish-German island of Usedom (in Polish: Uznam) in direct vicinity to each other. As well-known seaside resorts of the Baltic Sea Coast, Świnoujście and Seebad Heringsdorf share a coastal and land border. Tourism represents a vital source of income in both places and is considered an important economic factor for urban and municipal development. However, although Świnoujście and Seebad Heringsdorf signed a partnership contract in 2007, the development of cross-border ties has not been straightforward. Cooperation in urban and municipal development is clearly defined by diverging interests among local actors. The considerable income and price gap between Poland and Germany plays an important role in this regard: although both Świnoujście and Seebad Heringsdorf represent well-known, reputable tourist sites characterized by seaside resort architecture, their self-portrayals differ considerably. Whereas Seebad Heringsdorf defines itself as a "premium location" (Gemeinde Seebad Heringsdorf, 2006, p. 8) with high-standard tourism, Świnoujście is perceived as a tourist site that attracts visitors due to its comparatively reasonably priced accommodation and laid-back atmosphere. With tourism representing the main economic factor in both places, cooperation in urban and municipal development is considered an ambivalent endeavor—in particular among local business owners.

Far from being lauded, the development of cross-border transportation infrastructures was initially met with skepticism and rejection. This was most apparent during the early 2000s, when German business owners attempted to slow down the establishment of cross-border transportation links in order to "protect" their businesses. In light of Poland's full membership in the Schengen Area, the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern initiated the development of an Integrated Traffic Concept Usedom-Wolin 2015 (PTV Planung Transport Verkehr AG Berlin, 2006) to deal with the problem of traffic congestion related to the envisaged abolishment of border controls in 2007. It is important to note that, at the time, Świnoujście's urban center, including its business district and leisure quarters, did not have road access to the Polish or German mainland. As the border crossing point remained closed for car traffic even after Poland became an EU member in 2004, inhabitants of the city continued to depend on ferry services to access the Polish mainland. Resulting thereof, the opening of the border crossing point for car traffic came to be of key in-

terest to Świnoujście's inhabitants. While the traffic concept acknowledged Świnoujście's desire to escape its "isolation" and "peripheral location", it contrasts the latter with Seebad Heringsdorf's aim to protect its status as a destination of "quality tourism" (PTV Planung Transport Verkehr AG Berlin, 2006, p. 2)

The development of the traffic concept is noticeable because it indicates an imbalanced representation of Polish and German interests. With the exception of a Polish urban planning office, the group of authors consists exclusively of German urban planning and tourist experts. The fact that the German federal state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern initiated the concept, while the German Federal Ministry of Transport, Building, and Housing (BMVBW) secured its funding, further highlights the imbalance of interests. Nevertheless, although a preliminary study of the traffic concept (see PTV Planung Transport Verkehr AG Berlin, 2003) recommended keeping the border crossing point closed for car traffic, the final concept of 2006 stated that such a restriction is "hard to imagine" (PTV Planung Transport Verkehr AG Berlin, 2006, p. 4 own translation) in the near future. The year 2007 thus marked a turning point in the development of local cross-border ties: In addition to Poland's full membership in the Schengen Agreement, the abolition of stationary controls at Usedom's border crossing points included the reopening of the border for automobile traffic. However, the year-long negotiations concerning the traffic concept also led to the strengthening of contacts between Świnoujście's and Seebad Heringsdorf's administrations. Polish and German cooperation partners succeeded in implementing two significant cross-border infrastructure projects—the extension of the German railway network to the western part of Świnoujście in 2008, and the completion of a 14-km long cross-border promenade in 2014. Thus, while local cooperation partners in the two administrations failed to develop a joint tourism concept, the two completed projects have played an important role in facilitating cross-border links for both inhabitants and visitors.

Ślubice & Frankfurt (Oder)

The Polish city of Ślubice and the German city of Frankfurt (Oder) are located directly across from each other at the River Oder. Until the end of World War II and the establishment of the Oder-Neisse line, Ślubice used to be the Dammvorstadt — an embankment suburb—of Frankfurt (Oder). Similar to other divided cities along the Polish-German border, Ślubice's city districts east and west of the borderline were partly disconnected

from urban functions (Jajeśniak-Quast and Stokłosa, 2000, p. 35). For Ślubice, this unfavorable division resulted in the temporary loss of basic communal services, such as power and water supply. While the destroyed bridge between the two parts of the city was provisionally reconstructed already in 1945, however, relations between inhabitants were heavily regulated. The signing of the partnership contract in 1975 therefore falls into a short period during the 1970s when the border was temporarily re-opened for visa-free travel. After German unification, cross-border relations between the two administrations and the city's inhabitants gradually intensified. The close proximity between Ślubice's and Frankfurt (Oder)'s urban centers, which are directly connected by a bridge, facilitates everyday encounters and cross-border commute. During the 1990s and 2000s, the two cities finalized a cooperation agreement, initiated regular encounters between the city councils, and engaged in the cooperative foundation of the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) and the Collegium Polonicum in Ślubice.

Since the early 2000s, the development of joint infrastructure projects has become increasingly relevant. More specifically, the building of a cross-border tram route has caused much debate within the cities' administrations and among their inhabitants. The project idea goes back to the historical tram route which used to link Frankfurt (Oder) with Dammvorstadt (Jajeśniak-Quast and Stokłosa, 2000). When the Dammvorstadt turned into the Polish city of Ślubice in 1945, public transportation services of both cities were disconnected and started to operate independently. Strict border controls in the decades following the war made it impossible to even consider the development of an integrated public transportation system. However, in 2005/2006, ideas to extend the tram network of Frankfurt (Oder) to Ślubice's center revived the debate. The public transport service of Frankfurt (Oder) brought attention to the project, when, in the face of the upcoming abolition of border controls in 2007, a cross-border tram link appeared feasible. However, in a referendum held in 2006, the majority of Frankfurt (Oder)'s inhabitants voted against the project. While the referendum was not legally binding, the overwhelming negative outcome brought the project to a temporary halt. Nevertheless, the development of a cross-border transportation system was listed in "The Local Action Plan 2010-2020 of Frankfurt (Oder) & Ślubice Conurbation" (Stadt Frankfurt (Oder), 2010, p. B10). The initiative of students from both Viadrina University and Collegium Polonicum finally led the cities to agree on the establishment of a cross-border bus line. This bus line has operated on a regular basis since

2012 and connects Frankfurt (Oder)'s train station with Słubice's city center. In the updated version of "The Local Action Plan" (Frankfurt-Słubice Kooperationszentrum / Słubicko-Frankfurckie Centrum Kooperacji, 2014, p. 14), the cross-border bus line is eventually identified as one of the most frequently used bus services of Frankfurt (Oder)'s public transport service.

But while Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder) continue to debate about the joint development of an integrated, cross-border transport concept (see Frankfurt-Słubice Kooperationszentrum / Słubicko-Frankfurckie Centrum Kooperacji, 2014, p. 14), the negotiation process allows insight into the cooperation's dynamics. Similar to the case of Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf, the development or improvement of cross-border infrastructures has considerably slowed down due to fears of cross-border competition. In view of the income and price gap between Poland and Germany, local business actors across the two cities fear losing clients. This concern has been raised by both taxi business owners on the Polish side and retail service business owners on the German side of the border. However, the negotiation process does not only indicate competing interests, it also points at differences in economic resources: the high cost involved in linking Słubice to Frankfurt (Oder)'s tram network proved to be a major problem for Słubice and represented a further reason to retract from the project.

Competing interests, diverging practices

In both cases shown above, the character of negotiation processes effectively demonstrates the difficulty of cross-border urban and municipal development. Nevertheless, interview responses of local urban and municipal developers participating in these negotiations provide further insight into cooperation dynamics. The analysis indicates, above all, three guiding ideas of cooperation. As core frames of orientation, these ideas show that cooperation can function as a promising *resource*, as a strategy of *regulation*, or as an opportunity of *transcendence*.

Among urban and municipal developers in Świnoujście and Seebad Heringsdorf, the main orientation frames can be identified as follows: cooperation is either handled as a *resource* for additional funding, as a *regulation* strategy to manage competitive processes, or as a welcome opportunity to facilitate synergetic processes and enhance possibilities for border *transcendence*. The borderline does not function as a dividing line, demonstrating that Polish and German interview-

ees show overlapping approaches to cooperation. The responses of urban and municipal developers in Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder) indicate a different pattern, with the borderline playing a more important role in structuring responses. Cooperation thus represents either a *resource* for additional funding and a means to create a locational advantage (e.g., for marketing purposes), a *regulation* strategy to negotiate a power imbalance between cooperation partners, or an opportunity to strengthen intercultural competences and increase chances of border *transcendence*.

Each of the identified orientation frames is informed by a distinct understanding of cross-border ties and the border location. Urban and municipal developers who handle cooperation as *resource* perceive cross-border ties in terms of reciprocal dependence. Cooperation serves as a means to utilize the border location and describes the attempt to turn actual or perceived disadvantages associated with the border location into advantages. The border location is therefore considered to function as an asset, in which the development of cross-border ties turns into a necessary and welcome by-product. Furthermore, the course of narration is usually defined by elaborate funding strategy considerations and, in some cases, cooperation project outlines that are of little collaborative character. The latter could imply, for example, the necessary improvement of urban infrastructures (e.g., school buildings, leisure centers, or green spaces) due to a lack of regular funding. Here, a consequence of the short project funding-periods is that cross-border ties and networks tend to be defined by their temporality.

The idea of cooperative practice as *resource* is represented by a German interviewee (Male urban developer, in-person interview, May 26, 2014) from Frankfurt (Oder) who understands cooperation as a promising path to sustain the city's status as a regional urban center. The interviewee considers the double city of Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder) to "be of particular importance for the cooperation with the EU" and argues that the two cities "carry out tasks for the whole country". However, in the course of his narration, the interviewee repeatedly notes the "city's bad image" which has come to be defined by continuous population decrease and economic decline. Therefore, increased political attention and additional funding are considered a necessity to improve the city's attractiveness in the long run. Cooperating with Słubice appears to be a promising chance for both cities to deal with their geographically and economically remote location. This interviewees' responses, by illustrating the attempt to utilize the border as a locational advantage, indicate an understanding of cooperation as a valuable means to improve the (supra-)regional attractiveness of

Frankfurt (Oder).

Urban and municipal planners who handle cooperation as *regulation*, by contrast, recognize the border location as problematic. Interviewees' following this perspective understand spatial proximity to the border as a potential threat to local action possibilities. Accordingly, cross-border ties are seen as representatives of conflicting interests. Engagement in cooperation is perceived as a strategy to organize cross-border ties in a favorable way so as to protect local (business and administrative) interests. As in the case of both Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf and Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder), diverging price structures result in complex cross-border coordination processes. Understandings of cooperation as *regulation* are thus reflective of uneven power relations: the fact that cross-border spatial planning lacks routines and legislations opens up a space for strategic, hierarchical approaches. One-sided project attempts, for example, in the development and set-up of the traffic concept for the island of Usedom, or non-consideration of different financial resources, as in the case of the cross-border tram project in Słubice and Frankfurt (Oder), describe conditions that can lead to reluctance and caution amongst some (Polish as well as German) cooperation partners.

Approaches to cooperation as a strategy of *regulation* are best exemplified by the responses of a Polish interviewee (Female urban developer, in-person interview, June 16, 2014) from Słubice. During her narration, the interviewee distinguishes between "our project ideas", "Frankfurt's project ideas", and "joint project interests". Within the field of urban development, such joint project interests are related, for example, to tourist and infrastructure projects. Considering her words, the cross-border tram route project, while initially representing a joint interest project, gradually transformed into one of "Frankfurt's project ideas" during the 2000s. Her responses suggest diverging interests and a power imbalance in relation to the processes of project development. It becomes apparent how such differences in cooperation interests have not solely been a matter of diverging financial resources but also an expression of contrary urban planning and development priorities. This means, for example, that the interviewee considers the introduction of the cross-border bus line a successful outcome of cooperation and not a temporary compromise. Apparently, she understands herself as a representative of the smaller and — in institutional and financial terms — less powerful cooperation partner, and her practices represent a strategy to organize project development in a favorable way. By focusing on the problem of conflicting interests, this approach likewise draws on the barrier function of

the border and shows an interest in its continuous semipermeability.

A different picture emerges regarding the orientation frame of cooperation as *transcendence*. Enthusiasm and an idealistic perspective are characteristic of this approach, which conceives of the border location as a prospect, and cross-border ties as enrichment. Urban and municipal planners who understand cooperation as a promising opportunity to transcend borders actively engage in cross-border networking. Strengthening cross-border ties even stands at the center of this cooperation approach. Beyond their conflictual character, the negotiation processes between administrations, planners, and developers in Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf and Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder) have led to intensifying local cross-border relations. For some cooperation partners, the lengthy negotiations have provided the chance to establish regular cross-border encounters with their Polish or German colleagues. This is particularly the case in Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf, where expert colleagues have come to meet on a regular basis. In Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder), on the other hand, strengthening cross-border relations has resulted in the development of the Frankfurt-Słubice Cooperation Centre which coordinates joint projects, initiates, and collects cooperation ideas (e.g., "The Local Action Plan Frankfurt-Słubice"), and represents a contact point for both administrative employees and inhabitants.

A Polish interviewee (Female urban developer, in-person interview, March 3, 2014) from Świnoujście demonstrates an understanding of cooperation as a promising chance to *transcend* the Polish-German border. During the interview, she describes the border as both an "artificial border" and a stubborn "mental border" and refers to the island of Usedom as a "common region". The interviewees' responses indicate that her own work is oriented toward the establishment of cross-border links to make a collaborative use of Świnoujście's and Seebad Heringsdorf's infrastructure possible. Unrestricted cross-border car traffic, in this perspective, encompasses the potential to strengthen cross-border links amongst citizens. By focusing on the continuous significance of bordering practice in everyday life, this interviewees' approach provides an example of cooperation as a promising chance to establish dense cross-border networks, and to therewith tackle powerful symbolic boundaries.

Conclusion: Giving meaning to cooperation

Local cooperation practices in urban and municipal development are defined by their ambivalent character. As cooperation is situated in-between bounded and fluid concepts of space, cooperation partners are required to negotiate distinct and sometimes competing interests among city and municipal administrations, business owners, and inhabitants. Urban and regional planning systems are defined by system boundaries, thus further contributing to strengthening established planning routines (Jacobs, 2016). While cooperation is associated with the attempt to challenge such routines, cross-border urban and municipal development proves to be a difficult endeavor for two reasons. First, the notion of cooperation has turned into a powerful narrative that informs the perspectives of Polish and German planning actors in borderland cities and municipalities. The narrative of cooperation notably facilitates a spatial perspective on societal relations. Local problems, including tight budgets, demographic decline, and political-geographical distance to urban agglomerations have all come to be addressed within the framework of cross-border projects. The two case studies indicate that urban and municipal developers need to strategically handle the cooperation narrative so as to gain access to additional funding, therefore showing EU project funding as an adequate answer to local problems. However, as Knippschild (2005, p. 174) has pointed out with respect to practices in urban and regional development, “the initial enthusiasm of cross-border cooperation often dissipates before the processes have produced results.” A further aspect complicating cooperation is the notable price gap between Poland and Germany. The latter functions as a strong barrier and results in unequal cross-border partnerships. Consequently, the development of cross-border infrastructures does not necessarily appear advantageous to

both cooperating partners. The price gap is also a reason why local interest groups, such as business owners, can have a strong interest in keeping the border as a barrier. Contrary to the idea of cooperation as an opportunity for fruitful encounters, these positions demonstrate that state borders continue to represent significant instruments for the “protection of group interests” (Hasselsberger, 2014, p. 514).

Significantly, the documentary method provides a useful approach to study how urban and municipal developers handle these difficulties in distinct ways. The analysis shows how cooperation practices are linked to varied and sometimes contradictory ideas of local cross-border relations. By demonstrating the diverse character of cooperation practices, the documentary method of interpretation provides insight into the role and functioning of these relations in tackling established socio-cultural boundaries. Cooperation, therefore, does not necessarily represent a challenge to state borders but may well contribute to their reproduction. However, the discussion also shows that regardless of how urban and municipal developers approach cooperation, the engagement itself in cross-border projects is not called into question. In both the cases of Świnoujście & Seebad Heringsdorf and Słubice & Frankfurt (Oder), cross-border negotiations are increasingly integrated into everyday professional practices. As the particular needs of borderland cities and municipalities may be considered neglected by federal and national governments, EU-funded territorial cooperation programs provide both access to additional financial means *and* symbolic escape from marginalization. Thus, while the above analysis demonstrates that cooperation is related differently to the reproduction of the Polish-German border and does not in itself represent a challenge to exclusive concepts of space, it likewise shows that cross-border projects are considered a useful instrument to turn the disadvantages associated with the border location into potential advantages.

NOTES

ⁱ For further details on the methodological approach, see my forthcoming dissertation, “Thinking in Semicircular Terms? Cooperation Practices in the Polish-German and Danish-German Borderland”.

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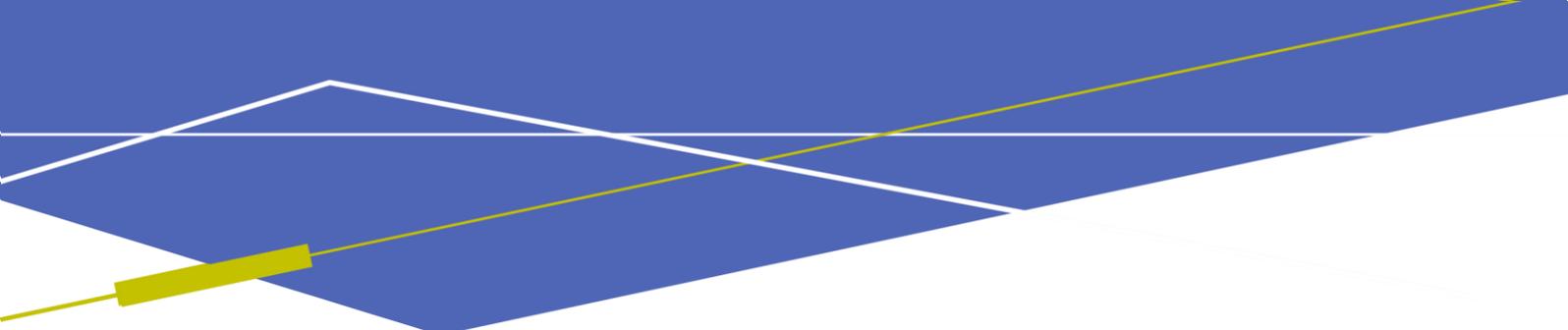
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Borders, Migration, Struggles: A Heuristic for Analysis of Border Politicsⁱ

Simon Sperling, David Niebauer, Laura Holderied

Since the EU “summer of migration” in 2015, we have seen an increased interest in the study of borders. Researchers from different scientific fields are now increasingly studying what we here term *border politics*: the entirety of struggles over the possibilities and conditions of cross-border movements. Against this background of a dynamic and fragmented field of research, the article maps a set of premises from Critical Border and Migration Studies for reflective analyses of borders and their politics. For this purpose, we firstly discuss the ontological dimension of contemporary borders as conceptualized in Border Studies as a basis to study border politics by pointing to the constructedness, the productivity, and the multiplicity of borders. Secondly, we focus on the political dimension of bordering processes by discussing struggles, actors, and arenas, as well as social structures. Thirdly, we suggest ways how to analyze the global dimension of bordering processes. This way, the paper aims at contributing to initiating debates and building bridges between different approaches on borders.

Critical Border Studies, Border Politics, Migration Research, Interdisciplinarity

Frontières, migration, luttes : Une heuristique pour l’analyse des politiques de frontière

Depuis « le long été des migrations » en 2015, on constate un intérêt accru pour l’étude des frontières. Des chercheurs de différents domaines scientifiques étudient désormais de plus en plus ce que nous appelons les « politiques de frontière » : l’ensemble des luttes autour des possibilités et conditions des mouvements transfrontaliers. Dans le cadre de ce domaine de recherche dynamique et fragmenté, l’article présente un ensemble de prémisses tirées des études critiques sur les frontières et les migrations, dans le but d’une analyse réflexive des frontières et de leur politiques. À cette fin, nous discutons tout d’abord de la dimension ontologique des frontières contemporaines, que les *Border Studies* mettent à la base des études des politiques frontalières, en soulignant la constructivité, la productivité ainsi que la multiplicité des frontières. Ensuite, nous nous concentrons sur la dimension politique des processus de production de frontières en discutant les luttes, les acteurs et les arènes, ainsi que les structures sociales. Troisièmement, nous proposons des accès analytiques vers la dimension globale des processus de production de frontières. Ce faisant, l’article veut contribuer à lancer des débats et construire des ponts entre les différentes approches aux frontières.

Critical Border Studies, politiques de frontière, recherche sur les migrations, interdisciplinarité

Grenzen, Migration, Kämpfe: Eine Heuristik für die Analyse von Grenzpolitiken

Seit dem “Sommer der Migration” im Jahr 2015 lässt sich ein gesteigertes wissenschaftliches Interesse an Grenzforschung beobachten. Dabei sind auch *Grenzpolitiken*, worunter wir die Gesamtheit der Kämpfe um die Möglichkeiten und Bedingungen grenzüberschreitender Bewegungen verstehen, in den Fokus von Forschenden aus verschiedenen wissenschaftlichen Feldern gerückt. Vor diesem Hintergrund eines dynamisch

wachsenden und fragmentierten Forschungsfeldes skizziert der Beitrag eine Reihe von Prämissen aus der Kritischen Grenz- und Migrationsforschung für eine reflexive Analyse von Grenzen und Grenzpolitiken. Hierfür diskutieren wir erstens die ontologische Dimension von Grenzen, wie sie in den Border Studies als Grundlage für eine Untersuchung von Grenzpolitik konzipiert wird, indem wir auf die Konstruiertheit, die Produktivität sowie die Vielfältigkeit von Grenzen eingehen. Zweitens behandeln wir die politische Dimension von Grenzziehungsprozessen, indem wir die Rolle von Kämpfen, Akteuren und Arenen sowie sozialen Strukturen herausarbeiten. Drittens zeigen wir Möglichkeiten auf, wie die globale Dimension von Grenzprozessen analysiert werden kann. Auf diese Weise soll der Artikel dazu beitragen, Debatten zu initiieren und Brücken zwischen verschiedenen Forschungsansätzen zu bauen.

Kritische Grenzforschung, Grenzpolitiken, Migrationsforschung, Interdisziplinarität

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Introduction: Studying Border Politics

Not only after the “long summer of migration” in 2015 (Kasperek and Speer, 2015), but also in light of the recent humanitarian emergency at the Greek-Turkish border in early 2020, struggles over transnational, national, and regional borders are currently particularly high on public and political agendas. Due to this topicality, the multi- and interdisciplinary field of Border Studies is increasingly attracting researchers from other fields interested in the contested nature of contemporary borders. Therefore, the analysis of border politics cannot be understood as an issue of only one specific scientific discipline, as, for instance, political science. Instead, it is an object of past and ongoing debates in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of Border Studies, which is shaped by a diversity of topics, social theories, research approaches, and disciplinary perspectives. Although the debate has developed certain common grounds in regard to terminologies used and analytical presuppositions, it still differs in the usage of others. There are clearly connected cross-disciplinary discourses, while ideas may be restricted to their disciplinary fields. Against this background, this article aims at systemizing existing positions and developing an analytical heuristic for studying border politics as border struggles. As researchers in Critical Migration and Border Studies, we particularly focus on cross-border movements in the sense of (high risk) migration – leaving out other topics in the field of Border Studies, such as cross-border commuting, mobility, flows of goods and capital or tourism, for now.

With border politics we can understand the entirety of struggles over the possibilities and conditions of cross-border movements, whether symbolic or material. This means an analysis of border politics can be, for instance, a study on new infrastructures of arrival control in “Hotspots” on Greek and Italian islands, of solidarity structures within or outside Europe, or of the constitution of non-European others in visual discourses, thus setting conditions of possibility for exclusive policies. Instead of reducing border politics to merely bureaucratic and regulatory political practices carried out by political elites, as is the case in classical migration and Border Studies, we thus apply a broad understanding of (border) politics that allows us to incorporate a wide range of actors, discourses, practices, and sites.

Although this paper is an introduction how to study border politics, it should not be seen as an instruction manual that has to be worked through step by step. The social phenomena related to is-

suues of borders, boundaries as well as their politics are too complex and diverse to be reduced to a simple procedural scheme. Each research project is different and thus needs to focus more closely on some aspects and neglect others. Therefore, we introduce here a heuristic approach for analysis by addressing the character of borders and the political dimension related to them. The first section lays out the ontological dimension of borders as theorized in Border Studies literature. We map them by asking how borders are constructed, what kind of effects they produce as well as where they can be found. After that, we focus on their political dimensions, asking how borders are (re-)produced, who is involved in this process, and which structural grounds shape the struggles around borders. The final section sheds light on the global dimension of borders and asks how to connect analyses of localized struggles around borders with global power relations.

Ontological Dimension of Borders

Constructedness

What are borders? One of the central assumptions in Border Studies is that borders are not naturally given, but instead socially constructed and materially produced. Borders are in this sense never just fences or walls, but part of symbolic and social orders. They rely on symbolic representations in the form of boundary formations and have to be socially and politically legitimized. Borders and boundaries are thus closely connected to each other and cannot be fully understood and analyzed independently of each other. The idea of nationalism, for instance, contributed to the conception of state territories, by firstly producing the imagination of communities inside and outside (Anderson, 2016) and secondly by legitimizing attempts to control mobility across these new boundaries. As this example shows, the material dimension of borders and their symbolic reproduction are deeply linked to one another.

These border and boundary formations need to be constantly reproduced. They are never fully stable but change their shapes permanently. Border Studies’ scholars speak of “doing borders” (van Houtum and van Naerssen, 2002), “performing borders” (Salter, 2011) or “border work” (Rumford, 2008) to stress the praxeological and processual dimension of borders, which they put at the center of their analyses. David Newman points out: “It is the process of bordering, rather

than the border outcomes per se, which should be of interest to all border scholars" (Newman, 2006, p. 148).

Stressing the contingency of social (b)orders and "denaturalizing" (Walters, 2002) them, is thus a precondition of understanding the political dimension of border politics. Only if we as researchers assume that borders could potentially be set up differently, instead of taking them for naturally given, can we identify conflicting positions and border struggles. Therefore, we suggest starting an analysis of border politics with the question of how borders and the social conditions related to them are constructed, sustained, reproduced, and challenged by different actors.

The strong connection between (material) borders and (symbolic) boundaries makes it obvious that also researchers are involved in bordering processes, when producing knowledge about borders, or as Janine Dahinden puts it, for the context of migration research: "It follows that migration and integration research is not only the product of the institutionalized migration apparatus, but itself also an important 'producer' of a worldview according to which migration- and ethnicity-related differences are predominant." (Dahinden, 2016, p. 2211)

A reflective research practice is thus indispensable for both, normative and epistemological reasons. Against this background, Border Studies' scholars repeatedly stress the importance to firstly question given categories used by state bureaucracies or in everyday life, secondly distinguish them from analytical categories, and thirdly critically reflect one's own position in the field (Bommes and Thränhardt, 2010; Dahinden, 2016). Used and suggested approaches therefore vary from deconstructivist strategies and strategic essentialism to intersectional perspectives (see for an overview: Dahinden, 2016). In any case, researchers are necessarily part of the phenomena they describe, intentionally or otherwise.

Productivity

What are the effects of borders? While the idea of a "Fortress Europe" prevails in critical media, academia and social movements, authors in Border Studies have argued that it is too simplistic to reduce bordering processes solely to repression. Borders are not just barriers of exclusion, but also selectively include parts of populations.

Following a Foucauldian understanding of power, researchers have highlighted the productive side of borders. As ordering technologies, they categorize, classify and filter people (Kearney, 2004; van Houtum and van Naerssen, 2002). Borders are, also, always gates, where mobility and immobility

is managed in various ways and, in this respect, do not have the same meaning for everyone. Thus, Henk van Houtum and Roos Pijpers (2007) have proposed the more complex figure of a "gated community" to describe the borders of the European Union, Chris Rumford uses the term "asymmetric membranes" (2008, p. 3), and William Walters introduced the metaphor of an anti-virus "firewall" (2006, p. 197) that "filters" what and who can or cannot enter a certain territory.

Therefore, borders produce new subjectivities such as 'the migrant', 'the refugee', 'the asylum seeker', 'the expatriate' etc., with their different modes of regulation. By doing so, borders shape not only the possibilities and circumstances of entry, but determine the conditions of rights, labor, economic, political, social and cultural participation, and everyday life for each group differently. While some aspects of this "civic stratification" (Morris, 2002) and "differential inclusion" (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 7) might be consciously planned, others can be unintended (side) effects of the attempts to regulate migration (Hess, 2012, p. 434).

For an analysis of border politics, this means understanding and analyzing the situations borders produce, instead of stopping research with the question as to whether or not border control has failed. Instead of just recognizing, for example, that most states are not able or willing to deport larger numbers of people, Nicolas De Genova (2002) stressed that this 'failure' has produced a situation of "deportability". Therefore, affected groups have to live with the constant fear of being deported one day or another, which strongly influences not only their daily life and participation in society, but also their capacities of organizing against exploitative labor conditions or laws imposed on them.

As we have stated in the previous section, highlighting the productive mechanism of borders also means de-essentializing the categories researchers are working with. There is no natural division between migrants and non-migrants per se. Instead, different types of mobilities and non-mobilities are divided by national borders into 'intra-state migration' (or forms of non-mobility) and 'interstate migration', which is again differentiated into 'labor migration', 'humanitarian migration' and so on.

De-essentializing these categories is not only a matter of more precise usage or of emphasizing that these terms have a social origin (as this is the case for any word); the main issue is rather that these categories and terms are inevitably linked to powerful regulative regimes that problematize certain types of mobility, and leave others untouched, or even promote their circulation. Therefore, we argue that the process of classifying

(non-)mobility is already part of border politics and thus needs to be a central part of analysis. In this context, a reflective research practice needs to focus on the ways categories are produced and the effects resulting from them, other than using predefined labels. When analyzing border politics, researchers should direct their attention to different types of migrantized and non-migrantized subjects in relation to the regime which is creating them as such, instead of studying 'the migrant' per se. While some subjects might use the categories, which are implied on them, in their own interest, others might reject them. The affected groups, however, are always confronted with regulative attempts trying to get hold of them accordingly. Therefore, we argue that an analysis of border politics is in essence always an analysis of power formations.

Multiplicity

Where are borders? The idea of "vanishing borders" (French, 2000) or the hope for a "borderless world" (Ohmae, 1990) are associated with processes of transnationalization and globalization. This idea was particularly widespread in media and public debates in the 1990s. Since then, scholars in Border Studies have instead pointed to a "ubiquity of borders" (Balibar, 2002, p. 85) and an "obsession with borders" (Foucher, 2007).

They also highlighted the overly simplified western- and particularly Eurocentric nature of the idea of a borderless world, stressing that these forms of debordering have to be seen within the context of processes such as the end of the Cold War and the creation of the Schengen Area in the E.U. (Newman, 2006). In this sense, borders do not have the same meaning for everyone: someone from the Global South lacking the relevant resources never lived and still does not live in a world with disappearing borders. Particularly the last decade has seen a (re-)emergence of fortified borders (Brown, 2010; Foucher, 2007), as has been the case recently in Europe since 2015; for example, at the Hungarian-Serbian border, or at the Israeli-Jordanian, and the U.S.-Mexican border.

When stressing the high significance and increasing extension of borders, we want to stress that analyses of border politics should not limit their focus on borders per se, following classic associations like walls or fences, but instead look at bordering practices which can take place everywhere and sometimes be less visible. According to this idea, borders are always where "control takes place on the movement of subjects" (Vaughan-Williams, 2008, p. 63). This is not only the case at geographical "ends" of national territories as the

image of "lines in the sand" (Parker et al., 2009) might suggest. Scholars of Border Studies conceptualize the spatialization and geographical multiplication of borders with terms such as "border-scapes", "borderlands", "border regions" or "border zones" (Balibar, 2009; Brambilla, 2015; Newman, 2011; Parker et al., 2009)

In this regard, researchers particularly discussed the processes of internalizing and externalizing borders (Bialasiewicz, 2012; Casas-Cortés et al., 2014; Lahav and Guiraudon, 2000). To externalize borders means transferring border control practices through "offshoring of the state's own migration authorities" and/or "an outsourcing of control responsibilities and duties to third states" (Gammelthoft-Hansen, 2011, p. 139) with the aim of managing and preventing flows of migrants and refugees outside the own territory and far away from the borderline. In the European border regime, this form of distant border governing in the sense of a "remote control" (Zolberg, 2003) becomes more and more common, particularly in the form of bilateral and multilateral (as well as often conditional development) cooperation with states in neighboring regions in North and Sub-Saharan Africa, (South) Eastern Europe and Asia. To internalize borders means that practices of border control are shifted far inside of state territories. Thereby, also railway stations, airports or even the public space become possible sites and spaces of migration and border control.

These new forms of border control are connected to a growing importance of technologization, digitalization and biometrization conceptualized as the emergence of "smart borders" (Broeders, 2007; Dijstelbloem et al., 2011; Scheel, 2019). Computer-controlled border surveillance technologies like the European Border Surveillance system *Eurosur* or the fingerprint data bank *Eurodac* make it possible to distinguish between 'wanted travelers' and 'unwanted migrants' on a technical basis and put border control in effect across an extended space. In this respect, the border is stamped on the body and moves with people to different places (Hess, 2018, p. 92). We suggest that researchers should consider these different spaces and forms in which boundaries and borders materialize in each empirical analysis.

Political Dimension of Borders

Struggles

How are borders (re-)produced? The ontological dimension of borders as socially constructed,

productive, and concurrently de- and spatialized is often considered common knowledge in Border Studies literature. There may be, however, less focus on the (differential) exclusions borders produce, as well as on struggles over the conditions of cross-border movements and the transformative power of movements labelled migration themselves.

While bordering is often imagined as a political top-down process, where states unilaterally decide about who can or cannot enter a territory, be part of a community, or gain certain rights, Border Studies scholars have shown that it is rather difficult for elites to effectively control cross-border mobility. This shared empirical observation is explained rather differently across the relevant academic literature. One group of works (see for an overview: Bonjour, 2011) focuses on factors such as liberal constitutions and law (Cornelius et al., 1994, pp. 9-11; Joppke, 2001, p. 358), supranational institutions (Sassen, 1996), interest groups (Freeman, 1994; Messina, 2007, pp. 239-241) or institutional settings outside of public view (Guiraudon, 2000). This body of literature shares and demonstrates the idea that migration governance is a top down process orchestrated by the political elites. On the contrary, another group of texts claims that the autonomous movements and the resistance of people on the move challenge regulations and therefore cause the failure of control practices (Hess, 2018; Papadopoulos et al., 2008; Mezzadra, 2011).

Although we consider it always an empirical question of what leads to a particular materialization of border politics, we consider the latter position, focusing on border crossings and the undoing of borders, to allow for a more accurate perspective on the border politics involved. When research is narrowed only to political elites from the beginning, it risks disguising underlying conflicts and neglecting the political and subversive potential as well as the relative autonomy of migration (Georgi 2019; Scheel, 2013; 2019) in bordering processes. In our understanding, this reenactment of borders and boundaries is almost always an antagonistic process, since it implies important issues as the (re-)distribution of economic and symbolic resources, identities and social affiliations and has therefore different interests at play. This constellation makes it highly problematic to frame issues regarding migration as objective problems, which must be resolved by the state, since definitions of problems tend to vary widely between the different actors involved. In contrast to ideas within public debates and political concepts like "migration management" (Gosh, 2000; see critically Geiger and Pécoud, 2010), multiple win situations, where many of the

actors involved profit, are scarce in reality. Therefore, we suggest focusing instead on the underlying conflicts involved and to transform the search for technocratic solutions to an analysis of a genuine political issue.

Instead of following the guiding question: "Why do states have difficulty controlling migration?" (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015, p. 4), a reflexive research practice needs to focus on the question: "How do borders result as the outcome of the struggles between different regulative forces and the different kinds of resistance to it?". In this context, governance appears not as top-down process, but as political and social "repair work" (Sciortino, 2004, p. 33), in which order is challenged and reconstituted in interactive processes.

Actors and arenas

By whom are borders (re-)produced? Everybody who sustains or undermines a particular border regime takes part in bordering processes. This can involve a large range of actors such as state agencies, supra- and international organizations, courts, border guards, non-governmental organizations, activists, thinktanks, research institutes, journalists and people on the move (Rumford, 2008). The question of which actors are involved and are relevant for an analysis of border politics has to be considered for each research project individually and depends on the specific border constellations the research focuses on.

Having said that, the search for the relevant actors can be simplified by at first clarifying which type of political strategy is examined. This is because different types of strategies lay the groundwork for different arenas and imply different sets of actors. In regard to how to differentiate bordering strategies and related actors, Sonja Buckel et al. (2017, p. 20) suggest that there are always groups stabilizing given hegemonic border formations, groups resigning or reacting passively towards this situation, and a third group challenging them. This third group applies three different types of strategies and thereby lays ground for three different types of struggles and actors: firstly, progressive, conservative or reactionary forms of counter-hegemonial strategies, which aim at changing societies and existing political orders. These strategies can, for example, be analyzed by focusing on protest movements (Ataç et al., 2016; Nyers, 2015; Tyler and Marciniak, 2013), struggles between civil actors, political elites (Bartels, 2018), or hegemony projects (Buckel et al., 2017). Secondly, there are anti-hegemonic strategies, which aim at creating own spaces out

side of the prevailing modes of regulation. One example for this type of project is the attempt of solidarity city movements to create safe spaces, in which nobody can be deported. Thirdly, they identify escape strategies (Papadopoulos et al., 2008), which aim at undermining or circumventing attempts of regulations, without trying to generalize these forms of resistance politically or universalizing certain political ideas. Nevertheless, they have a large impact on the actual materialization of borders and bring different societal forces to react on them as ethnographic studies on the relative autonomous movements of the migrants crossing borders have illustrated (Hess, 2012; Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010).

Of course, these border struggles have effects on each other, and it could be interesting to focus research on their interrelation. Nevertheless, we consider it reasonable to keep them analytically separate, since they follow different logic and often aim at different goals. Therefore, researchers should be aware of the dynamics they are interested in. While, for example, it may be illogical to study struggles on the actual borders by analyzing only governmental planning, it can still be relevant to see how certain political positions become hegemonic and how they are implemented in legislation. Laws and governmental strategies are therefore not accurate representations of the realities on the actual border sites, but neither are they just irrelevant paperwork. On the contrary, they are political artifacts, which often have material effects on the possibilities and conditions for movements. If researchers want to know, however, how these legal acts affect the actual conditions of mobility, they are interested in a different type of struggle. They have to look at the actual borders, focusing on the question of how controlling actors are making use these laws and how they are being challenged by escape strategies.

Social structures

What is the role of social structures within bordering processes? The border struggles described in the previous sections do not take place in an empty space. While actors are reshaping the structure of borders and boundaries, they are themselves dependent on structures in the form of social rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). It always depends on the particular field which types of structures are made relevant by actors. Or as Christoph Rass and Frank Wolff put it:

“Laws and norms, for instance, have little to no influence on migration if they are not applied, values count little if they are not tai-

lored to recent debates and state institutions only require consideration if their actions impact the migration regime. Practices load structures with meaning and turn them into factors for regime formation – yet they can disappear into the institutional background if this mobilization ceases.” (Rass and Wolff, 2018, p. 49)

Even though the relevance of structures depends on their empirical context, we briefly present examples of types of structures which are often important. Focusing on the struggles of (counter-)hegemonic projects within states, Buckel et al. (2017) suggest, for instance, to look at four different types of resources, which might be relevant within this particular arena. Firstly, characteristics and resources, which can be mobilized directly and without greater complications by the actors themselves, such as organizational resources, networks, bureaucracies, financial resources, and military structure. Secondly, the ability to make decisions which have critical consequences for the whole system. The threat of large companies to outsource their production to other countries can be held here as an example, as well as the (often migrant) workers who have the potential to block the production by going on strike. Thirdly, Buckel et al. name the ability of actors to connect their interests and claims with socially highly recognized symbols or discourses like for example human rights. If actors manage to link their own claims with these symbols, they might be able to succeed politically, even if they lack some of the other resources their counterparts have. Fourthly, there are institutionalized types of selectivity such as sexist or racist structures, which are deeply embedded in society, markets, laws, etc. They are condensed effects from earlier power relations, and may allow social or political strategies connected to them to be more easily mobilized.

While Buckel et al. developed this framework in light of struggles between social groups aiming at changing political orders, we suggest that these points can also become relevant for and be transferred to analyses of border politics in the form of anti-hegemonic projects or escape strategies and attempts of controlling them. As many studies have shown, for instance, migrant networks (Massey and García España, 1987), the possibility to claim on human rights (Cuttitta, 2014; Stierl, 2019; Walters, 2011), and the selectivity along the line of race, class and gender (Mahler and Pessar, 2001; M'charek et al., 2014; van Hear, 2014) are also essential for the attempts of people on the move to bypass the mechanisms of migration control.

Having highlighted these parallels it stays important for researchers to realize that the role of

the above-mentioned structures can be different depending on which type of struggle analyses focus on, since the rules of struggles can greatly differ. While the sets of resources largely define the options of social groups to gain hegemonic influence within societies, people on the move might still be able to pass and succeed with their exit strategies, even though the distribution of resources may be highly asymmetric. This is due to the fact that attempts of states to fully control social actions are usually unsuccessful, especially when the agencies of control are forced to feel bound to at least a minimum of humanitarian standards.

Global Dimension of Borders

How are border struggles linked to global power relations? Having stressed rules and resources which impact the ways how concrete border struggles take place in the previous sections, an all-encompassing and critical analysis of border politics needs to also consider the structures causing these struggles or forming their broader context.

In many works in Border Studies, the interest in the phenomenon of borders is not founded in the (material) border as a research object alone. Instead, borders can serve as a "prism" to analyze global social conflicts (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013, p. 8, Hess, 2018), since the latter become visible within the struggles over mobility, rights and participation that are fought at and over borders. This makes it necessary to reject a methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002) and to analyze how local, national, or transnational processes of bordering are embedded in global power relations and inequalities. However, it can be empirically challenging to draw a link from localized border struggles to transnational power relations, which might be the reason why there are more studies stressing the need to draw this interconnection than to analyze it systematically.

Studies which attempt to do so choose different roads to discuss these asymmetries. In the following section, we will present a brief overview of different approaches: a number of works contextualize bordering processes from perspectives of political economy using, for example, the world system analysis (Jones and Mielants, 2010) or the materialist border regime analysis (Georgi, 2019) as frameworks to connect localized cases of bordering with global settings. Others show how modes of living deeply embedded into contemporary societies are connected to the reproduction and manifestation of global inequalities and how this is related with cross-border mobility

on a global scale (Brand and Wissen, 2018; Lessenich, 2019). A third group of studies focus on knowledge structures using decolonial or post-colonial theories to draw a historical genesis of contemporary thoughts and constellations (Mbembe, 2018; Mignolo, 2000). Others look at the inequality of rights connected to different legal citizenships and their nexus with migration processes (Boatcă, 2014; Shachar, 2009). A fifth group draws on theories of radical democracy (Isin, 2009; Rancière, 2011) to grasp the contested options to participate in political decisions. Research coming from peace and conflict studies focus on "migration out of, as and into violence" (Bank et al., 2017) in the context of global politics. Finally, researchers working under the paradigm of transnationalism have demonstrated how global social relations change under the impression of migration, building new transnational communities (Faist, 2000; Glick Schiller et al., 1992). They also pointed out how social, economic, or political remittances draw back on the countries of origin and thereby also affecting global power relations (Levitt, 2001; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). All of these approaches provide different lenses through which localized politics can be linked to global dynamics. We see them as complementary perspectives, pointing to different aspects of global asymmetries and thus further research.

Conclusion

It was the aim of this article to provide researchers of Border Studies an overview of general concepts that we consider helpful to guide reflections about border politics. Therefore, we hope to inspire the design of individual research projects and to build connections within the multi- and interdisciplinary field of Border Studies. Some aspects, such as stressing the social construction and the praxeological dimension of bordering, are largely considered, by now, common ground within border studies and are shared by concepts like "borderwork" (Rumford, 2008) or "border-scapes" (Brambilla, 2015). Other aspects, such as the conflictual nature of border struggles, are primarily stressed by critical approaches, such as the ethnographic and the materialist border regime analysis (Georgi, 2019; Hess, 2012; Tsianos and Karakayali, 2010). For future research, we stress the importance to link analysis of border politics more systematically to an analysis of global power relations; we agree with Mofette and Walters that "the connections to racialization and the postcolonial are generally muted or presumed" (2018, p. 94). While there are relevant works broadly outlining the course of world

history, we suggest there is a particular lack of empirical middle range studies which link local border politics to their unequal effects on a global scale. These types of studies are necessary to not just repeat what seems to be obvious (at least among critical scholars) but to make it possible for Border Studies scholars to differentiate heterogeneous processes and their effects. These analyses may also reveal points of discontinuity and ambivalence, often neglected within macro-narratives, which may rather focus on general

structures of oppression than consider disruptions to those structures. We also claim that acknowledging this ambivalence may be essential for considering options for social transformation. Change may never happen by only examining abstract ideas, but rather relying on analyses which consider concrete social processes and actual forms of resistance. We hope that critical migration and border studies researchers will continue to fill this gap within the following years.

NOTES

ⁱ This text is the result of the collective and collaborative work and discussions in the working group "Migration and Border Research: Perspectives from Political Science" within the PhD program "Boundary Formations in Migration Societies" (Universities of Oldenburg, Göttingen and Osnabrück).

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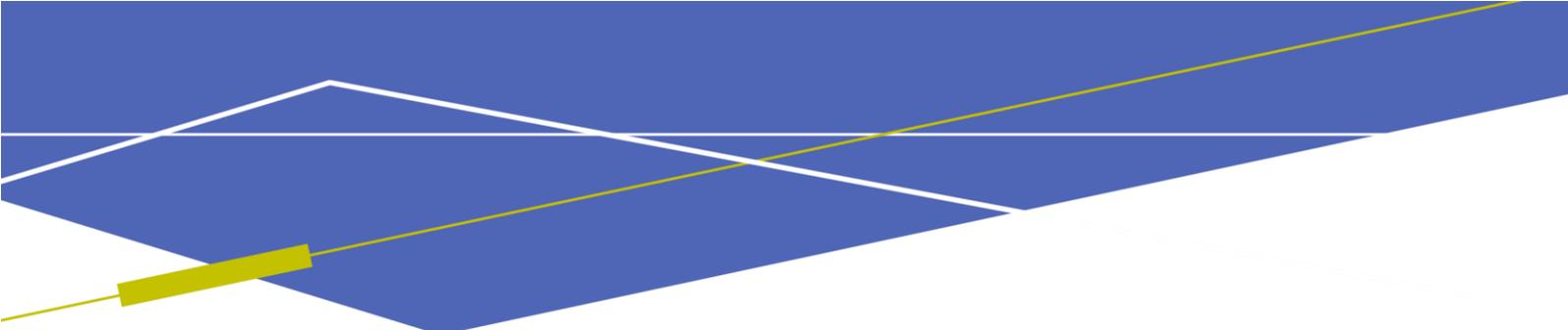
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

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The Seven Follies of Lampedusa

Chiara Dorbolò

This contribution aims to illustrate how architecture can upset the dominant narratives around the topics of borders and migration. In order to do this, it uses as a case-study the island of Lampedusa, Italy, one of the main arrival points for migrants trying to reach Europe. The contribution is divided in two parts: (i) a research on the role of the landscape in transforming Lampedusa into a border island, and (ii) an architectural proposal for a fictional intervention to counteract this transformation. Based on an arbitrary line orthogonal to the existing borderline, the proposal symbolically overturns the current image of the border as a line of separation, revealing its potential as a line of connection. Reproducing the process that converts imaginary lines into real boundaries by means of social construction, the line is made real through seven architectural interventions, termed follies.

Architecture, Border Production, Folly, Lampedusa, Migration

Les sept folies de Lampedusa

La présente contribution vise à montrer comment l'architecture peut déstabiliser les narratives dominants autour des thèmes des frontières et des migrations. À cette fin, l'étude de cas de l'île de Lampedusa en Italie, l'un des points d'arrivée les plus importants pour les migrants qui tentent de rejoindre l'Europe, est examinée. La contribution est divisée en deux parties : (i) une réflexion sur le rôle du paysage dans la transformation de Lampedusa en une île frontalière et (ii) une proposition architecturale pour une intervention fictive visant à s'opposer à cette transformation. Partant d'une ligne arbitraire orthogonale à la ligne de frontière existante, cette proposition surmonte symboliquement l'image actuelle de la frontière en tant que ligne de séparation et dévoile son potentiel en tant que ligne de connexion. Cela se fait à travers sept interventions architecturales – ici appelées folies – qui représentent la reproduction de constructions sociales et sont capables de transformer des lignes imaginées en frontières réelles.

Architecture, production de frontière, folie, Lampedusa, migration

Die sieben Torheiten von Lampedusa

Der vorliegende Beitrag will zeigen, wie Architektur die dominierenden Narrative rund um die Themen Grenzen und Migration destabilisieren kann. Dafür wird das Fallbeispiel der Insel Lampedusa in Italien betrachtet, einer der wichtigsten Ankunftsorte für Migranten, die versuchen nach Europa zu gelangen. Der Beitrag gliedert sich in zwei Teile: (i) eine Betrachtung zur Rolle von Landschaft bei der Transformation Lampedusas in eine Grenzinsel und (ii) ein architektonischer Vorschlag für eine fiktive Intervention, um dieser Transformation entgegenzuwirken. Ausgehend von einer willkürlichen Linie, die senkrecht zur existierenden Grenzlinie verläuft, überwindet dieser Vorschlag symbolisch das aktuelle Bild der Grenze als Trennlinie und zeigt ihr Potenzial als Verbindungslinie auf. Dies geschieht über sieben architektonische Interventionen – hier als Torheiten bezeichnet –, die für die Reproduktion sozialer Konstruktionen stehen und es vermögen, imaginäre Linien zu realen Grenzen zu machen.

Architektur, Grenzproduktion, Torheit, Lampedusa, Migration

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Introduction

This text was not written by an academic scholar and does not follow the traditional structure of an academic paper. In 2015, I spent some weeks on the island of Lampedusa, Italy, to investigate the island's relation with the border between Europe and Africa. The goal of the research was a proposal for an architecture intervention – the final project of my graduate school in architecture. By presenting the project in this paper without trying to correct its ambiguous nature, I wish to make a case for the necessity of blended approaches that cross the boundaries of academia and architectural practice.

The peculiarity of the island in that historical moment captured me with all of its contradictions and complexity, increasingly distancing me from the simple solution I had envisioned while looking at the island from far. The resulting project is a complex combination of research and design, where one does not make sense without the other. The research focuses on the spatial consequences of border on the island of Lampedusa as seen by the eyes of an architect, while the architectural approach consists of a design for a fictional intervention strongly influenced by sociological motives that little have to do with the traditional role of architecture. My involvement with the notion of border, for which Lampedusa was my point of entry, pushed me to investigate, through academic research, the impressions I gathered during my stay on the island. In particular, I felt compelled to support my considerations on the physical space of the island, based on my observations, with a sociological analysis of Lampedusa's relation to the border.

This work combines an empirical approach which applies theoretical thinking to personal reflection on the geographical space of the border and a more conceptual approach which speculates on what the role of architecture could be in changing the narrative of the border by proposing a fictional intervention. While it cannot be presented as academic methodology, this work may raise questions regarding the role of spatial and artistic approaches in understanding and illustrating the construction of the border narrative.

Context and preliminary reflections

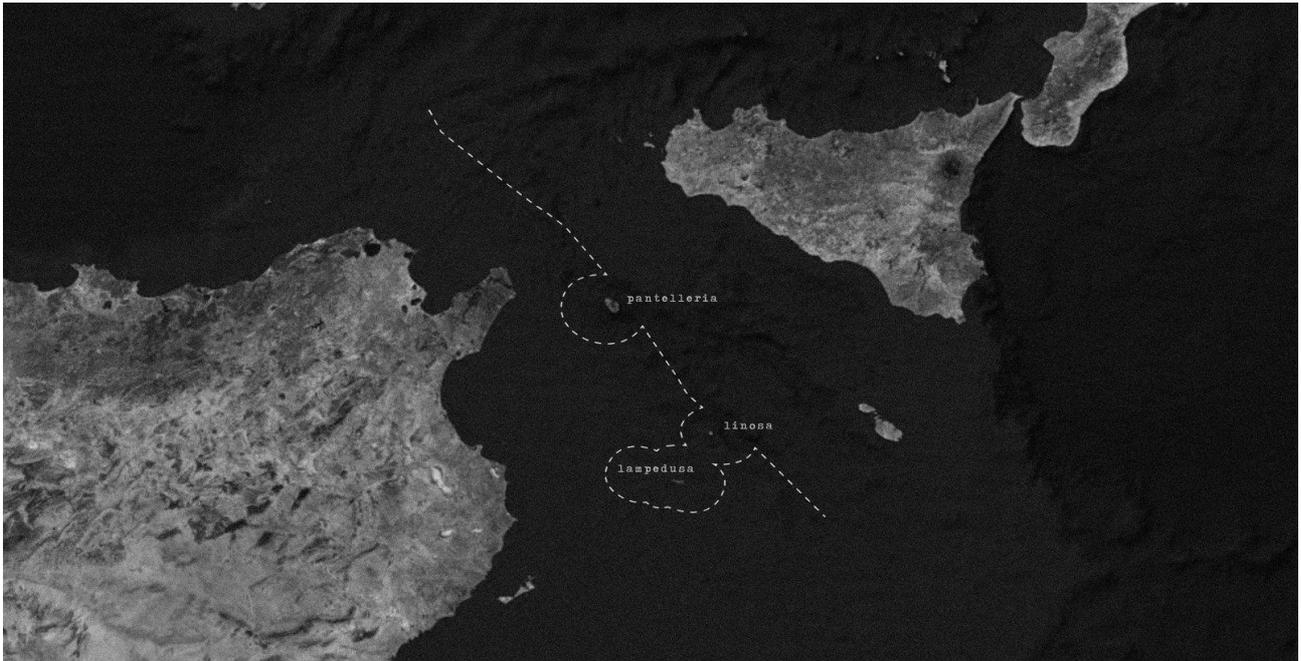
Lampedusa is a small island in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. With a surface of 20 square km and a population of around 6000, it is the largest and the most populated of the Pelagie, a small

archipelago of three islands defining the southern border of the country. The first recorded use of the island was as a Phoenician trading base. Subsequently, it became one of the most important steppingstones in the Mediterranean Sea. However, with the exception of a few mentions in literature, cinema, and international news, the island managed to keep a low profile until recently, when it became widely known as the detention island of the central Mediterranean route. (Orsini, 2014)

Although Lampedusa is an island rich in history, its identity today is largely related to the border between Europe and Africa. The international borderline that separates Italian and Tunisian waters consists of a main line that sits approximately halfway between the coastlines of North Africa and Sicily (without considering the four Italian islands of Lampedusa, Linosa, Lampione, and Pantelleria), interrupted by circles that enclose the islands that would, otherwise, sit in African waters. As a result, the archipelago is almost entirely encircled by Tunisian sea. Because of its remoteness and key role in the central Mediterranean route, Lampedusa is a good case study to analyze the complex relations between border, natural landscape, and built environment.

The analysis of the borderization process of Lampedusa (Cuttitta, 2014) through the analysis of the island's landscape and built environment is deeply rooted in the theoretical shift from the idea of border as a 'line in the sand' to the idea of 'bordering' as an ongoing process (Van Houtum, 2005). The concept of 'borderscapes', as used by Chiara Brambilla and others, effectively conveys the meaning of a space of the border which cannot be seen as static and limited to the geographic perimeter of a nation. The borderscape is the result of complex practices and relationships that require a multidisciplinary approach (Brambilla, 2015). I propose that the geographic localization of the border may therefore be found not in a line, but in all the physical artifacts that contribute to the borderization practices and in the spaces where border-related social interaction occurs.

In this text, I attempt to demonstrate the utility of this approach by looking at the case of Lampedusa. The analysis breaks down in two parts. The first investigates the process of borderization on Lampedusa, and by looking at the geographic characteristics of the island, it explains how territory serves the purpose of manipulating the (in)visibility of the border. The second part takes a closer look at the borderscape to identify the main elements that explain the process of border production. The landscape of Lampedusa is interpreted not only as a canvas where the border left its mark over the years, but also as a 'simulacrum' (Baudrillard, 1994) of the non-existing border wall.



Lampedusa, at the border between Europe and Africa fig. 1
Image made by the author

Lampedusa: sea and border

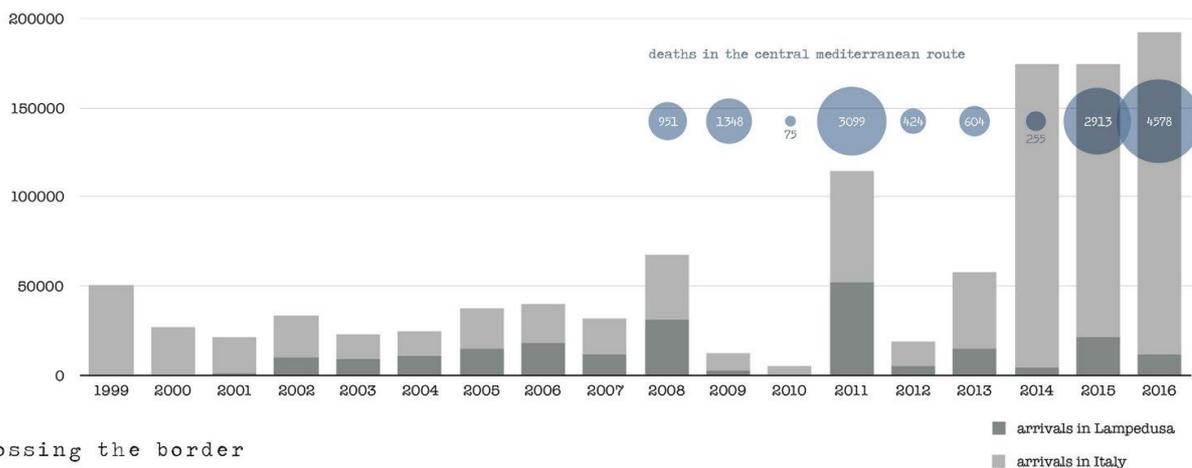
Until the 20th century, water was the defining element of life on Lampedusa: the local economy revolved around fishing, and trading could only occur via sea. At that time, the border was not an issue, at least at a local level: fishermen on Lampedusa still remember when they used to fish in Madhia, Tunisia, and use the coast of Sfax to paint and repair their boats during yearly maintenance (Orsini, 2014). With the construction of the airport, the increase in tourism, and the emergence of the immigration industry, however, the sea was stripped of its natural role. No longer a gateway between Lampedusa and the world, nor a source of income for fishermen and their families, the sea acquired a more negative connotation as it started to be associated with the death of migrants and with touristic exploitation.

The island's relation with the border is often presented as a consequence of its geographic position. Yet, in the words of Cuttitta (2014, p. 199), "the geographical context alone would not suffice to explain why Lampedusa is more 'border' not only than other sea border spots in Calabria or Sicily, but also more than Pantelleria, another Italian island just off the coast of Sicily, which is even closer to North Africa". He argues that Lampedusa was deliberately turned into a border place: yearly data on the arrival of migrants to Lampedusa, to Sicily, and to the rest of Italy, suggests that the episodes of overcrowding of the island's detention center were not a consequence of a

greater number of arrivals overall, but of the fact that most of these migrants were intentionally diverted to Lampedusa – and held there instead of being transferred to the mainland. The diplomacy between Italy and its cross-Mediterranean neighbors, particularly Libya, often caused migrants' flows to be manipulated so as to influence political choices. For example, in the early 2000s, Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi deliberately eased control over the Libyan coastline to gain bargaining power in his collaboration with Italy to curb illegal departures. What seemed to be emergencies were thus simply the artifact of political machination (Cuttitta, 2014).

Lampedusa as a border landscape

At first glance, the landscape of the island reveals that the increasingly burdensome presence of the border left its mark on the territory. Many areas are cut off from public access, restricted for military purposes or simply affected by dilapidation. The barracks of the different law enforcement organizations, together with their sea and land vehicles, are one of the most recurring visual elements. The local cemetery, a place of commemoration and mourning, became a symbolic battlefield to protest against the anonymity of the mass graves. Here, socially and politically active tourists are told the stories of those who died trying to reach the island of Lampedusa.



Yearly data on the migrants' arrival in Lampedusa and in Italy between 1999 and 2016 and number of deaths along the central Mediterranean route between 2008 and 2016 fig. 2

Image made by the author, data from Cuttitta, 2014



Map of the elements of border production on the island of Lampedusa fig. 3

Image made by the author

If the borderization of Lampedusa was deliberate, then it might be possible to find intentionality in the physical elements that materialize the border on the island. Can we look at Lampedusa's landscape as an active tool of border production and enforcement? The following is an account of the three places (Lampedusa's reception center, the military pier, and the monument of the Door of Europe) that, in the author's opinion, better represent the three phases of the border production;

namely, the narrative of the invasion, the securitization, and the humanitarian discourse (Cuttitta, 2014). These places not only played a crucial role in turning the island into a borderscape, but well illustrate the different phases of the mediatic production of the border.

The Centro di Primo Soccorso e Accoglienza (CPSA), literally First Aid and Reception Center, is the only detention center for migrants on a minor Italian island. The presence of the center, estab-

lished in 1996, is in fact what allows the redirection to Lampedusa of a great number of migrants rescued in the Mediterranean. Its construction was, therefore, the first (and most crucial) step in turning the island into a grand theater for the border.

The choice to place the CPSA in a hidden valley and make it inaccessible to the public serves the purpose of creating as big a distance as possible between the people living and working on Lampedusa and the migrants forcibly held on it. The isolation of the center affects the narrative surrounding the island in several ways. As shown by the frequency of riots and violence, especially during periods of overcrowding, the isolation tends to escalate frustration and resentment among the people locked in the center, by alienating them from any semblance of normal life. The isolated position is also very convenient to some: it makes the place ideal to tell a story that cannot be contested by witnesses, exacerbating the feeling of detachment that is, at any rate, always part of island life. To complete the picture, the media coverage of the center consists almost exclusively of images of the physical barrier of the fence with migrants standing behind. The *Border Spectacle*, as described by De Genova, “sets a scene that appears to be all about ‘exclusion,’ where allegedly ‘unwanted’ or ‘undesirable’—and in any case, ‘unqualified’ or ‘ineligible’—migrants must be stopped, kept out, and turned around” (De Genova, 2015). After being rescued at sea, the migrants are usually disembarked at the Molo Favalaro, the military pier. Publicly inaccessible yet perfectly visible from the other side of the bay, the pier is where the boats of the Coast Guard and other branches of the military are docked. The proliferation of military boats on the pier signaled the shift from a pattern of spontaneous and occasional arrivals of migrants in the early-90s, to the well-oiled immigration machine put in place from 2002 onward: “The Italian authorities increased sea patrolling activities: from that year on, they would carry to Lampedusa all the migrants intercepted in the southern Strait of Sicily” (Cuttitta, 2014, p. 203). The terrible structural conditions of the pier, which urgently requires restoration, are aggravated by its inadequacy in receiving people who spent hours, sometimes days, in small boats at sea. The absence of toilets, changing rooms (to get rid of clothes soaked in seawater or fuel), and areas equipped to perform first-aid procedures is explained by the fact that it is not clear who would be responsible for such facilities. In reality, these services would radically change the way in which rescuing operations are managed at the pier and depicted by the media, rendering the current procedure completely unnecessary. In fact, if we look at the images in the press, these operations seem

to boil down to the following freeze-frames: the disembarking, where military officers with gloves and masks handle the migrants and count them by touching; the queuing, where migrants wait standing or sitting on the ground, with shiny thermal blankets being the only comfort; and the transfer, when migrants are brought away on a bus. Without any interference, these images present the clear story of an invasion that requires measures to be contained. The military’s involvement is presented as necessary to keep the threat under control. It should not come as a surprise that activists from Lampedusa criticized *Fuocoammare*, the Italian independent film that won the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2016 (Collective Askavusa, 2016). Trying to raise awareness about the militarization of the island, they pointed out that, in the opening scene of the movie, one of the island’s many radar stations is presented as a system to localize and rescue migrants at sea while not used in rescuing activities in the first place.

In 2008, Italian sculptor Mimmo Paladino was commissioned to build a monument in memory to all the people who have lost their lives trying to reach the Italian shores. He realized the *Porta d’Europa*, the “Door of Europe,” a symbolic door open toward Africa. Located on the south coast of the island, south of the airport’s landing strip, the monument is not signaled and rather difficult to reach. As with the CPSA, it is impossible to casually stumble upon it. The two-dimensionality of the door, realized with zincate steel and refractory clay, is reminiscent of the most common features of cheap theatre props, which are meant to be looked at from a specific point of view. And indeed, the door became a favored location for commemorations and official events related to migrants. The media is especially fond of its appearance at sunset, when the soft light and the sound of the waves make for poetic footage. The authorities use this evocative setting as a platform to exalt the role of Lampedusa in welcoming people who escape poverty or war. This monument, which addresses the most bleak and tragic aspects of immigration, is fundamental to enact the final key aspect of the narrative: humanitarian discourse.

Lampedusa as a simulacrum

In his philosophical treatise *Simulacra and Simulations*, Jean Baudrillard (1994) proposes an interpretation of contemporary society as a world of images disconnected from reality, where facts are always mediated and simulation dominates societal life. In his analysis, he identifies three successive orders of simulacra. First order simu-



The three artifacts that illustrate the border production in Lampedusa: the CPSA, the military pier, the monument Porta d'Europa fig. 4
Photographs taken by the author

lacræ are simulations that stand in place of the original. Second-order simulacræ do not bear a relation with the original, but become as “real” as the original. Third-order simulacræ consist of images that precede and replace the original, turning originality into a meaningless concept. The landscape of Lampedusa can be interpreted as a third-order simulacrum: an image of the border that has become more important than the natural role of migration for the survival of the island.

In particular, the most symbolic of the artifacts previously analyzed, the Door of Europe, can be interpreted with a literal illustration of Baudrillard’s theory. There are three layers of simulation: (a) the door represents an opening in an imaginary border wall, while as of today the border is still closed; (b) the imaginary border wall implied by the door would actually be an honest representation of the impenetrable state of the border, so that remarking its absence contributes to hide reality; (c) the border, however, is a completely artificial fact. The door cleverly reaches the purpose of naturalizing the border and at the same time creates a moral system (the humanitarian discourse) that makes it acceptable.

The role of the media in turning Lampedusa into Border Spectacle, as previously explained in reference to the immigration center, the military pier, and the Door of Europe, is consistent with the role attributed to the media by Baudrillard (1994) in obliterating the distinction between reality and simulacræ.

Broadly speaking, Lampedusa serves as evidence of the complexity of the spatial implications of political borders, when they do not translate into physical barriers. The narrative around migration that currently permeates Europe has not led to the creation of a physical wall in Lampedusa, because geographical conditions make it redundant. But there is, nevertheless, a physical dimension to the borderscape: in Lampedusa it has taken the form of a network of artifacts, a backdrop against which the Border Spectacle takes place.

A fictional intervention project

This section consists of an illustration of the fictional intervention project “The Seven Follies of Lampedusa”, which constituted the practical part of my graduate architecture final. I believe that my proposal for a fictional spatial intervention on the island of Lampedusa, in connection to the research outlined in the previous chapters, might be a point of reflection on the possible value of an approach that crosses the boundary between academia and architectural practices.

The spatial focus of the research led to a reflection about the power of space to change existing narratives. If the physical space of the island had an active role in the construction of the border spectacle, it could be possible to reverse the process. Based on the role of the landscape in materializing the border, the following is a poetic, speculative attempt to devise a spatial approach to deconstruct the narrative of the border. This spatial approach consists of a design for a spatial intervention on the landscape of the island. Through the use of maps, architectural drawings, and references for a fictional intervention, I materialized the outcomes of the research into a series of artifacts that allow for different levels of interpretation. In the following paragraphs, I will outline and explain the series as a whole, as well as each element through the architectural typology, the geographic arrangement on the island, the formal language, and the symbolic function.

In my search for a specific architectural tool to challenge the narratives around the “borderized” Lampedusa, I was drawn to the typology of the folly. The intellectual roots of this typology are found in Erasmus’ famous 1511 essay *In Praise of Folly*, and it implies a suspension from utilitarian purposes (Erasmus, 1876). Precisely because there is no specific program, there is no shared definition of what constitutes an architectural

Amsterdam, the place where the project was conceived and first presented. The line started merely as an inspiration and a key to interpret the phenomenon of migration from a different perspective. Later, it became the main idea of the design. Instead of being only the symbol of a deconstructing process that would replace a line of exclusion with a line of connection, it became its physical manifestation. This transformation resembles the process that turns the imaginary line of a border into a real line, which becomes tangible through social construction.

The seven follies

Borders turn from imaginary lines into actual barriers, even in the absence of a real wall, through the social practices and policies that revolve around them. Similarly, my line becomes real through the construction of seven follies that celebrate the physical and symbolic nexus between the different cultures of the Mediterranean. The seven follies can be interpreted as a journey through the peculiarities of the island, all of which important, interconnected, and part of an ancient story that can be told from many different perspectives. The journey through the follies is not predetermined: there is neither a beginning nor an end. It can be joined anywhere. The visitor is en-

couraged to engage and take a critical stand against the present situation. The architectural language of the seven follies is inspired by the informal architecture of the Mediterranean region. The simple but powerful forms, which all peoples who live around the Mediterranean can relate to, have become the physical proof of the cultural interconnection. The historical role of Lampedusa as a steppingstone is revived and emphasized, in opposition to the contemporary narrative of the border island. The follies are made of rammed earth, a technique that compresses ground soil, the most widely used material on the planet. Stripped from any functionality, the follies are a place to feel and meditate, a place to (re)experience private emotions and discover their relation to the bigger picture. Each folly addresses a specific issue connected to immigration and borders, and each of them creates an emotional experience that describes the dangerous journey across the sea. In doing so, it serves as a reminder that every human being is on a journey. The follies allow the visitors to (re)live a range of feelings, meditate on their experiences, and exorcise their demons. From fear to courage, from safety to uncertainty, from delusion to trust, from calm to anxiety, from alienation to involvement, the simple shapes of the follies are designed to trigger a personal emotional response.



The Seven Follies of Lampedusa fig. 6
Image made by the author

The seven follies carry the visitors and the inhabitants of Lampedusa into the diverse island's landscape. They walk the visitors through the wild and beautiful landscape of Lampedusa, encouraging a different kind of tourism: responsible, curious, and off the beaten path. In the silence of the island, the wind, the sea, and the rock cease to be

a backdrop and become cornerstones of our relationship with the world, fostering awareness for nature as a common good. They also provide new public spaces, devoid of institutional power and superimposed programs. They do not belong to anyone: they are not there to support institutional work or fixed programs.

They are synchronic public spaces, where everything can happen because nothing is supposed to. *Morteammare* is a tholos, or a beehive dome. A long staircase cut in the falesia, the suggestive high cliff on the north side of the island, brings the visitor down to the bottom of the sea, where a small room with light coming from the top and through the water symbolizes the end of the journey. *Morteammare* (death at the sea) is a met-

aphorical descent into the world of death. Inspired by the title of the movie set in Lampedusa *Fuocoammare* (literally "fire at sea"), the name of this folly is a reminder of what really happens at sea. The countless deaths off the shores of Lampedusa cannot be shrugged off as a consequence of the island's central position in the Mediterranean Sea. Instead, they are the consequence of specific policy choices at a national and interna-



Morteammare, section fig. 7
Image made by the author

tional level, which trigger the economic and political abuse of borders. *Morteammare* is a memorial to those who died at sea, but also an attempt to exorcize the most human fear of all: the fear of the end. Moreover, the folly is a critique of the deafening silence that surrounds those who die in their attempt to reach the shores of Lampedusa. This includes not only the countless bodies swallowed by the sea, but also those in unmarked graves in the local cemetery. *Morteammare* is a scream against the silent immobility with which the authorities become accomplices.

La Torre is a watchtower. It creates an opportunity to see the island from above. Constructed as two towers, one inside the other, the folly offers two separate routing to reach the top and to descend again. Visitors can reach the top of the

structure through the outer, square-shaped staircase, which is completely closed off on both sides, creating a strong focus towards above. The outer wall and the outer staircase are realized in rammed earth. From the top-level platform, the concrete inner spiral staircase brings them down again. During the descent, several narrow slits in the concrete wall, all the way through the massive rammed earth staircase and outer walls, frame different views that represent the different identities of the island: the harbor, the airport, the forest, the sea, the desert, the city, the military area, the immigration center.

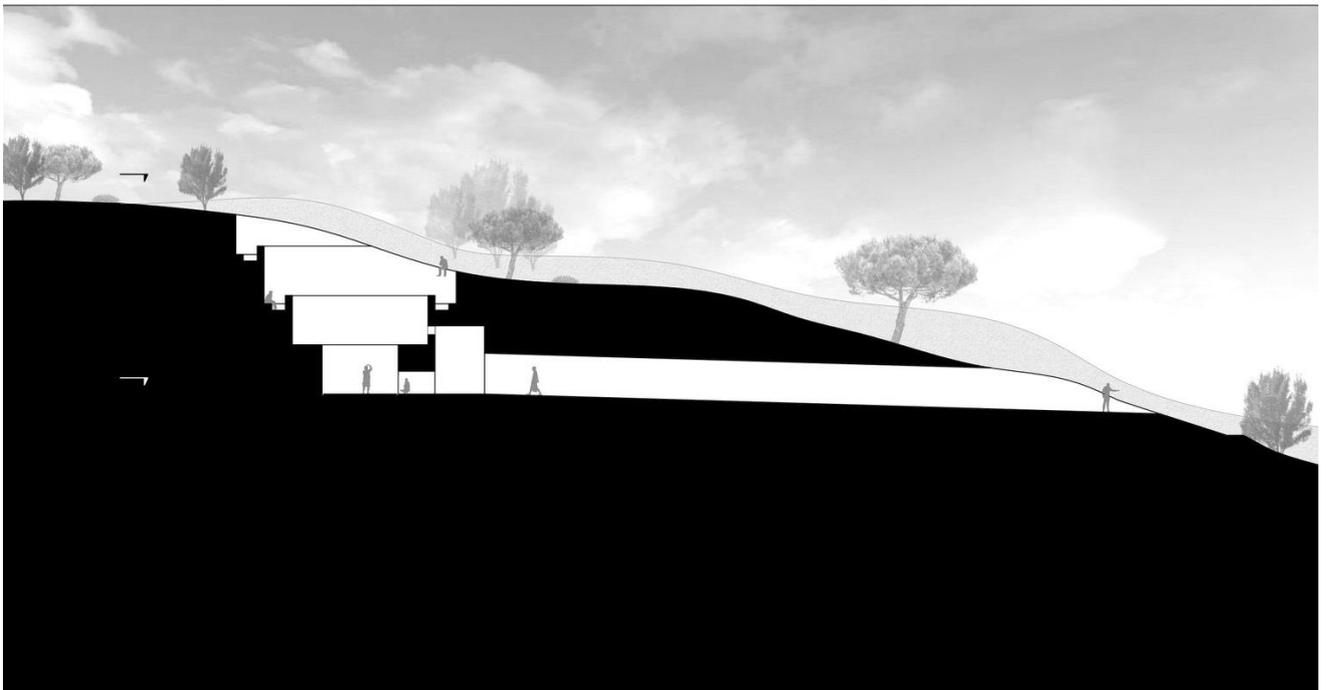
All the tall structures (lighthouses and transmission towers) in Lampedusa are for military purposes and/or not accessible. This makes it impossible to see the island from above for everyone

who is not arriving or leaving by plane. La Torre offers a new perspective on the island while criticizing the militarization of the island, which does not benefit the locals nor the migrants. At the same time, the different framed views serve as a reminder that the identity of Lampedusa as a border island is just one aspect of the story, an image that was carefully staged by framing one single element and editing out everything else.

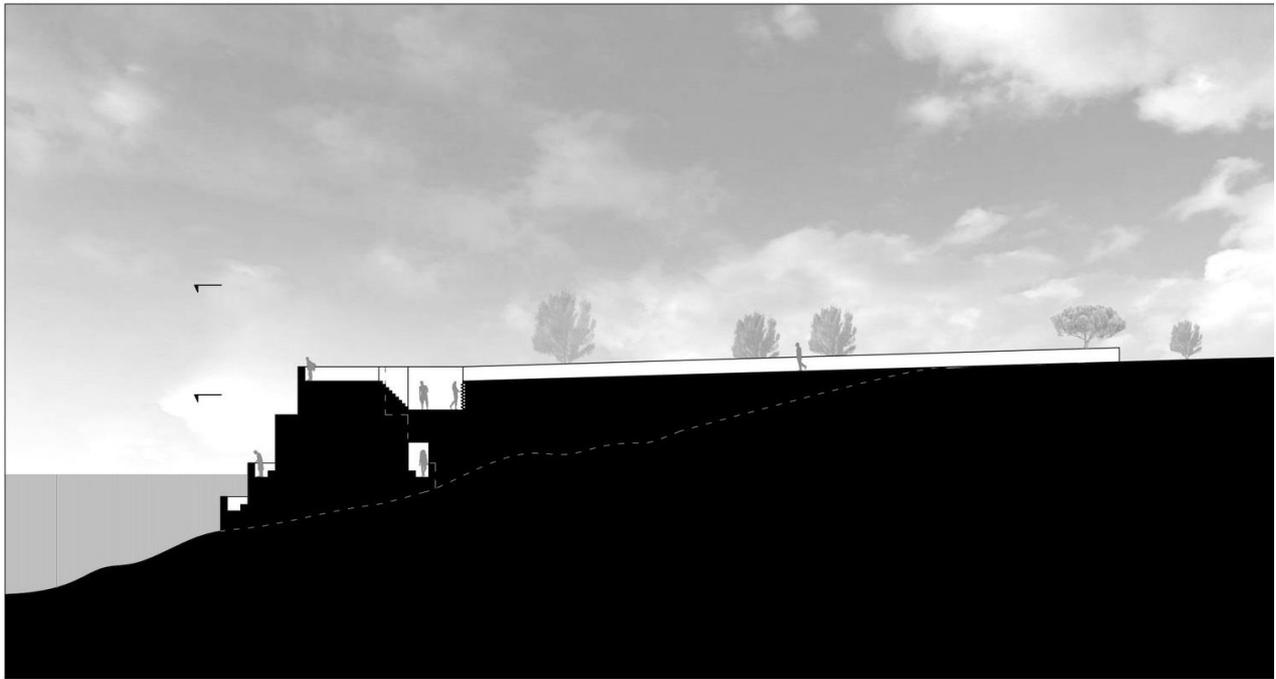
Terra Promessa is a hortus conclusus where the inner walls take the shape of an amphitheater. A high, circular wall stands in the middle of a dusty expanse, where the landscape of Lampedusa resembles a rocky desert. Towering trees are visible inside the wall, suggesting the presence of an oasis in the desert, sheltered from the dangers of the world. Inside, a large and shallow crater digs into the earth and is covered by a canopy of maritime pines encloses a pool of sand. By suggesting the possibility for a spontaneous gathering, this shape induces the visitor's imagination to switch from the comfort of seclusion to the eagerness of being together. From the prospect of isolation to the one of possible integration.

Lampedusa served as a detention island for many centuries - the sea acts as a natural barrier and it allows the government to detain immigrants without the costly deployment of guards, fences, and surveillance systems. Terra Promessa ("promised land") invites a reflection on the barrier that encircles Lampedusa by recreating a similar barrier on the island. The folly presents the tragic paradox of escaping one hell only to find another.

Dentro and Fuori work together, and are one the opposite of the other: Dentro is a hypogeus inverted pyramid, while Fuori is a step pyramid. Dentro ("inside") is accessed through a long tunnel escalated in the earth. From the access point, the main space is not visible, and a light coming from an opening guides the visitors to the end of the tunnel. Drawing from the spatial experience of the access to the inner chamber of the pyramids, a larger space creates a moment of expansion after the long tunnel; after that, through a narrow and low passage, it is possible to access the main space. From here, the steps of an inverted pyramid in rammed earth surround the visitors, whose attention is drawn towards the open sky. The experience of the space shifts the focus inwards.



Dentro, section fig. 8a
Image made by the author



Fuori, section fig. 8b
Image made by the author

Fuori create a diametrically opposed experience. The monumental pyramid is visible from far, and it is possible to reach the top through a long bridge in rammed earth. At the end of the bridge, a ladder descends into a sunken space, from where only the sky is visible, and on the opposite side a staircase climbs up again to the top of the pyramid. From here, it is possible to look at the immigration center and at the surroundings, shifting the focus towards the outside.

Located North and South of the detention center, Dentro and Fuori consider the role of Lampedusa in relation to the border, ambiguously and conveniently shifting between the inside and the outside. They refer to the condition of migrants in Lampedusa. While they are locked in here, these people are caught in a paradox, being inside and outside at the same time. Scared and relieved, chained and free, still in Africa but already in Europe. Dentro e fuori.

Isole is a set of two quffah, or small round boats. Literally translated as "islands", this folly consists of two small boats anchored to two opposite shores within the harbor of Lampedusa. A system of ropes ensures that, when they are at their minimum or maximum distance from the shores, the boats are on the line traced by the project. When they meet in the middle of the bay, they can be used as steppingstones to cross the harbor in a way that is impossible by walking because of interruptions on the seafront. The meeting point coincides with the tip of Molo Favalaro, the military harbor used to disembark migrants and currently inaccessible to the public.

To be isolated means to be disconnected from the rest of the world, just like an island is detached from the mainland. Sometimes, being isolated also means being independent and autonomous, so that the rest of the world is not only far away, but also unnecessary. The history of Mediterranean islands suggests something different: to be an island can also mean being a bridge, a steppingstone, and a fundamental link between two opposite shores. Thus, an island can be a meeting point for different cultures and different realities. Isole transforms the solitary experience of using a rowboat to cross the water into a collective endeavor. To reach the other side, one needs someone else to bring the other boat to the meeting point. The design suggests that meeting halfway is only possible if the two parties try to reach out to one another.

La Porta is a spontaneous settlement based on the typology of the courtyard. A composition of simple blocks is created around the door of Europe, based on the already existing topography. Each block consist of a small quadrangular rammed earth building with four walls and no roof, following the principle of the giardino pantesco, a similar structure that was used to protect trees from the drought and the wind. The protection of the walls will allow wild plants to grow inside the units, creating small natural gardens. The walls, of different thickness, are punctured by slit-like openings of different size and shape that allow visitors to look inside, but not to enter. The only accessible unit is the one built around the monument Door of Europe.

The monument *La Porta d'Europa* embodies the last act of the border spectacle: the humanitarian response to the tragedy. It does that in a rather ironic way: a symbolic door commemorates the tragedy of people who died because the real door to Europe is in fact shut. As already mentioned, the door can be interpreted as a simulacrum put in place to naturalize the border and creating a moral system that makes it acceptable. On an architectural level though, the monument already contains the main argument to its own criticism: it is not a real door, for it does not grant access to anything. In order to criticize it, the project reverse this element by adding a space that can

only be accessed through the door. Reproducing the naturalization process of the simulacrum, a series of appealing yet inaccessible spaces are created around the door, so that the door grants entrance to the only accessible garden.

In 1843, the Bourbon kings of Sicily built seven palaces on Lampedusa, overlooking the bay that serves as a natural harbor. These seven palaces became the center of urban development on the island. The seven follies represent the hope for a new period of social and human development, where the role of Lampedusa as a steppingstone in the Mediterranean is not abused, but cherished.



Terra Promessa, section fig. 9
Image made by the author

Conclusion

This study of Lampedusa's borderscape suggests that sociological theories looking at borders from a multidisciplinary perspective and conceptualizing them as ongoing, unstable phenomena may provide a valuable framework to understand the border's spatial implications. The presence of a network of artifacts intrinsically involved in the borderization process suggests that it is impossible to grasp the full complexity of the border without looking beyond the borderline.

The architectural approach of The Seven Follies of Lampedusa is an attempt to use architecture to shed some light over this complexity. Both the architectural typology and the geographic positioning of the artifacts offer an interpretation of the island's relation to the border, and an overview of the different identities of Lampedusa.

Each folly is a creative reaction to a specific element emerged from the research. The interpretation of the network of artifacts as simulacra of the border serves also as a theoretical framework to envision a possible solution: the project uses spatial intervention to recreate a connection between the physical space of the island and the reality of the border.

Combining sociological reflections, geographic analysis, critical engagement, and conceptual, speculative spatial planning, this work offers a fresh gaze at Border Studies, identifies possibilities for cross-disciplinary collaborations, and presents an example of a combined approach: theoretical, empirical, and conceptual.

This makes the project not only a creative reflection on a social issue, but also an alternative, non-academic proposal for discussion and public engagement.

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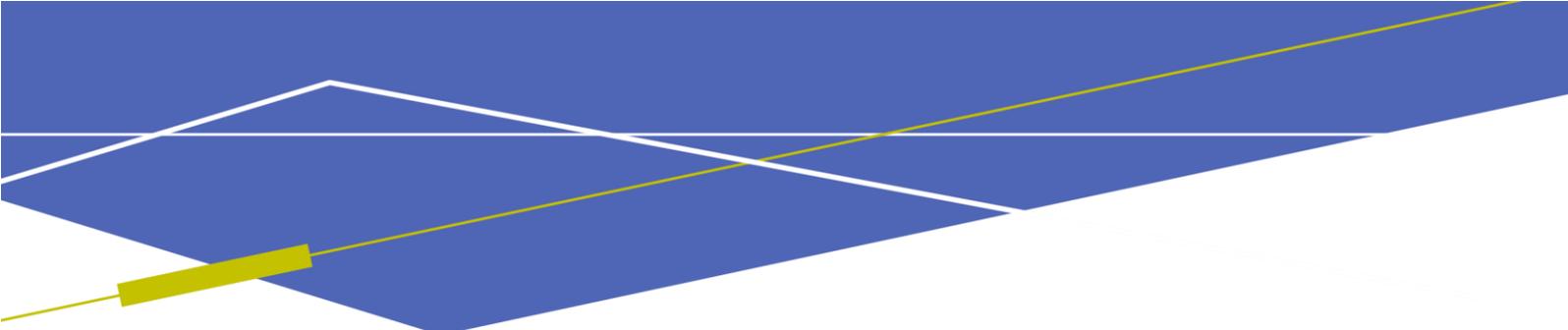
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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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The Approach of Contemporary History to Border Studies in Europe

Birte Wassenberg

In Europe, Border Studies is a relatively new research field for Contemporary History. It has been explored since the 1990s by historians mainly in connection with Area Studies and the History of European Integration. It therefore finds itself at the intersection between International Relations and European Studies. This contribution will assess how Contemporary Historians in Europe interpret Border Studies. It will show that, contrary to international scholars who approach Border Studies generally via Global History, they are dealing with this field either by individual case studies on the border in cross-border regions (Area Studies) or as a sub-section of research on the process of European Integration. It will also argue that, when historians are ready to take open up to new research methodologies and take on a multi-disciplinary and multi-scale perspective, they can largely contribute to Border Studies by means of a long-term, historically context-based approach to borders and borderlands.

Contemporary History, Area Studies, International Relations, European integration, Multi-Oriented Scale Approach

L'approche de l'histoire contemporaine à l'étude des frontières en Europe

En Europe, Border Studies sont un champ de recherche relativement nouveau pour l'histoire contemporaine. Il a été exploré par des historiens à partir des années 1990, principalement en lien avec les Area Studies et l'histoire de l'intégration européenne. Il se trouve donc au croisement entre les Relations Internationales et les Etudes européennes. Cet article examine comment les historiens interprètent les Border Studies. Il montre que, contrairement aux chercheurs internationaux qui les approchent en général par l'histoire globale, ils les traitent soit par des études de cas sur la frontière dans les régions transfrontalières (Area Studies) ou comme courant de recherche sur l'intégration européenne. L'article argumente aussi que, si les historiens s'ouvrent à de nouvelles méthodologies de recherche et adoptent une perspective pluridisciplinaire et multi-scalaire, ils peuvent largement contribuer aux Border Studies par une approche centrée sur la longue durée et le contexte historique des frontières et espaces frontaliers.

Histoire contemporaine, Area Studies, Relations Internationales, Intégration européenne, Approche multi-scalaire

Zur Annäherung der Zeitgenössischen Geschichte an die Grenzforschung in Europa

In Europa sind Border Studies noch ein relativ neues Forschungsfeld in der Zeitgenössischen Geschichte. Es wurde seit den 1990er Jahren von Historiker_innen vor allem in Verbindung mit den Area Studies und der Europäischen Integrationsgeschichte untersucht. Daher befindet es sich an der Wegkreuzung zwischen Internationalen Beziehungen und Europawissenschaften. Dieser Artikel untersucht, wie Historiker_innen der Zeitgenössischen Geschichte Border Studies interpretieren. Er zeigt auf, dass sie, im Gegensatz zu internationalen Wissenschaftler_innen, die Border Studies im Allgemeinen von der globalen Geschichte aus be-

trachten, das Forschungsfeld entweder durch individuelle Fallstudien über die Grenze in grenzüberschreitenden Regionen (Area Studies) oder als eigenen Forschungsstrang über den Europäischen Einigungsprozess behandeln. Der Artikel argumentiert außerdem, dass Historiker_innen, wenn sie sich neuen Forschungsmethoden öffnen und eine multi-disziplinäre und multi-skalare Perspektive einnehmen, erheblich zu Border Studies beitragen können, nämlich durch einen langfristig und auf den historischen Kontext ausgerichteten Zugang zu Grenzen und Grenzgebieten.

Zeitgenössische Geschichte, Area Studies, Internationale Beziehungen, Europäische Integration, Multi-skalärer Ansatz

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Introduction

Border Studies has developed in recent years as a growingly attractive research field for many disciplines in Human Sciences. It was initially launched by a network of geographers in the United States, who set up the Association for Borderland Studies (ABS) in 1976 and then progressively opened up to other disciplines, Political Scientists, Anthropologists, Economists, Cultural Scientists, etc. Though it was advocated as a pluri-disciplinary research field, there has, however, so far been little interdisciplinary discussion about concepts and methodology, so that each scientific discipline still basically relies on their own research tools to approach Border Studies. For Contemporary History, this “unilaterality” holds particularly true. Not only were historians undoubtedly late in discovering Border Studies with regard to other scientific disciplines, but the research field remained marginal for a long time in Europe, because it was not approached by them from a pluri-disciplinary and multi-scalar perspective in order to study networks, connections, and systems that cross traditional boundaries (Libera, 2014, pp.151-165). Instead, research in Europe concentrated more on borders as part of the history of nation-states (Stoklosa, 2010, pp.53-62). Indeed, the history of Europe can be understood as one “of constantly shifting borders” (Beck, 2019, p.13) and during its development, Europe has only seen a few phases, in which borders were stable for protracted periods. Thus, until the end of World War II, borders were more synonymous with barriers and conflicts than with areas of cooperation. The history of European integration and International Relations after 1945 has changed this perspective. On the one hand, border regions and cross-border cooperation now became interesting as models for European integration, where the functions of the border evolved from a closed barrier to an open, integrated space (Wassenberg et al., 2019, pp.172-213). On the other hand, cross-border cooperation could now be approached as a specific form of Area Studies in International Relations where historians could examine the development of intra or extra-European neighboring areas, the borderlands, from a geopolitical perspective, in order to understand the political, economic and cultural representations between border regions, states or groups of states (Romer, 2014, pp.7-11). It is therefore unsurprising to see that the Contemporary history branch of Border Studies has developed in Europe at an intersection between studies on European integration and on International Relations (Wassenberg, 2014a, pp. 67-81). How exactly, however, are Border Studies in Europe approached by contemporary historians and

what is their added value for future interdisciplinary research in this field? The answer to this question will be divided into three sections: first, a general description of the historiography in the field of borders will show which geographical areas, topics and time periods have already been covered by Contemporary historians. This section will also illustrate the specific methodology employed by historians. Second, the following section will deal with the development of research on Border Studies as a form of Area Studies and its relationship with the history of European integration. Third, the final section proposes a conceptual framework for future research in Contemporary history on Border Studies in Europe which can also be used in interdisciplinary contexts and thus constitute a promising contribution to the development of Border Studies as an interconnected, pluri-disciplinary research field.

Historiography on borders

In Europe, the border has been subject of a large amount of research and the historiography on the matter is abundant (Wassenberg, 2014b, pp.29-43). Historians have, like geographers, often put the accent on the (geo)political dimension of the border which becomes apparent with its territorial affirmation; i.e. “the articulation of politics and of space” (Foucher, 1986).

Classically, three types of historical approaches to the border can be found in the historiography. First, the Westphalian border has been largely examined as part of the formation of the relevant nation-states in the 19th century, such as the the border created between France and Prussia. Historians revealed that it was only with the redrawing of the national border in 1871 that the border gradually became a barrier (Schlesier, 2007). There are also many case studies, however, of borders in relation to national state-building and resulting neighborhood relations, for example with regard to the Russian-Finnish border (Liikanen, 2011, pp.177-199, Carrez, 2019, pp.65-95). Second, given that borders have been shaped mainly by conflict in the past, historians generally first committed themselves to a reappraisal of the difficult aspects of the relevant history of the border. The topics dealt with thus covered the negative effects of shifts of the borders in Europe following wars and conflict and the resulting consequences; i.e. mainly minority questions or forced displacement of the border population. For Central and Eastern Europe, these questions have been analyzed, including Poland (Halicka, 2013), Russia and Ukraine (Kravchenko, 2019, pp. 91-109; Besier, 2019, pp. 109-117); and for Western Europe including Spain (Camiade, Font, 2012),

Denmark and Schleswig-Holstein (Henningsen, 2011; Klatt, 2017, pp. 15-30) or Belgium (Venken, 2017). In this context, the perception of history and its impact on the configuration of border relations also played an important role. Thus, memory in relation to with the border became an important focus for historians (Serrier, 2013; Stokłosa, 2019). This has also given rise, for example, to research on “phantom borders” as “earlier, mostly political demarcations or territorial divisions that structure space, the historical traces of which can be materially observed for example in architecture and rural settlement patterns or in infrastructure” (Hirschhausen, 2017, p. 97). Since the European integration process has been launched, borders have also been identified by historians as symbols of hope for the reconciliation of the peoples of the continent (Paun and Schirmann, 2016; De France and Pfeil, 2016). The third field of historical studies on borders focuses on the political or ideological functions of the border, as identified, for example, in the “Frontiers of communism” (Dullin and Cœuré, 2007), in the Iron Curtain and especially the Berlin Wall (Becker and Komlosy, 2004), or more generally in European borders (Gehler and Pudlat, 2009).

However, regarding contemporary Border Studies, historians are often trapped by their methodology, which does not allow them to deal with contemporary issues. Any historical research on a specific subject or period of time is likely constrained by methodology based on archival sources. The access to archives is normally fixed at a 30-year limit, but some issues related to International Relations can be classified as “security relevant” and might therefore even be restricted to a 50-year rule (Delcroix et al, 2010, p. 282-294). This means, even if historians normally consult several types of sources, i.e. primary archival sources and secondary literature (press articles, journals or grey literature of printed documents), it is still difficult for them to extend their research beyond the period of the 1990s (Libera, 2014, p. 152). A solution for this methodological gap can be to invest in a new approach of “immediate history” which allows historians to draw on techniques of research used by sociologists or anthropologists, such as interviews, in order to complement archival research (Garcia, 2010, pp. 284-285). This methodological evolution towards an emphasis on “oral history” has been recently used by historians of European integration, who investigate the development of European organizations (Dujardin, 2019; Wassenberg and Schirmann, 2019). It can be extremely useful in the field of Border Studies, where cross-border actors on local, regional, national and European level can provide historians with the necessary information to complete the documentary and archival

sources and to interpret historical events according to their personal experience.

Regarding concepts, there are only few general principles followed by the branch of contemporary historians in International Relations and European integration. These principles have been developed by the French school of historians led in the 1960s by Jean-Baptiste Duroselle and Pierre Renouvin (Duroselle and Renouvin, 1964). They focus on the so-called *forces profondes* (deep forces), which are geographic conditions and demographic movements, economic and financial interests, as well as national sentiment and collective mentality that are supposed to frame the behavior of actors in international politics. However, as this school generally refers to national governments as the main actors of International Relations, historians working in the field of Border Studies have complemented this approach in order to be able to also take into account actors situated on the sub-national level (Klatt and Wassenberg, 2017, pp. 205-218). They therefore combined the *forces profondes* approach with a second conceptual school which has emerged from specialists of the history of European integration. This school focuses on transnational actors (political parties, but also on associations or local and regional actors) forming networks which act across national borders, and directly influence European policymaking and the development of a multi-level European Community governance system (Kaiser and McMahon, 2019).

This new conceptual school in European integration had been used for the development of a research branch of Contemporary historians on Borders Studies. It served to establish the field as a regionalized, decentered approach to the history of European integration.

The Development of Border Studies in Contemporary History

The link between Border Studies and the history of European integration has not been evident, as it was only in 1989, when René Girault, one of the founders of the liaison group of historians with the European Commission, initiated a program on European identities which set up one working group on borders in Europe (Girault, 1994; Frank, 2004).

However, despite this first initiative, research by historians on Border Studies has first been undertaken independently from that on European Integration. This was because the latter had focused

on the analysis of actors such as national states, European institutions, transnational networks of lobbying groups or political parties, but not on the local and regional authorities, which are the core actors in the development of cross-border relations in Europe. (Wassenberg, 2013, pp. 75-76). The first studies pointing into this direction were conducted on town-twinning after World War II, examining the contribution of local actors to the process of European reconciliation (De France et al., 2020). Not all of these studies concerned towns immediately situated at the border, but they generally analyzed the historical development of neighborhood relations between partners depending on two different systems of law, cultures and governance structures and therefore paved the way for an intercultural approach to Borders Studies (Schultz 2009, p. 157-166).

Historians then turned toward studying the development of cross-border cooperation in areas where optimal conditions existed, such as a "common history, mutual interests, bilingualism, family or kinship relationships and an open border" (Schultz, 2004, p. 161-183). The research was conducted in the form of regional Area Studies, i.e. case studies on the historical evolution of Euroregional cooperation in Europe. Euroregions played indeed a significant role in the development of cross-border cooperation and historians began to investigate their origins and their impact on neighborhood relations. (Gabbe and Von Malchus, 2008). As the first Euroregions were established in Western European border regions, these were logically the first to be analyzed. In contrast, however, to geographers who mainly analyze the functions and effects of borders or to political scientists who regard the cooperation regarding the subject of governance, historians mainly looked at the origins and actors of neighborhood relations and their evolution over a long period of time. The case studies for Western Europe were carried out either by means of a collective, comparative approach via the organization of International Conferences (Prettenhofer-Ziegenthaler et al., 2011), or by individual doctoral, post-doctoral or other research projects; for example, in the development of the Upper Rhine Region (Wassenberg, 2007), the Saar-Lor-Lux/Greater Region (Leinen, 2001; Hudemann, 2003; Gengler, 2003), or the border regions between France and Spain (Harquindéguy, 2007).

By contrast, it took longer for historians to investigate case studies in Central and Eastern Europe, because these border regions had been cut off from the rest of Europe by the Iron Curtain until the end of the Cold War. However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Euroregions have also been spreading at the European Community bor-

der with the East: first studies were therefore undertaken at the end of the 1990s on the history of cross-border cooperation at the borders between Germany and its Eastern neighbors (Eckart and Kowalke, 1997). Historians then covered post-cold war borders in general (Laine et al., 2019), and more specifically, with a particular attention drawn to the external borders of the European Union (EU); for example, in case studies on the Polish-Russian-Ukrainian border or the EU-Russia Borderland (Stokłosa, 2007, pp. 233-242; Stokłosa, 2012, pp. 245-255; Eskelinen et al., 2013). This also included the analysis of twin cities, which had been separated by the Iron Curtain resulting in strong alienation of the border population (Jajeśniak-Quast and Stokłosa, 2000).

Overall, these case studies on Western and Eastern Euroregions focused on the identification of a specific history of cross-border cooperation, each with its own geographical, economic, and political constellation and with its own actors. They illustrated that in every border region there has always been a particular group of people who greatly contributed to the process of cross-border cooperation. These might be politicians, private (industrial) actors or employees of various public institutions, but for each local case study there were different actors at the origin of cooperation (Wassenberg et al., 2019, pp. 173-213).

While it constituted an important contribution to Border Studies by contemporary history, the problem with the regional area approach to cross-border cooperation was that it was difficult to establish a comparison between different border regions or to replace the development of cross-border cooperation into a more general context of the history of European integration. Since the 1990s, the individual history of cross-border regions in Europe has inevitably been linked to that of the European Community, especially in the framework of its Regional Policy and the Interreg programs that were introduced in order to support cross-border cooperation. (Wassenberg, 2013, pp. 73-101). Cross-border cooperation was also identified as a means to implement the European single market and to establish a "Europe without borders" with free movement of goods, services, capital, and people (Reitel and Wassenberg, 2015). Thus, a progressive shift of interest could be observed by contemporary historians away from case studies and toward a more general approach linked with the history of European integration. Within the European Commission's liaison group of historians, Marie-Thérèse Bitsch was the first to emphasize the role of border regions for the process of European integration after 1945, in a conference which she organized in Strasbourg in 2002 on the regional "element" in

European Integration. It included several contributions on the history of cross-border cooperation and its relevance for the European integration process (Bitsch, 2003).

More recently, contemporary historians have also engaged in an interdisciplinary approach to retrace the history of European cross-border cooperation. By crossing views of researchers from different European countries and different scientific disciplines, they first examined the origin and governance structures of cross-border cooperation in French and German border regions (Wassenberg, 2009; Beck and Wassenberg, 2011). They then widened the scope of analysis to the European dimension of cross-border cooperation, dealing with the link between border regions, the European Union and the Council of Europe (Beck and Wassenberg, 2011 a, b, c), as well as to "sensitive" border regions (for example in Northern Ireland, Cyprus or the Balkans) in order to analyze the geopolitical aspects of the history of border relations and their impact on International Relations. Finally, they now deal more closely with the link between European integration and cross-border cooperation, by focusing on the forging of (trans-)regional identities and on the development of territorial cohesion (Beck and Wassenberg, 2014 a, b). This interdisciplinary approach permitted establishing a first possible chronology of the history of cross-border cooperation and its link with European integration. (Wassenberg, 2009; Beck and Wassenberg, 2011 a, b, c; Beck and Wassenberg, 2014 a, b). It distinguished between the pioneering border regions of the founding Member States of the EEC (until 1973), the internal border regions of the EEC/EU of the first Interreg generation (up to 1995) and the border regions outside the EEC after the fall of the Berlin Wall, before the EU's enlargement to the East (1989-2004). (Wassenberg, 2011, pp. 297-329). This chronology also illustrated that the degree of integration has increased steadily from the first category of border regions to the third, not least because cross-border cooperation began at different times between the 1950s and the 1990s. It was a first significant contribution by contemporary historians on a possible classification of border regions according to "historical" periods, based both on the origin of cross-border cooperation as well as on its established link with European integration.

With the increasing (geo)political function of cross-border cooperation, especially after the EU enlargement to the East in 2004, historians also started to analyze cross-border regions in relation to the EU's Neighborhood Policy. In 2010, for example, the historians Jean-Christophe Romer and Denis Rolland published a special edition of *Matériaux pour l'histoire de notre temps* dedicated to

the history of neighborhood spaces in Europe, which also dealt with the history of cross-border cooperation (Wassenberg, 2010, pp. 45-49). However, this research slightly changed the perspective of Contemporary historians on borders. While so far they had been regarded either as "scars of history" (Mozer, 1973), i.e. as a starting point for a reconciliation process or as part of the European integration process, they could now acquire new (geo)political functions. Within the realm of the EU's Neighborhood Policy, cross-border cooperation could become part of a neo-imperialist strategy of the EU's power enlargement to the East (Zielonka, 2006). Agreeing with new historicist theories that associate EU enlargement with a reasoning of territorial conquest, Jan Zielonka went so far as to identify "Europe as a global actor: empire by example[?]" (Zielonka, 2008, pp. 471-484).

With increasing interest in the geopolitical function of borders and cross-border cooperation, research in Border Studies in Europe by contemporary historians has thus shifted to the wider field of Studies in International Relations (Dominguez and Pirès, 2014). This shift can be illustrated by two new orientations of historical research in Border Studies. The first is characterized by a move away from the link between border regions and the process of European integration towards a larger focus on the actors of cross-border cooperation and their tools in International Relations. More recently, historians have therefore started to investigate, for example, the role of local and regional authorities in foreign policy since the 1950s (Klatt and Wassenberg, 2017) or the development of territorial diplomacy since the 1980s (Wassenberg and Aballéa, 2019 a). This research has been undertaken in a comparative perspective analyzing European actors with regard to other local and regional actors in the world (for example, in Latin America, Asia or North America). It therefore rejoins the historical strand of historians working on global Area Studies. The second orientation consists in replacing Border Studies into the geopolitical strand of International Relations, focusing on the link between borders, geopolitics, and international relations. (Wassenberg and Aballéa, 2019 b). Recent studies reveal that this shift leads to a changing understanding of borders by contemporary historians, in particular those who have specialized in the history of European integration. From an International Relations perspective, they evolved from a rather unidimensional interpretation of the border as an economic obstacle which should be removed in order to create a "Europe without borders" toward a recognition of the complex multi-dimensional character of borders, which can have both negative and positive functions (Wassen-

berg, 2019, pp. 43-65).

Overall, the research by Contemporary historians has made the growing importance of studies on the historical dimension of Border Studies apparent. They have moved away from a sovereignty-based approach to borders as changing lines fixed between nation-states in course of conflict and wars towards a more positivistic approach of the border as a place of contact and cooperation in border regions contributing to cross-border cooperation and to European integration. More recently, however, they have returned back to a geopolitical view on borders, which relatives the positivistic approach in order to consider the multiple dimensions and functions of borders.

However, there still remains a major challenge for contemporary historians working in Border Studies: how to insert future research into a conceptual framework, so that it can be approached in an interdisciplinary and multi-scalar way.

A conceptual framework for historical research on cross-border cooperation

The interdisciplinary research on cross-border cooperation until now has revealed a significant lack of theorization. As Joachim Beck has stated, “an original theory on cross-border in Europe is, to date, still lacking”. (Beck, 2019, p. 15). He explains this as follows: “Comparative studies, as well as papers contributing to theory formation from territorial case studies, are less pronounced”, and also, “Cross-border cooperation, as subject of scientific analysis, is in general more likely to be characterized by high territorial and mono-disciplinary fragmentation” (ibid.). In order to tackle this problem, Joachim Beck has engaged in a transdisciplinary research project, which invited representatives of a large number of scientific disciplines to articulate their mono-disciplinary approach to cross-border cooperation in the framework of a pre-established pattern of questions in order to allow for a comparative approach on the subject. (Beck, 2019, p. 17). However, the result was more a mirror of different disciplinary “discourses on cross-border cooperation” than the development of a theoretical framework for the field of study, although these “trans-disciplinary” discourses constituted a good starting point for the development of future interdisciplinary research (Beck and Wassenberg, 2019, pp. 527-539).

From the point of view of contemporary historians, this project did not resolve a fundamental dilemma for their research on cross-border cooper-

ation: indeed, it still needs to be based on a conceptual framework, which is suitable to insert the history of border regions in Europe more systematically into the history of European integration and International Relations. There are, however, two main obstacles to overcome for the development of such a conceptual framework. First, contemporary historians, especially those specialized in European integration, are often reluctant to insert their research into pre-established concepts. The historian Wolfram Kaiser has already largely criticized the “conceptual under-development of the history of European integration and its’ too descriptive character” (Kaiser, 2005, p. 208). He advocated an interdisciplinary cooperation between historians and political scientists, also to counteract stereotypes of political scientists accusing historians to be incapable of conceptualizing and historians accusing political scientists of superficial and hasty generalizations (Kaiser, 2010, p. 63). His approach on the history of European integration focusing on transnational actors has therefore used this interdisciplinary cooperation, which historians have also already used in their case-studies on cross-border cooperation (Wassenberg, 2009). However, this was only the beginning for contemporary historians of European integration to meet the “interdisciplinary challenge” (Warlouzet, 2014, pp. 837-845). In the field of Border Studies, it is especially important not only to engage in interdisciplinary work with political scientists, but also with many other disciplines in Human Sciences (geography, anthropology, sociology, etc.).

Second, future research on Border Studies by contemporary historians not only necessitates an opening up to an interdisciplinary research on borders and cross-border cooperation, but also for historians to accept the challenge of working embedded in a conceptual framework. However, the field of cross-border cooperation is confronted with the obstacle that, until now, only a few academic works have managed to conceptualize it from the point of view of European integration-theories on an interdisciplinary basis (Beck, 2019, pp. 13-29). In addition, most classical European integration theories have a “vertical” focus of analysis, concentrating on the relation between the local, regional, national and the European level, while cross-border cooperation can be interpreted as the “horizontal” dimension of European integration (Beck, 2013, p. 10).

One conceptual solution for Contemporary historians to link Border Studies to European integration could be found with a more territorialized approach to the history of European integration (Patel, 2019, pp. 327–357). Two works by Contemporary historians already point into this direction. First, Steffi Marung has dealt with the borders of

Poland until the 1990s by assessing the various layers of border-making in a multi-scalar way, from the local to the national and the EU level, thus identifying new regimes of territoriality (*Territorialisierungsregime*) (Marung, 2013). Second, Ulrike Jureit and Nikola Tietze have developed a concept of “post-sovereign territoriality” in order to describe how people experience border regions and the formation of cross-border governance structures. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, they not only contextualize but also conceptualize European territoriality in border regions and identify it as part of the European integration process (Jureit and Tietze, 2015). Along these lines, in order to frame and to conceptualize dynamics taking place within the territorial sub-systems of cross-border cooperation in Europe and to better understand their link with the European integration process, I suggest – in line with Joachim Beck – using “neo-institutionalist” theories in order to develop a new “territorialized approach to [the history] of European Integration” (Beck, 2012, p. 23). This approach focuses on the role of actors and of institutions, which operate in a given territory at a given time and thus influence the development of European integration. It starts from the observation that in many territorial settings all over Europe, new forms of institution-building were created, either with specific reference to European integration or “following the governance logic of multi-actor cooperation for the purpose of stimulating new territorial development” (ibid., p. 25). I have been inspired for this mosaic method by the Holberg Prize Symposium in 2010 on “Doing decentered history: the global in the local”, where several researchers exposed their decentralized approach to global history (Zemon Davis, 2011, pp. 188-202). From a methodological point of view, contemporary historians could thus adopt a Multi-Orientated Scale Approach to European Integration and cross-border cooperation and European Integration (MOSAIC), which reconstructs the development of multiple local cooperation histories in order to reinterpret them in the general framework of the history of European integration, like a mosaic made up from many individual pieces.

Such a concept necessitates the stimulation of further interdisciplinary research on cross-border cooperation. Despite the existence of a whole collection of individual case studies on the history of border regions (Beck and Wassenberg, 2009-2014) these have not yet been reinterpreted with regard to how they insert themselves into the European integration process. Also, considering the multiplicity and the complexity of existing cross-border areas, a large number of geographic spaces have not yet been covered. For contemporary historians, the final objective could therefore

be to write a new “decentralized” history of European integration. It can build on an interdisciplinary historical-geographic project which was realized in 2014-2015 in cooperation with the European Commission consisting of a series of maps and articles on European Regional Policy and cross-border regions in EU Member States (Reitel and Wassenberg, 2015). However, this project did not systematically retrace the link between the history of cross-border cooperation and European integration since 1945. In order to write the decentralized history of European integration, the individual histories of border regions have to be compared, periodicized and then inserted into the different phases of development of the EEC/EU, by taking into account each step of integration and each enlargement period.

Conclusion

As a specific branch situated between the history of European integration and the history of International Relations, contemporary historians have so far approached Border Studies from four very different perspectives. First, their approach on borders has for a long time been focused on a classical analysis of the Westphalian function of national borders as lines of separation between sovereign nation-states on the border as a source of conflict due to shifting borders from wars, and on the border as a place of displacement of population, sufferance and memory of the “scars of history”. Second, contemporary historians have conducted individual case studies on the history of cross-border cooperation since the 1950s. These studies were first focused on Western Europe, as Euroregions originated in this area, but they were then also applied to Central and Eastern Europe, because after the end of the Cold War, Euroregions have been spreading in this part of Europe and presented an interesting field of study, not only on cross-border cooperation, but also on East-West reconciliation. Third, they have linked Border Studies with European integration history dealing with the role of the European Community/EU for the development of cross-border cooperation and the role of border regions as actors of the European Regional Policy and the EU Neighborhood Policy. Fourth, and finally, by means of comparative Area Studies, they have also examined the geopolitical dimension of borders, inserting the individual case studies of cross-border cooperation into the history of International Relations, thus taking into account “the local in the global”. The research of contemporary history on Border Studies has thus moved away from case studies on the border or on cross-border relations

in certain areas in Europe to a more global assessment of the role of cross-border cooperation in Europe and of its link with European integration and International Relations.

In general, one can regret that in the field of contemporary history, there are still rather few interdisciplinary approaches to Border Studies. Hampered by their strict rules of access to archival sources, which prevent them to tackle subjects of “immediate” history, by their dedication to mono-disciplinary historical methodology, and by their resistance to conceptualization, there are only a few contemporary historians participating in the international networks on Border Studies. However, their involvement in interdisciplinary research in this field is important, for historians help to insert the analysis of flows, relations and actors at national borders and in borderlands into a long-term perspective, which takes into account, at each moment in time, the international and European (geo)political context. Contemporary history can therefore largely contribute to the identities and methodologies of Border Studies. They can provide an input from a long-term historical perspective to borders as “scars of history” and therefore explain why in some cross-border regions cooperation is facilitated by positive memories (of peace and good neighborhood relations) whereas in others it is impeded by negative memories (of conflict and war). They can also deliver keys of understanding why, even in cross-border regions with a longstanding experience of cooperation, due to historical *ressentiments*, resistance to cooperation or mutual mistrust might reappear. As well, by inserting individual histories of cross-border regions in Europe into the general context of European integration history, they can

produce a chronological periodization of borderlands in Europe. This periodization helps to better understand the temporalities of border relations in different parts of Europe. For example, due to the Cold War, cross-border cooperation in Western Europe has an “advance” of 40 years with regard to Central and Eastern Europe. Or, due to the experience of two world wars, the Eurodistrict between Strasbourg and Kehl was slow to develop with regard to other cross-border governance structures in the Upper Rhine Region. Without the necessary historical keys, the comparative history of cross-border cooperation in Europe cannot be fully comprehended.

In sum, contemporary historians’ research on borders and cross-border cooperation in Europe can be mutually beneficial for Border Studies and for European integration history. By opening up to interdisciplinary and multi-scalar research, contemporary historians specialized in Europe integration can contribute to Border Studies in Europe via an approach based on the contribution of cross-border cooperation to European integration. Inversely, via a concept of territorialized European integration or of territorial institutionalism, where the territorial settings in Europe are the basis from which to examine the history of cross-border cooperation, the history of European integration can be revisited. By considering the complexity, the multidimensional and multifunctional character of borders, contemporary historians may be able to write a new decentered history of European integration, which considers the multiple histories of individual border regions in order to insert them, like a mosaic, into the general development of European integration and International Relations.

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