

Editorial

# Introduction to “Reshaping the World: Rethinking Borders”

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**Abstract:** This paper provides some historical context to understand border formations. By comprehending how our present system of borders and exclusions function, we can gain a new appreciation for migration. Moreover, it presents arguments for open borders to counter anti-immigrant policies, includes short summaries of relevant research, as well as for each article included in this Special Issue. Together, these articles show how more welcoming policies towards immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers do not threaten popular sovereignty but, conversely, strengthen both democracy and local rights.

**Keywords:** border walls; fences; limited migration; open borders; free movement; regionalism; localism

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## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this Special Issue is to provide case studies, contextual information, theoretical arguments, and critical analyses to understand geographical borders and their social implications, as well as the individuals who reside in border areas and those who travel between borders. It purposely takes an interdisciplinary, international, and comparative approach. The authors featured in this Special Issue work at universities in the United States, Mexico, Canada, Trinidad and Tobago, France, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic, South Africa, and Australia. Sociologists, anthropologists, geographers, philosophers, and scholars of international relations, public health, and linguistics are just some of the authors who contributed to *Rethinking Borders*. The contributions range from case studies of migrants' sense of belonging and safety in various places to theoretical discussions of “white diversity” and “necrocapitalism.” These works' interdisciplinary makeup and openness to so many schools of thought stand in contrast to the solidifying of stricter borders across the globe. They include theoretical discussions about migration, globalization, anti-immigrant laws, and the benefits of inclusion. The diversity in the authors' disciplines, and the topics they focus on, exemplify the intricacies of borders and how much there is to learn about them.

It is timely to publish this Special Issue in the middle of a pandemic that has affected every single place in the world. Unprecedented border closures and stringent travel restrictions have not been enough to effectively contain the virus. As COVID-19 proves, diseases, ideas, and xenophobic and racist discourses know no borders. While COVID-19's lasting impact on migration and border security is still to be determined, it is apparent that collaborations and plans that transcend borders are vital when dealing with global threats, such as climate change and pandemics.

## 2. The Resurgence of Border Walls

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent German reunification in 1990 at first seemed to relegate border walls to the distant past of the Hadrian's Wall of 122 in Britain, the Chinese Great Wall, or the medieval walls of Paris (Castañeda 2012a). Nevertheless, the relevance of physical borders is on the rise with, for example, political campaign promises of lengthening the walls between the U.S. and

Mexico (Castañeda 2019). As papers in this Special Issue document, skepticism about nation-states' ability to integrate refugees is gaining popularity, along with increasing demands for stricter border controls and attacks to international law regarding the right to asylum. Some groups in Europe have criticized the European Union's free-movement policies, which were included in some of the talking points of the Brexit campaign. The civil war in Syria revived a public debate about the challenges posed by displaced people and reframed the issue of a large number of people arriving at a border seeking asylum—which we can call group asylum—as constituting a refugee “crisis.”

The mainstreaming of xenophobic and anti-immigrant discourses allows politicians to run mainly on an anti-immigrant platform, justify draconian anti-immigrant policies, and become a recruitment tool for white nationalists. The ideas about nation-state, anti-immigrant exclusion, and making the daily life of immigrants' intolerable in order to generate “self-deportation” are recipes for the creation of social boundaries, further exclusion and exploitation, as well as state and citizen-led violence against immigrants and racialized minorities (Castañeda 2019).

The discourse and policies around “border security” and “immigrant cultural and economic threats” that have to be addressed by federal policies started with the Dillingham Commission created by the U.S. Congress in 1907 (Benton-Cohen 2018), and more recently in California with Governor Wilson's Proposition 187 in 1994. These anti-immigrant policies and discourses by politicians have spread around the world, along with the services of consultants on border security technology, weapons, and architecture. These securitarian and xenophobic understandings have also impacted civil liberties and surveillance away from international borders. For example, after 9/11, the Patriot Act was quickly implemented in the United States, allowing the federal government to spy on citizens. Furthermore, the ACLU notes how the Patriot Act prevents individuals who are being targeted by the FBI from telling others about their status, essentially forcing them to obey a “gag order.” The Act also gave law enforcement the power to search people's homes and workplaces with a delay in notifying the individual being searched. These infringements on basic rights and privacy were defended in the name of national security, even though only one terror-related conviction came from it, which as the ACLU notes, “would have occurred even without the Patriot Act” (ACLU 2020b). Furthermore, land a hundred miles away from the southern and northern U.S. borders, as well as the coast, have become zones of exception where people can be detained (ACLU 2020a; Misra 2018).

Throughout history, the location and meaning of borders have constantly shifted. The national and international constellations of political powers get naturalized in borderlands, identities are challenged and rebuilt, and multiple distinctions between border inhabitants fade and reemerge. This volume constitutes a multidisciplinary space to critically analyze the political and sociological implications of the increased solidification of national borders that we currently face worldwide.

### 3. Denaturalizing Borders by Understanding Them Historically

City-states such as Athens or Sparta existed in ancient times. Venice and Florence were powerful and influential city states in the Middle Ages (Hanagan and Tilly 2011). Citizenship was a feature of life in many pre-modern cities and towns (Prak 2018; Tilly 1992). Other historical forms of political organization include monarchies, fiefdoms, and areas controlled by warlords, where who owed tribute and allegiance to whom was largely delimited by the outcomes of the most recent wars, marriages, and pacts. The extreme of this form of government were empires, where a region would have long-distance reach in asking for tribute and regulating trade. Examples include Alexander the Great expanding the influence of Macedonia and Greek culture across 3000 miles of land, or the inhabitants of Rome creating the Roman Empire that, for a thousand years, governed over and granted citizenship to people with different languages, cultures, and religions. The Ottoman Empire was similarly expansive and inclusive, lasting 600 years. In these examples, the borders of the empire were constantly shifting, and taxation and rights were not tied to a common culture.

The legitimacy of borders as markers of cultural and ethnic differences arose and spread with the birth of the nation-state after the Haitian, American, and particularly French Revolutions. Haiti did

not claim to be a Black-only nation. The United States was born as a multi-confessional, multi-lingual, and multi-racial union of states and territories (Atkinson 2020; Manseau 2015; McCullough 2006). The French Republic more wholly equated popular sovereignty with population homogeneity by creating common cultural practices and a common identity for all the people living within its borders and among the elites in its colonial lands (Anderson 2006; Weber 1976). The implications of the ethno-nation with an official language and culture are still felt by contemporary immigrants and minorities living in France (Castañeda 2018a).

Today, most politicians, policymakers, and citizens believe that borders must exist. They imagine borders as part of a natural law separating nations. Nevertheless, nation-states—with governments representing imagined homogenous communities—are not the only way in which humans can organize to manage public affairs and protect a commonwealth. Popular sovereignty in participative democratic regimes is a historical win coming out of popular struggle, but this does not have to be tied to strict international borders.

#### 4. Borders, State-Centered Approaches, and Methodological Nationalism

History tells us that the primary causes of territorial demarcations are the result of warfare, conquests, and invasions (Castañeda and Schneider 2017). However, there have been many unintended consequences as a result of such conquests. Walled castles and cities had both a defensive purpose and a taxing purpose. Taxing incoming trade became possible because passing through city gates allowed to control who left and came and with what. Since then, one of the main purpose of borders and ports of entry has been to raise customs. While many citizens through the decades have come to embrace nationalism and belief in borders and national sovereignty, let us not equivocate; borders and the problematization of immigration are state-centered approaches. The primary framers of migration and diversity as “social problems” are nation-state governments themselves. They can be problems for political elites but not for the population. A national territory is not equivalent to a house or private property. Thus, by reifying borders and national citizenship walls, we engage in what we are here calling epistemological nationalism: failing to think sociohistorically and instead conceiving of national-states as real, natural, and inevitable units (see also Anderson 2019).

While a real challenge when doing empirical work and collecting data, we must avoid methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) when designing research or analyzing data, i.e., to draw the scope of a problem or population of study along state boundaries, categories, or definitions given by the state. For example, to be considered an unaccompanied alien child (UAC) has important legal consequences, but sociologically speaking, there is not a UAC population to speak of—they are just youth dealing with the punitive arm of the state and its designations. The law may designate this group as such in paper, but their transit experiences are not necessarily different from people traveling with their parents, or immigrant minors traveling alone but entering undocumented rather than asking for asylum (Jenks and Castañeda 2020). While many UAC-designated youths nowadays are from El Salvador, Guatemala, or Honduras, many were from Europe before the legal designation of UAC existed. Furthermore, there are marked categorical and situational differences for youth from each of these countries, and within them, some may have better circumstances than others making it problematic to consider them as one homogenous group. The designation as an alien matters but it does not truly vary from other alien immigrants. The differences, rather, are produced by the legal system at a particular time. For instance, a recent law demands expedited review of cases involving minors which complicates securing legal representation and expedites deportation (Luiselli 2017).

Some of the papers in this volume use theoretical and methodological innovations to transcend methodological and epistemological nationalism. Some papers directly question the design of international and global studies and the theoretical conceptualization of globalization and transnationalism because they all start from the assumption of independent nation-states. However, thinking that “societies” are perfectly bounded by political borders is a “pernicious postulate” (Tilly 1984) since empirically, culturally, and socially it is practically impossible to establish,

for example, where American culture ends and starts or what the differences are on either side of the Pyrenees (Sahlins 1989). Rather than focus on geographic divisions, we should follow links, networks, social relations, and production chains, all of which often cross many international borders (Wolf 1982).

## 5. Xenophobia and the Construction of the Moral and Racial Boundaries of the Nation

Borders are socially constructed, but once established, they are constitutive. International borders create ethnic differences by contrasting to the ethnicity next door. It is argued that they become a way to produce and maintain inequality and constitute a form of apartheid. They allow for wealth extraction by richer countries—either as cheaper labor abroad who work for offshore companies based in the global north or as labor commodity with few labor rights as immigrants in the global north (Heyman 2017). Though, rather than blaming employers, people often blame foreign workers for stealing jobs (see Castañeda and Shemesh in this Special Issue).

When policymakers call for more stringent borders, they frequently rely on anti-immigrant rhetoric such as blaming migrants for not assimilating, taking jobs away from citizens, and committing crimes. These views are rooted in nationalism, xenophobia, and a fear of “otherness.” However, counterarguments from politicians who are open to immigration frequently fail to address the weaknesses in anti-immigrant rhetoric, thus upholding the power and legitimacy of borders.

When politicians spend their efforts defending immigrants by, for example, standing against Trump’s border wall or quoting data analyses about how much the migrant labor force supports the U.S. economy, they fail to address the arbitrariness of borders and the dehumanization of migrants. Democrats standing against the border wall are not calling for eradicating borders; in fact, most Democratic 2020 presidential primary candidates supported increased funding for border security, and many were against decriminalizing border crossing outside of custom checkpoints (Washington Post 2020).

There is, of course, a significant difference between leaders who call for the detention of immigrant children in cages and the separation of family members asking for asylum compared to those who denounce such actions. Nevertheless, children end up in cages because of a shared understanding among all political ideologies that there is a need to keep people out of the country to keep citizens safe. These border myths lead to the exclusion of migrants and limit who is accepted as a “citizen.”

Democracy depends on extending the franchise of citizenship to all inhabitants in a region (Castañeda and Schneider 2017). Most countries have made substantial improvements in terms of gender, and there is still a struggle in terms of giving full de facto equality along the axes of religion, race, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, most nation-states still resist giving citizenship rights to people born abroad who are non-citizens, thus discriminating based on place of birth. Naturalization is possible but often takes time and is limited to certain categories of individuals, e.g., the highly educated, athletes, inventors, spouses of citizens. Therefore, national citizenship creates categorical inequalities and excludes millions of people from equal rights in many cities and territories (Castañeda 2018b; Castañeda 2019).

## 6. The Case for Open Borders

Given how accustomed we have become to nation-states, it takes a good amount of imagination to have a conversation about what different systems can look like. This becomes easier once we are cognitively open to discussing different forms of citizenship that are more equitable and less exclusionary, ones that do not rely on surveillance of migrants, mass detentions, deportation, and the violent enforcement of borders.

There are many current states that are multiethnic. Sometimes tensions exist not from practical or urgent problems but from the ideal of one ethnicity, one state. For example, despite a long social movement in favor of Catalan independence (Tilly et al. 2020, pp. 208–19), Catalonia benefits from being part of Spain and vice versa. Despite fears of “cultural threat” (Zamora-Kapoor and Castañeda 2014),

the children of immigrants embrace Catalan culture (Castañeda 2018a). Furthermore, Spain and therefore, Catalonia are both part of the European Union.

Current regional agreements bridge the widespread existence of nation-states and other possible future arrangements. Examples partially transcending the nation-state are most explicit in the European Union. The member countries of the European Union have not disappeared and neither have their cultures or languages. The European Union has not threatened, say, French or German culture. People can travel and relocate openly between member states, although most people estimate that only around 4% of European citizens have migrated across country boundaries within the EU (Eurostat 2020; Pew 2017). The European Union decided to create a new common currency, the Euro, and a central bank. Some of the critiques from leftist movements in Greece, Italy, and Spain have originated from this decision, which further decoupled macroeconomic decisions from local voters (Castañeda 2012b; Castañeda 2015). While economic policy is a contested issue in the EU context, this is also the case within many nation-states.

People often forget to think about a region across the Atlantic from the European Union in similar terms. The United States of America is a federation of independent states each with its own jurisdiction, constitution, flag, legislature, governor, armed guard, electoral system, and traditions. Since the creation of the U.S. Treasury by Alexander Hamilton, there is a common centralized currency: the U.S. dollar. However, like in the European Union, there is free migration within the 50 states of the union, the District of Columbia, and territories around the world like Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Over 40% of people in the United States live in a state different from the one they were born in (Florida 2019). Moving across state lines is no real issue. On the contrary, much of the vitality of the U.S. economy and culture comes from this continuous movement of people across the 50 plus states and territories. Additionally, as of 2020, outside of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., the U.S. has 750 military bases around the world (Vine 2020), and military personal, contractors, and civilians come and go between these spaces.

Nowadays, some residents of the border region can live on the side of the border with a lower cost of living and work on the other side with better pay. They can also take advantage of leisure, shopping, education, and healthcare on either side. However, the current border regime requires visas based on guaranteed high incomes and ties to Mexico. Families on the Mexican side of the border can benefit from a binational life, but they expend considerable resources and time to cross back and forth (Chávez 2016).

Sociologist Fabio Rojas states that open borders are beneficial to the U.S., similar to how commuters go into Chicago every day from Indiana and Wisconsin. These daily commuters from the bordering states do not “steal jobs” from Chicagoans, just as Mexicans do not steal jobs from U.S. citizens. Open borders increases most Americans’ incomes and expands innovation (Matthews and Pinkerton 2018). Rojas summarizes the argument for open borders into three parts. First, there is a moral argument against closed borders. Second, the argument that immigration is a theoretical problem does not hold up in practice, as most studies show the theoretical weaknesses. Lastly, open borders to trade, human mobility, and immigration align with liberal support for decreasing inequality and conservative support for hard work (Rojas 2013). Open borders underline individual rights over state rights and big government intervention in personal and family decisions.

The argument here is not for the return to an “empire,” but to argue how open borders do not have the negative effects that some associate with them. Open borders do not require a world government or the erasure of control over local issues. Again, the U.S. is an excellent example of this. In 1831, De Tocqueville visited America (Tocqueville 1969) and noted that most of the governance, decision-making, and problem-solving, including the provision of education, were done at the local level with the participation of residents. If anything, open international borders would need to be accompanied by reinforcement in the power and importance of the local level and strengthening the urban, municipal, and county levels of government.

## 7. Rethinking Borders: Reshaping the World

The contributions of this volume are divided into six related themes around international migration and national borders: (I) Migration and Border Myths; (II) Exclusion; (III) Ethical and Philosophical Questions; (IV) Successful Immigration Practices and Cultural Exchange; (V) International Regionalism and Cooperation; (VI) Homelessness Marginality and Mental Health in the US–Mexico Border Region.

### 7.1. Migration and Border Myths

The first four papers address migration and border myths. Many people have blamed international migration for the negative effects of globalization. In the piece opening this volume, “Overselling Globalization: The Misleading Conflation of Economic Globalization and Immigration, and the Subsequent Backlash,” Ernesto Castañeda and Amber Shemesh stress that there was immigration before globalization. The authors trace the use of the term globalization and reveal how it is used to explain disparate phenomena such as migration, cosmopolitanism, the deindustrialization of the Global North, and income inequality, despite the inaccuracy of bundling all these phenomena as one process. For example, while globalization is decried as the cause for mass immigration, there is less attention on the rise of xenophobia and nationalism. Discussing the work on globalization by Tilly, Wallerstein, and Giddens, and comparing them to the more widespread understanding of globalization and especially to the rhetoric used by Reagan, Clinton, and Blair, the authors reveal how globalization-talk created open borders for corporations and capital but not for low-skilled immigrants. The article emphasizes the need to avoid conflating migration and globalization. Without critically thinking about how these phenomena are not solely dependent on each other, politicians and voters will continue to blame migrants for issues that exist irrespective of them, such as increasing socioeconomic inequality.

In “Methodological Nationalism in Global Studies and Beyond,” Agnes Katalin Koos and Kenneth Keulman discuss the field of Global Studies at U.S. institutions and how it became influenced by the field of International Relations (IR). They criticize IR’s “methodological nationalism,” meaning the field assumes the nation-state as necessary and the precise unit of political analysis today. The authors also point out how the three main areas of IR thought (i.e., realism, idealism, and constructivism) were created by people who were U.S. citizens, which inevitably led to bias. They contend that IR has focused too much on state sovereignty, a Western view of nation-states, and neglects cooperation on ecological issues. Therefore, this paper calls into question the normalcy of national borders. It calls for other theories to be advanced to challenge IR’s dominance or to, at least, decrease its reification and justification of nationalism.

In “The Ideal and the Real Dimensions of the European Migration Crisis: The Polish Perspective,” Barbara Cieślińska and Małgorzata Dziekońska focus on Poland’s acceptance of refugees during their influx from the Middle East into Europe in 2015. The country’s parliamentary elections took place at the same time, and the parties that did not support accepting migrants had great success. The authors use ideal types to view refugees through different criteria. They describe how the demographics of arriving refugees are not the same as the demographics of the population where they are, yet they are often inconsistent with the refugee “ideal type”: a poor uneducated middle-aged man. For example, refugees were not only going to the nearest country after entering the EU from outside. For some, this is seen as a problem since if refugees were in such a desperate situation, they would be happy to go wherever in the world they could get to first. However, the authors posit that longer distance travel is due to already established social networks in particular countries in Western Europe. In contrast, the rise in the number of refugees in Poland was accompanied by a decrease in the number of processed applications. Only 2.8% of applicants were granted refugee status in 2013, 0.87% in 2016, and 2.95% in 2017. The authors then discuss the case of a refugee center, Białystok, on the Eastern edge of Poland and the EU. Armenians and Chechens previously migrated in large numbers through the city. Interestingly, the Chechens received more support from the state than Armenians. The Armenians had to integrate by learning Polish, while Chechens withdrew and were more isolated. The authors find

that offering social assistance at refugee centers does not necessarily create integration in the shortest term. Nevertheless, studies elsewhere show that a welcoming context of reception may have a large positive effect in the long-term (Castañeda 2018a; Portes and Rumbaut 2014). The paper presents an agnostic view in relation to the management and integration of refugees in Poland, a country with a more recent history of emigration rather than immigration (see Goździak and Main 2020).

In “Border Residents’ Perceptions of Crime and Security in El Paso, Texas,” Ernesto Castañeda and Casey Chiappetta discuss Hispanic residents’ sense of safety and wellbeing in El Paso using data from a 2011–2012 survey sponsored by the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Media and political narratives dictate that violence in Mexico would travel into the U.S. with migrants, painting the border region as a dangerous place. However, this paper provides reasons why this is not the case for El Paso inhabitants. The city is an illuminating location as it shares a border with Ciudad Juárez, which has high levels of violence. El Paso, however, is one of the safest cities in the U.S. Castañeda and Chiappetta discuss the paradox of an increase in crime in Mexico but the lack of spillover into the U.S. The sample studied includes 919 residents of El Paso. While only Hispanics were surveyed, this is a relevant way to study the El Paso population considering that over 83% of El Paso residents are Hispanic. Among the sample, 60% of the respondents were born in the U.S., and nearly 80% were U.S. citizens. Moreover, 96.9% of respondents said that they felt “very safe” or “safe” in El Paso (and 66.3% of these individuals said they felt “very safe”), whereas only 3.1% said they felt “not safe.” While the responses show that men were more likely to feel “very safe” than women, and U.S. citizens feel safer than non-U.S. citizens, these findings challenge misconceptions of American border cities being dangerous.

## 7.2. Exclusions

Four strong theoretical papers delineated the consequences of the exclusions produced by the policing of national borders, including the imprisonment of uninvited arrivals and ethnic minorities within a country—especially one simultaneously espousing racial “colorblindness” and the idea of a homogenous population. At the same time, it claims to sponsor universal values and beliefs, while it discriminates against ethnic, racial, religious, and other minorities.

In “Processes of Sub-Citizenship: Neoliberal Statecrafting ‘Citizens,’ ‘Non-Citizens,’ and Detainable ‘Others,’” Daile Lynn Rung critically analyzes how nation-states create citizens and non-citizens along a continuum of rights. Rung conducts a qualitative analysis of child detention centers in Australia and the United States. Through this, Rung introduces the term “sub-citizenship,” a process of subordination that occurs at a hierarchical level. People’s experiences accessing social justice and human rights vary based on their social position, including immigration and citizenship status and interactions with international borders. The hierarchical system goes between citizens (1st class), deportable others (2nd class), highly deportable others (3rd class), and detainable others (4th class). While there are far more children in U.S. detention centers (15,000 in 2018) than in Australia (1068 children in 2014), the children detailed similar traumatic experiences. Rung shows how the children’s sub-citizenship exposes them to state-led violence.

In “‘White Diversity’: Paradoxes of Deracializing Antidiscrimination,” Milena Doytcheva analyzes various paradigms of diversity. Superdiversity “is designed to highlight the conjunction of race and ethnicity with a range of discrete categories, such as age, address, legal status, and occupation” (Doytcheva 2020, p. 5). In addition to theoretical discussions of diversity, Doytcheva uses the processes of corporate diversity campaigns and gentrification as examples of how middle- and upper-class residents in France can appear as open-minded. However, the process ultimately benefits Whiteness without actually producing organizational change. Gentrification does not end up contributing to social change that would help residents of color. While there is a push for a race-blind society in France, White diversity determines which minority differences are accepted and which are not. This phenomenon is akin to Foucault’s “normalized diversity”, in which only forms of difference and otherness that fit the White view of diversity are accepted. Doytcheva shows this practice occurring through discrimination in the job hiring process and beyond.

### 7.3. Ethical and Philosophical Questions

We then address philosophical discussions and ethical questions about how governments should best address borders, immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. Enrique Camacho-Beltrán dissects the meaning of borders within liberal democracies in the paper, “Legitimate Exclusions of Would-Be Immigrants: A View from Global Ethics and the Ethics of International Relations.” There is a separation between two camps: the inclusionists (who believe in a need for porous borders, international freedom of movement, and human equality) and the exclusionists (who are focused on a country’s internal affairs and where consent is needed before immigrating or migrating to another country). The author explores the concepts of legitimacy (who is entitled to what and to what extent) and justice (the distribution of burdens and benefits), and the unbounded demos thesis, which posits that borders are institutions themselves. This paper shows how inclusionism goes beyond naiveté or leftist posturing but is the most practical, beneficial, and ethical, and how exclusionism is not only faulty logically but also morally.

Many philosophical discussions about migration ethics are based on abstract concepts, stating assumptions, and thought experiments. Some of these arguments are often full of logical fallacies and fall short of empirical facts. Therefore, there is power in combining philosophical discussions, ethical considerations, concrete cases, and critical analyses of theoretical and legal arguments. In their fascinating contribution, “Group Asylum, Sovereignty, and the Ethics of Care,” Luis Xavier López-Farjeat and Cecilia Coronado-Angulo dissect the arguments that use the concept of national sovereignty to control borders and people coming in. The “refugee crisis” was created when a visible number of people from a given region of the world arrived at a border checkpoint escaping war, gangs, or political persecution. Thus, individual asylum cases become framed by politicians and the media as unruly groups of people asking for “group asylum” if they can establish supportive precedents in immigration courts. Examples are the boats in the Mediterranean Sea or the Caravans from Central America to the United States. Arguments about the inability of any country to “deal” with these individuals are factually false given that most empirical research shows how immigrants and refugees create economic growth. López-Farjeat and Coronado-Angulo then propose the “ethics of care” as a solution to international mobility because our ethical duties to others supersede state sovereignty.

### 7.4. Successful Immigration Practices and Cultural Exchange

Not all media coverage and academic research on immigration has to focus on the negative. In “Analyzing Migration Management: On the Recruitment of Nurses to Germany,” Jan Kordes, Robert Pütz, and Sigrid Rand analyze Germany’s shortage of nurses in elder care institutions and the state’s push to recruit nursing staff abroad. This recruitment process, known as migration management, is meant to address half a million nurse shortages in Germany by 2030. Migration management posits that, if done well, migration processes can benefit all groups by fixing a gap in the labor market through hiring qualified nurses from other countries. Germany has encouraged recruitment programs and created legal exemptions to allow for an increase in nurses. In response, the applications for care workers increased from 1500 in 2012 to 11,500 in 2018. Foreign nurses are viewed as “desirable” migrants. Nevertheless, specific credentials and requirements are needed for acceptance, such as German language proficiency. Nurses from other countries face difficulty in having their credentials officially recognized by Germany, causing them to have to obtain more training before being accepted. This disparity reflects how privileges are assigned to certain migrant groups, such as those who speak the host country’s language or poses valued skills.

In “Going by an English Name: The Adoption and Use of English Names by Young Taiwanese Adults,” Ivona Baresova and Marcel Pikhart study Taiwanese adults using English names. This is a micro-level analysis of what “border-crossing” or cultural globalization may look like in practice. They surveyed 76 Taiwanese adults, 40 of whom were studying abroad at universities in the Czech Republic. All of the respondents were fluent in Mandarin, and English was their first foreign language. Only four of the respondents did not report an English-sounding nickname. More than 50% of participants changed their English name, and almost 40% value their English name as much as

their Chinese name. Reasons for using the English name include allowing for easier communication in multicultural settings and creating familiar identifiers among fellow Taiwanese young adults. The majority of respondents had been studying abroad, so they may be more “global” than other Taiwanese. Moreover, Taiwanese names are more “traditional/historical” than names in other Asian countries; this could create more openness to adopting a more contemporary name while studying abroad. Despite these limitations, the study still reveals how international students and travelers are inclined to change their own identity in favor of the dominant culture.

#### *7.5. International Regionalism and Cooperation*

Another reason to think beyond borders is to address environmental issues, pandemics, and public health. Vijay Kumar Chattu and Georgina Chami in their paper, “Global Health Diplomacy Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Strategic Opportunity for Improving Health, Peace, and Well-Being in the CARICOM Region—A Systematic Review,” analyze how globalization impacts health by focusing specifically on COVID-19’s impact in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Health in All Policies (HiAP) Community, known as CARICOM, was established in 1973 and is comprised of 20 countries. The authors investigated Global Health Diplomacy (GHD), which is when stakeholders work to advance public health, management, law, and global affairs, in these countries during a pandemic. They gathered evidence regarding disease and health security throughout the Caribbean and reviewed 33 articles. The findings show how disease and outbreaks have a significant negative impact on CARICOM’s tourism industries, which is why GHD is essential in dealing with COVID-19 and creating ways to ensure health security through partnerships with institutions across CARICOM. Leadership is needed not just in the public health sector but also in diplomacy, so coordination is always happening across political boundaries. The authors offer examples of specific programs that may help deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, such as expanding access to health information through telehealth and creating a regional global health diplomacy center. This article shows the benefits of interregional diplomacy when facing global crises, such as a pandemic.

In another less known example of regional integration, Inocent Moyo’s article, “On Decolonizing Borders and Regional Integration in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region,” presents a qualitative analysis of people who travel through the Southern African Development Community. The SADC is a Regional Economic Community in Africa that embraces regional integration through formal institutions. However, there is still tension between the member states’ sovereignty and an embrace of full regionalization. The data from 2013–2017 features interviews with individuals traveling predominantly across the Botswana-Zimbabwe and South Africa-Zimbabwe borders. Moyo finds that there is a lack of policies in the countries that focus on the informal economy. With the absence of regulation, transnational economic activities by non-state actors occur often. This article discusses recommendations to decolonize these borders that take into account the already existing informal cross-border networks.

#### *7.6. Homelessness Marginality and Mental Health in the US-Mexico Border*

Borders provide brokerage opportunities not only for wealthy entrepreneurs but also for the most vulnerable such as the homeless who may be attracted to the border (Campbell and Lachica 2013; Comar 2011). Border cities are strategic locations to study those living, literally and symbolically, at the margins of a society. In “Sick enough? The severity of mental illness and service eligibility for homeless individuals at the border,” Curtis Smith and Ernesto Castañeda study the relationship between mental illness and homelessness in El Paso, Texas. Original data was obtained through a survey of homeless individuals asking them to self-report mental illness.

Contrary to assumptions that homeless individuals have high mental illness rates, the findings show that homeless respondents experiencing “severe mental illness” are only around 2–3% higher than the general population, and “any mental illness” is 1–3% higher than the general population. The findings challenge the stereotypes of homeless individuals experiencing mental illness at far

higher rates than housed individuals. The study also notes the limitations of the Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) "Point In Time" measurement for homeless individuals as the HUD survey only asks respondents one question related to mental illness. The authors' survey offers more accurate results of how many homeless people qualify for subsidized housing based on HUD's policy. It calls for housing assistance for a broader population, not only subsets of people experiencing homelessness.

Gustavo Aviña Cerecer's ethnography of the San Diego-Tijuana corridor applies the theoretical framework of Gilles Deleuze in "The Dispossessed of Necropolitics on the San Diego-Tijuana Border." The study focuses on hard drug users experiencing homelessness, referred to as the "dispossessed." The devaluation of the lives of immigrants and the dispossessed along a militarized border results in politics and economic practices that trade in human lives and cause preventable deaths.

## 8. Conclusions

This Special Issue considers everyday life in border cities for average citizens who feel safe and the dispossessed who are challenged by hunger and state forces. It looks at successful cases of integration and migration management and more seamless and beneficial regional integration. The images that people who live far from borders have of border regions are distorted by fiction, politicians, and media discourses. Militarized and walled international borders are not a necessary evil to keep a country safe. On the contrary, they are places that justify the negation of human rights for foreigners through practices that later on may affect citizens further inland (Cohen 2020). We would do well to imagine a world without borders, one with more robust policies that take care of all local residents, reduce income inequality, and truly reward merit and effort.

This volume provides new perspectives, research, and theories to take a human-centered approach to world populations where we center human rights and the right of transit and mobility, the right of cultural difference, and freedom of religion. The transition of sovereignty from the crown to the people was a significant step in spreading rights (Castañeda and Schneider 2017; Reed 2020). Nevertheless, the current emphasis on national sovereignty—as limited and defined by artificial and political territorial boxes that we call nation-states or racist understandings of nations as bloodline communities—get in the way of the protection of the 3% of the world population that lives in a country different from the one they were born in. Addressing pandemics, climate change, and just economic exchange requires truly global approaches that do not put national interests over humanity's wellbeing. It is time to reshape the world by rethinking boundaries.

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