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Introduction: Beyond Borders? Interrogating Boundaries in our Twenty-First Century World

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Taking our cue from a 2017 interdisciplinary pedagogy and research workshop on "Border Studies in the Liberal Arts", supported by the Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA),[1] and held (in conjunction with Kenyon College) here at Franklin University Switzerland, this Volume 6 of *intervalla* seeks to explore some of the very many ways in which we understand, shape, and negotiate borders and boundaries in our twenty-first century world.[2] In the face of such a vast and multidimensional concept, and such a varied, multidisciplinary terrain, the direction and (dis)order of the volume, its somewhat unruly line of flight, is first and foremost guided by the contributions gathered here, following the threads of the papers present to tease out common themes and concerns in our twenty-first century approach to borders over a variety of fields. Drawing together papers from International Relations, Communication and Media Studies, Literary and Cultural Studies, and Psychology, also in some of their broader applications, the ideas collected here suggest possible modes by which to think – and in some cases, rethink – Border*s* Studies, and to collectively express the twenty-first century emphases emerging from this most interdisciplinary of fields.

The original conception of this volume began from the somewhat utopian standpoint that our age is, seemingly, an age in which communications technologies, transnational institutions and markets, and easy mobility – for those in positions of privilege – enable the transcendence of the borders of communities, states, literatures, cultures, and institutions. In this utopian view, border transcendence would give access to other ways of living or thinking, and to "crossings" for visiting, learning, or relocating, and would further enable us to challenge the limitations imposed by borders past, those constructed by wars, by colonialism, by law, by custom, by academic disciplines, or by accepted definitions and categories. And yet. At the same time, we cannot deny that our supposedly post-national world seems to have a mania for representing "in-between" spaces, and for verbalizing the idea of the "crossing", with phrases such as "cross-cultural contact" and "cross-cultural communication" always already constructing entities, both actual and metaphorical, that implicily have two sides. Are we capable of thinking beyond the static? Do we even have the conditions to do so at our present point, and in our present world?

While we might think, especially with the technological facet of our world as it is, and the extensive mobility that many academics take for granted (including many of those who traveled to the workshop that sparked this volume), that borders *should* be being broken down, crossed, "removed altogether" (Newman 2011), what we find in comparing and contrasting all of the papers collected here, is that they in fact demonstrate that the articulation of difference is still very much a part of our contemporary communities, worlds, and spaces, in all senses of the word – even those of the technological, as Sugiyama and I both demonstrate in our contributions here. Indeed, the central idea we all share and discuss, in our different ways, is that of "us" and "them" (see for example Newman 2011; Diener and Hagen 2012). We may be able to "see beyond" borders, but that does not mean that they do not exist and that we ourselves are not implict in making them and remaking them on a daily basis. Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen caution that "determinations of 'us' and 'them', 'insiders' and 'outsiders', and 'in place' and 'out of place'"

[1] Franklin University Switzerland is grateful to the GLAA, and particularly to Dr Simon Gray, its Program Officer, for their generous support of this initiative. We would like to retrospectively dedicate this volume to Dr Ann Gardiner, who was a driving force of this particular Border Studies workshop collaboration, and the inspiration for Franklin University Switzerland's engagement in this most important, topical and multifaceted of subject areas, particularly from a pedagogical standpoint. Warmly, in memory and gratitude for your incredible presence and tireless work to build teaching moments for all of us from encounters with borders in all their forms.

[2] I bear a huge debt of gratitude to my research assistants, Ilumin Mahal Gacayan and Catherine Cravens, funded by Franklin University Switzerland's LLLS Program, for their help in the putting together of this volume. I know Nizar Messari and Irene López will join me in thanking Min for her engagement in the middle stages of this project, and in particular for her thoughtful and incisive comments, and enthusiastic attention to the detail of our arguments. I thank Catherine for her tremendous support in the final stages of this project, and for all the work she has done to make this volume cohesive, and to make it look good.

emanate not from our processed perceptions of supposedly pre-existing "categories" or "cultural characteristics" – they give the examples of race, ethnicity, language, and religion – but rather, from "unequal power relations within and between social systems" (2012, p.6). Identification with a "territory" – again, either an actual space, or one created and shaped around *something*, however ephemeral or nebulous, able to be constructed as shared, possessed in some way by a group – provides us with the "social mechanism" and impetus for controlling this territory by constructing "what is 'ours'" and "what is 'theirs'", and, resultantly, an "us" and a "them" (Diener and Hagen, pp.4-7).

Precisely this construction and management of borders, territories, and different social, political, and communal iterations of "us" and "them" is, perhaps not surprisingly, a further shared concern of the papers in this volume. In their different ways, all of them, and especially Bucher, ask how the borders they interrogate come into being, who manages them, and with what. For many of the contributors, David Newman's concept of "the bordering process" (2011), a cornerstone of interdisciplinary Border Studies, is either explicitly referenced, or ideas similar to Newman's are discussed in another way or form. Newman argues that the contexts, environments, grounds, and conditions for the formation of borders may vary across the border situations explored by different fields and disciplines, but the general "themes" of border formation bear striking commonalities (2011, p.33). These themes are the "demarcation" of borders, the "management" and institutionalization of them that immediately follows this and continues as a process, and their borderland-potential – the possibility for future crossings and destabilizations that is inherent in them from the beginning (Newman 2011).

This notion of "crossing", and what happens afterwards, is the final common thread of the volume contributions that I will address here. The twenty-first century borders we discuss can crack, they can rupture, and they can be fuzzy around the edges – there is always "a degree of movement within [our] border zones" (Newman 2011, p.37). This movement is inherent in Bucher's "border as process", in Sugiyama's "emoji borderland", and in my contribution's focus on the "how" of imagining and effecting border crossing in cultural texts. There is also movement inherent in Messari's migrant stories, but he and López focus on the aftermath of border crossing: on the borderlands of the migrant as a suprisingly static, limbo state. Crossings do not always bring answers, nor do they promise resolution.

Moving from the conceptual, to the social and technological, to minings of cultural texts, to two inherently topical, moving, and experience-driven calls for action, the volume both begins (with Bucher) and ends (with López) with explicit calls for new ways of thinking and of doing the study of borders, and plenty of material for setting us on that path.

In "*B*oundaries, *I*nequalities and *L*egitimacies", Bernd Bucher opens the volume by putting forward a framework for understanding and usefully working with the intersections between boundary demarcation (as process), the production of inequalities, and the normative assessment of the "legitimacy" of both in a variety of situations. Bucher is particularly concerned to demonstrate that any process of boundary drawing necessarily produces difference, and that boundary *re*drawing *re*negotiates it. As such, he sees borders and boundaries as a process, rather than as any kind of static entities, they are never ontologically implicated, that is, they do not begin by merely "existing" as entities, rather, they are continuously drawn and redrawn: in a constant state of becoming over time, they in fact *precede* nation states (Jackson and Nexon 1999). This also means that the borders and boundaries Bucher discusses cannot simply "stop existing", rather, they would eventually give way to other boundaries or borders over time. They are also always already multiple, and Bucher is adamant that we must see borders "in the plural", ultimately calling for "border*s* studies." Moving to his second dimension, Bucher is careful to point out that differences and inequalities are not – indeed, are never – synonymous, even if the latter may emanate from the process of boundary drawing, and here, he explores how difference can "translate" into inequality, and how this process is always already enmeshed with other, multidimensional social processes. Bucher's third dimension is the construction of "(il)legitimacy",

entailing an exploration of how we normatively adjudge whether boundary-drawing processes are "just" or "fair." Teasing out the relationships between the three dimensions, Bucher reflects on the "multidimensional space" that their interrelations produce, and concludes on suggested implementations of his framework as a resource and a connect for collaborative teaching and research practises at liberal arts (here, specifically GLAA) institutions.

Satomi Sugiyama also addresses the ways in which boundary-drawing produces difference and forms social groups, but for her, it is important to remember that these (communicative) boundaries are always already blurred at the edges. Beginning with the idea that mobile communication has blurred many boundaries in our contemporary lives, Sugiyama introduces the centrality of the emoji to our twenty-first century communication processes. Exploring the various ways in which the emoji is communicatively employed, Sugiyama's paper is particularly notable for demonstrating the process whereby accepted definitions of social categories can actually be made via emoji use, and the way in which the social and the semantic intersect in this process. Asking how people, and especially the young, university-going women she has interviewed, demarcate and manage (Newman 2011) their relationships via their use of emojis, Sugiyama goes into depth on the construction and implications of norms, supposed "right ways" and "wrong ways" to denote meaning to various, inherently polysemic emojis and to build groups – whose "belongingness" networked individualism has rendered always already unstable – via the management of a shared understanding of these meanings. Identifying a number of different boundaries at play in the shaping of the semantic boundaries of emoji use, Sugiyama focuses in particular on three of these – relational boundaries, gender boundaries, and generational boundaries – exploring how her interview subjects maintain these boundaries by focusing on the differences in the ways others (parents, grandparents, male friends, colleagues, etc.) use emojis, creating themselves as insiders and these "others" as outsiders to the group in question. In so doing, Sugiyama uncovers an interesting dichotomy: where mobile communication emphasizes the fluidity of boundaries, her subjects are seeking precisely to fix them (again), a challenging task in the space of the "emoji borderland", where multiple social boundaries intersect, and multiple semantic possibilities are produced.

In my contribution, I also mine borderland spaces, here those of the central Mediterranean, exploring challenges to boundary drawing in (state) memory through the Deleuzoguattarian concept of "holey space" and the works of three practitioners, French writer Leïla Sebbar, Tunisian artist Farah Khelil, and Italian filmmaker Martina Melilli. I argue that holey space, that in Deleuzoguattarian terms is both striated (formed and policed by the state) and smooth (a deterritorialized space of escape), is a particularly useful concept to help us understand how Sebbar's, Khelil's, and Melilli's imagined Mediterranean is marked up with colonial pasts and the socio-political residue of the present, and yet still offers some form of escape from striation in the various border "openings" their works' connections make possible. Indeed the combination-in-process of the elements in their work, I argue, functions to redirect and open up meaning and "frustrate the state apparatus" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.458, Hantel 2012). Suggesting that specific formal features of Sebbar's Franco-Algerian alphabet book, Khelil's obscuring and piercing of Franco-Maghrebi tourist paraphenalia, and Melilli's Italian-Libyan memory fragments and mediated presents in her film *My Home, in Libya* (2018), in particular the virtual and actual collages, holes, and points they work with, produce a statically-intense holey fabric matter of the border, I look at how historical striations and cultural systems are disrupted by the active reshaping of memory and its folding into the present at the border.

Also focusing on the Mediterranean region, Nizar Messari seeks to problematize the current popular discursive notion of migration as one of exclusion and the contemporary understanding of a migrant as a threat to the state. Telling stories, and thereby both acknowledging and highlighting the voice and agency of migrants he has interviewed in the specifc, and arguably little-studied, context of contemporary Morocco's role as a transit (and latterly, residence) country of Mediterranean migration, Messari posits a dynamic understanding of space (specifically, of the

space of North Africa and the Sahel) and how it is altered by being moved through by the migrant. Arguing that non-state actors such as violent extremist groups, smugglers, and migrants redefine the ways in which "space matters" and borders are crossed or reshaped altogether, thereby prompting the *re*actions of the state to their movements (rather than the state being the actor imposing the meaning and relational framework), Messari explores movement through three narratival categories he has identifed in migrant stories: stories of hope, stories of suffering and hardship, and stories of resilience. Messari discovers how migrants in and of the region of North Africa and the Sahel themselves narrate their "push and pull" factors and their journeys, and how their resultant narratives (and the commonalities between them) shape their world around them and encourage them to continue "acting and moving."

In the final contribution to this volume, "Whiplash: Shifting Positionalities and Disciplinary Cross-Fire in the Study of Borders", Irene López identifies the ethical challenges inherent in the study of migration. Like Messari, López believes that we must start with the individuality and experience of the migrant, but not only there – indeed, while migration studies must place the migrant at the center, for López it is also fundamental for migration researchers to take a long, hard look at themselves, reflecting on their own positionality. Using a borders workshop she attended in Greece – which included an organized visit to a refugee camp, Kara Tepe, in Lesbos – as her case study, López begins by formulting a scathing critique of academics more concerned with squabbling over "correct" border terminology and semantics than reshaping the on-the-ground, lived realities of their "field." Both the presentation of the camp to the academics (as "village", when its restrictive architecture and regulations suggested otherwise), and the reactions of the majority of these academics in automatically accepting the descriptor, are telling, López posits, and demonstrate a very different notion of the importance of semantics in the description of real, lived spaces, our resultant perception of them, and the very different understanding of those who actually inhabit them. López reflects on how the group's subsequent return to the hotel and the relational and spatial contrast this produced, led to her whiplash, and its ephiphany of the importance of taking account of (her) multiple identities ((her) job, (her) gender, (her own) immigrant background) and how they always already inform and fundamentally infuse any approach to border research. López ends her paper on a call to action. We must understand migrant stories as told by them to better acknowledge their agency. This calls for a coming down from the ivory tower and a "collaborative walk" on the ground. Centering the experience of the movers themselves effects a decolonization of migration study that actually listens to the voices of migrants.

At its outset, this volume sought to further develop an interdisciplinary framework of the border (and boundary). If there is any shared impetus to come out of this volume, it should be the inherent plurality, multidimensionality, and instability of borders and boundaries and the involvement of different actors, states, individuals, and literary and artistic works in all of the levels of their shaping – and of their shaping anew. And yet. The siting of López's paper as the volume's final contribution, its last reflection, is a deliberate choice. It is all very well to for us to theorize and seek to understand the machinations and permutations of the border on a cerebral level, but Messari and López bring us into contact with the stories, lives, and lived experiences of refugees, and suddenly these theories that frame our academic worlds and disciplines do not matter so much anymore in the face of – and in the faces of – the on-the-ground, lived reality of the border. Ultimately, we must, as López writes, "prioritize the voices of those who move", and ask ourselves what it means to be arguing over definitions of borders, and how we might instead "collaboratively walk" at the border, to better understand its lived reality and make our understanding count.

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*B*oundaries, *I*nequalities, and *L*egitimacies (*B.I.L.*) – A Conceptual Framework for Borders Studies Collaboration

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ABSTRACT
This contribution reflects the ongoing discussions of a group of participants at a GLAA border studies workshop in the summer of 2017. It seeks to develop an integrated conceptual framework and a basis for research cooperation among scholars, programs, and institutions studying borders. The framework itself is designed to allow for the contribution of diverse disciplines, approaches, and methodologies, to a shared research agenda focused on three intertwined dimensions of borders, namely 1) boundaries, 2) inequalities and 3) legitimacies.

Dimension one centers on the notion that boundary drawing constitutively links insides and outsides and is irreducibly tied to the construction of social (id)entities. Boundaries in practice not only signal conceptual relation(s); they have complex and multifaceted political, social, cultural, emotional, and environmental implications as well. As any boundary drawing practice produces difference, the project's second dimension focuses on how differences are translated into inequality in practice. Thirdly, boundaries can and should also be assessed normatively. The third conceptual dimension therefore links to questions of the legitimacy of boundary drawing practices, resulting differences, and inequalities. It also allows studying the construction of legitimacies.

Together these dimensions open a conceptual space which diverse approaches can occupy (addressing one or more of these dimensions) in order to add to a growing web of knowledge on boundaries and borders. To allow for a cumulative process, this paper envisions a shared digital platform that bundles conceptual resources, and provides a home for contributions that draw on this framework. Over time, it may generate a web of studies (from multiple member institutions, both faculty and students, and focused on both teaching and research) that allow for increased knowledge generation and cooperation across member institutions.

KEY WORDS
Boundaries/Borders, Difference/Inequality, Legitimacy, Collaborative Research, Conceptual Frameworks

INTRODUCTION

Boundaries and borders are omnipresent.[1] At times we become aware of them actively, as in cases of traveling to conferences or workshops in foreign countries (on national borders see Shelley 2013, pp.1-13). These same borders might not function as meaningful filters when we communicate by video call halfway around the globe. But in doing so, we might at times notice that we have unintentionally overstepped this or that cultural or social boundary.

One can study boundary and border drawing practices (on practice theory see Schatzki 2001, Bueger and Gadinger 2018) at a very abstract and theoretical level (see Abbott 2001). Other types of boundaries and borders, like school districts or voting eligibility rights, are more central to conscious everyday experiences. Some boundaries like mountain ranges are highly visible. Other boundaries like 'glass ceilings' and 'sticky floors' (see Chodorow 2002), limited access of working class children to higher education (see Pugsley 2018), or restrictions to communication flows (see Mueller 2017), are more difficult to identify. Some boundaries seem unalterably fixed (like the borders of Campione d'Italia) and natural (like the Rocky Mountains). Other boundaries seem fluid or blurred (e.g. the boundary between communication technologies and human bodies, see Sugiyama and Vincent 2013).

But whether we are dealing with abstract or very specific boundaries and whether we become aware of them or not are key to societal organization. Conceptually, boundaries (as the broader, more abstract concept) are irreducibly tied to processes of individuation (of social entities like people, businesses, states, or international organizations) and consequently, to social interactions. As Butler has convincingly argued, "the boundary is a function of the relation, a brokering of difference, a negotiation in which I am bound to you in my separateness" (Butler 2009, p.44).

As such, boundaries simultaneously establish separateness and relate that which is individuated. Focusing on boundary drawing processes consequently allows us to move beyond a focus on a social entity in the singular, and take plurality in the construction of differences as a basic starting-point of inquiry. At a basic level, studying boundary and border constructions is about understanding how differences are established and re-negotiated. This points us towards boundaries and borders as processes (rather than stable and natural things) that constitute and relate 'things' as functions of their performance: "Social entities […] come into existence when social actors tie social boundaries together in certain ways. Boundaries come first, then entities" (Abbott 2001, p. 263). Taking a border studies perspective makes it possible to link insides and outsides (see Walker 1992) conceptually, while simultaneously underscoring the developmental or processual character of these relations. Border studies, in this sense, encourages us to focus on the constitutive dimension of boundary drawing processes, and to make the relational and processual character of social entities visible (on boundary drawing and community building see Anderson 2016).

Such a broad perspective on boundaries not only makes studying boundaries central to understanding social arrangements (see Onuf 1998), it also highlights that studying boundaries is highly complex and cannot be claimed by any single discipline. Border studies can be seen as an integrative perspective which synthesizes insights from fields such as philosophy, mathematics, biology, physics, sociology, law, topology, geography, history, political science, film studies, literature, and history. The complexities of studying boundaries and borders consequently call for ways of integrating, systematizing, and coordinating insights provided by these diverse disciplines (see Newman 2006).

[1] While the concepts of boundaries and borders are often used synonymously in everyday language, I will refer to boundaries in the broader sense of signaling difference and reserve the concept of borders to signal the territorial demarcation between states (see Popescu 2010).

At the same time, all of these disciplines share the challenges of addressing the ontological, political and normative dimensions of boundary drawing processes. As such, it is possible to structure border studies (in its disciplinary diversity) around these shared dimensions of inquiry.[2] Doing so can lead to a broad framework that not only makes studying boundaries and borders more manageable, but can add to creating a web of knowledge that integrates multiple and diverse disciplines and approaches.

The first (ontological) dimension of studying boundaries concerns the practices and mechanics of establishing difference and sameness. This dimension can be addressed both at a theoretical and an empirical level, but primarily focuses on the complex and multifaceted ways in which boundaries and borders are drawn, and how this constitutes not only difference but thingness as well. This first (ontological) dimension (which will be expanded upon below) at base addresses the creation of insides and outsides, but it does so in a way that suggests moving from border studies (in the singular) to borders studies (in the plural).

The second (political) dimension of inquiry concerns how boundary drawing practices relate to differences and inequalities.[3] While differences (e.g. among people and groups) are closely linked to observable inequalities, differences and inequalities are conceptually distinct. While boundaries and borders are central to social inequalities, not all boundaries effectively constitute politically or socially relevant markers of inequality. Depending on historically situated settings, some differences will play a significant role, while others will not. Age will play a role in determining voting eligibility, whereas gender and social positioning, nowadays no longer do in many places.[4] Gender at the same time is still a marker of inequalities when it, for example, comes to wages (see Auspurg et al. 2017). As there is no obvious or necessary link between specific differences and social inequalities, it is central to understand how differences are translated into inequalities. In political terms, *some* differences are central to the uneven distribution of advantages. As such, the second dimension of inquiry focuses on how differences (or heterogeneities) are translated into inequalities.

Just like differences cannot immediately be equated with inequalities, inequalities are not immediately normatively problematic or valued. Some inequalities, like the distinction between civilians and soldiers in warfare (see Foote and Williams 2017) are broadly considered to be normative achievements, while others, like inequalities stemming from racial discrimination are predominantly considered to be problematic (Strmic-Pawl et al. 2017). But if this is the case, inquiries focusing on the construction of inequalities cannot, without further consideration, move to a normative assessment of the processes under investigation. Not only do boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate actions change over time; how inequalities are perceived or discursively situated is also central to understanding how boundaries become relevant to individuals and societies. Additionally, normative justifications are central to stabilizing differences and inequalities, while normative challenges can destabilize, fracture, and develop social orders. As such, this framework suggests integrating the study of how boundaries and their associated effects are legitimized as the third dimension of this research framework.

From the perspective taken here, border studies are then very much about understanding how boundary drawing processes, the production of inequalities, and the construction of (il)legitimacy are related in practices. To the degree that a shared framework facilitates contributions from different disciplines using diverse research methods, it can help to 'triangulate' the knowledge we generate about boundaries and borders, and integrate them into a web of

[2] To be clear, I do not seek to suggest that the boundaries between these concepts are clear cut or obvious. If anything, they are fuzzy (on fuzzy logic see Davis 2005). I maintain the distinction for heuristic purposes.

[3] Drawing on the classical work of David Easton (1979), political in this context refers to the 'allocation of advantages' and purposefully remains very broad. The idea is to integrate economic, social and cultural aspects under a broad concept of politics.

[4] These later factors may still be relevant for voting behavior.

knowledge. Once a starting point is made, it could also serve as a reference point for studies conducted within (but not limited to) different member institutions of the Global Liberal Arts Alliance (GLAA).

In an important sense, studying borders has the potential to make the contingencies of specific borders and their multifaceted implications (also economic, social, or aesthetical) visible.[5] While border studies are not necessarily linked to a critical stance or political activism, their basic focus engages the processes informing boundaries and in doing so makes their contingencies tangible. This, in turn, opens space in which to imagine how the world might be different. As such, this allows for studying boundary drawing processes in not only a demanding undertaking, but one that can gain from a systematic and structured framework of inquiry. Providing a set of guidelines on studying these processes can enable collaboration across institutions and disciplines in a way that invites scholars at all stages of their careers (from students to emeritus) to contribute. Doing so promises to facilitate an increasing web of knowledge, but it also promises to contribute to democratic deliberation.

In the following, I will elaborate on each of the three dimensions introduced above (***B***oundaries, ***I***nequalities, ***L***egitimacies) before outlining how such a framework could be implemented as a research process. In doing so, I do not aim to provide a fixed or static framework or a comprehensive tool-box. Proposing a specific framework is in itself a boundary drawing process. But it is intended to start a debate, not arrest discussions on studying boundaries and borders. As such, I set out here to draw only a thin line on a sandy beach, soon to be washed over by the waves.

BOUNDARIES AND BORDERS

As mentioned above, studying borders can center on the construction of boundaries themselves. While boundary construction processes can be studied in multiple ways methodologically (e.g. discourse analysis, process tracing), I contend that border studies has much to gain from taking a processual-relational (ontological) starting-point (see Bucher 2011, 2017; Jackson and Nexon 1999; Rescher 1996, 2000).[6] While I cannot elaborate on the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the approach in detail here, a few basic comments are in order to situate the discussion.

Processual-relational thinking focuses on 'related becoming over time'. It especially lends itself to studying boundaries and borders as it reverses the well-established "ontological commitment to an already constituted and permanent reality" (Albert et al. 2001), inhabited by static things with fixed boundaries. It generally prioritizes activity over substance, process over product, change over persistence, and novelty over continuity (Rescher 1996, p.31). Where dominant Western philosophy sees discrete individuality, separateness, classificatory stability, and passivity (being acted upon); processual (relationalism) sees interactive relatedness, wholeness (totality), fluidity and activity (agency) (see Rescher 1996, p.35).

This means that 'things' are not understood as static, but as "complex bundles of coordinated processes" (Rescher 2000, p.9) which exhibit varying degrees of stability. Social entities "come into existence when social actors tie social boundaries together in certain ways" (Abbott 2001, p.263) through what one can call yoking processes. Yoking processes necessarily involve the destruction of a "previous dimension of difference" (Abbott 2001, p.272) and the establishment of new connections between dimensions of difference which were separate beforehand. The emergence of the state, for instance, "must be seen as involving the persistent drawing and redrawing of boundaries, establishing and re-establishing those demarcations that

[5] These later factors may still be relevant for voting behavior.

[6] I do not consider processual-relational thinking to the only perspective compatible with the framework outlined here. As mentioned above, the framework is intended to be inclusive and I explicitly welcome contributions that take a different point of departure.

make it possible to speak of the state" (Jackson and Nexon 1999, p.315).[7] In a radical way, this implies that boundaries are prior to entities. Taking a processual-relational perspective, one can then focus on how boundaries are drawn in the process of creating social entities (in the plural). Boundaries then take center stage not only in terms of focusing our inquiries, but also at the level of ontology and epistemology.[8] It also points us to multiplicity and complexity in boundary drawing or yoking processes. Methodologically, processual-relational thinking suggests inquiries into 'verbing' (see Albert et al. 2001, p.5), and the analysis of language practices (especially acts of reification).

Processual-relational thinking also nicely lends itself to empirically highlighting complexity in studying boundaries. While a boundary in the singular is conceptually intelligible (e.g. the line of a circle separating the space encompassed by the circle and the outside), empirically observable and socially relevant boundaries are more complex and arguably not reducible to a singular decisive act of boundary drawing.

First, any boundary drawing process can in itself be disaggregated into multiple underlying processes. For example, upholding 'a border' between states is a multi-faceted ongoing process that involves not only the work of border patrol agents or immigration officers, but also, for example, legislation which itself is based on the observance of the boundary between legislative and executive branches of government. The technologies and supplies needed to reproduce a border depends on a specific division of labor. Borders are also reproduced in the perception of actors, which for example, involves aesthetic dimensions (see Wolfe 2014). In other words, boundaries and borders are seldom simple. Rather they are the continuous and temporary outcome of multiple interdependent practices which themselves are characterized by boundary drawing practices at different levels. Studying a specific border therefore necessarily encompasses the analysis of diverse boundary drawing practices and how these constrain and enable the stabilization of a specific border.

Second, and closely related, specific practices may have implications for a number of different boundary drawing practices simultaneously. For example, agreement to some new set of WTO rules would have implications for a whole range of national borders, but also for some of the underlying boundary drawing processes mentioned above. Additionally, the notion that actions are relevant for different actors at different levels at the same time, is wonderfully captured by Putnam's two level game (see Putnam 1988). Figurational sociological approaches also underscore that actions always speak to different (potentially unknown) sets of actors, and it therefore becomes difficult to predict or bring about intended outcomes in complex social systems (see Elias 1978). This disconnect between intended and actual outcomes can then be understood as a maker of complex social systems more generally. At base, boundary drawing processes constitutive of national borders generate a multitude of intended and unintended outcomes at different levels and for different groups. The regional effects of globalization processes illustrate the point. As such, focusing on borders not only suggests looking at plurality and relation, but also at multiplicity and complexity. It is therefore useful to think about borders in the plural rather than only in the singular and move from (in a sense) *border studies to borders studies*.

This of course does not preclude studying a specific boundary or a specific type of border, say the stabilization of residential segregation (see Ellis et al. 2018). But doing so requires inquiries into multiple related practices. Boundaries, while central to any type of individuation, are institutions in continuous need of stabilization.[9] If the practices upholding specific boundaries are discontinued, the associated borders would give way to some other boundary or border regimes. These practices need to be understood in their complexity. Returning to the example above, upholding national borders involves a number of dimensions encompassing legislation, border

[7] On the construction of sovereignty see Biersteker and Weber 1996, Bartelson 2006.

[8] For this and related discussions see Bucher 2011.

[9] Some material boundaries like mountain ranges, water divides or the Karman line may not be social or institutional facts in the narrow sense. On brute and institutional facts see Searle 1995.

patrol (training), economic relations, identity politics, nationalism, technology development, or environmental aspects, etc. Focusing on these processes reveals the continuously constructed and shifting character of borders. Changes in legislation, standard operating procedures, technological developments (e.g. in detecting illegal border crossing attempts), or the political willingness to enforce standards may all shape how borders play a role in the lives of diverse actors and groups. As such, focusing on a specific border implies studying how micro processes or micro practices are linked to the continuous stabilization of a social institution.[10] Clearly these practices are based on and linked to (the production of) power asymmetries and inequalities, which will be discussed in the section below. It will therefore not be surprising if studies focusing on the complex (de)stabilization of boundaries will also address the different implications which these have for different groups.

DIFFERENCES AND INEQUALITIES

As established above, any boundary drawing process produces difference. At the same time, not every difference constitutes inequality. Some differences (among people) do not generate systematic or structural effects (e.g. freckles and dimples) whereas other differences like gender, nationality, or race often become socially relevant markers of inequality. It is therefore key to (also) study how differences (or heterogeneities) are translated into socially relevant inequalities between groups (and potentially homogenize opportunities among members of an in group).[11]

This is not to suggest that heterogeneities or differences themselves are somehow obvious, unambiguous, or natural phenomena. As discussed above, they are the continuously re-negotiated temporal outcomes of social boundary drawing processes. At a minimum, the observation of differences is theory-laden and involves culturally and historically situated ascriptions of meanings: "Heterogeneities are always perceived and appraised, there is always a historical backdrop of cultural representation and practices for dealing with them, and they are always invoked or engendered by actors in the generation of inequality" (Diewald and Faist 2011, p.13).

Having addressed the construction of differences above, the process to be discussed in the following concerns the ways in which some observable differences come to establish inequalities (among individuals, groups, states, etc.).[12] It is central in this regard to note the context dependence of such processes. Gender, race, ethnicity, etc. are relevant in many settings as a marker of inequalities, but not (equally so) in all settings (even if these markers are constitutive of individual life experiences). It is empirically not possible, (nor is it to be expected) to identify automatic links between difference and inequality. But one can study which differences are translated into inequalities in specific discursive settings and in relation to the social positions of actors. "The significance of a certain ethnicity, gender, age or religion derives from the respective social and

[10] This calls for using different quantitative and qualitative research methods drawn from different disciplines. For a broad methodological overview and triangulation specifically see Wellington and Szczerbinski 2007. On post-structuralist analysis, especially for naming and framing analysis see Hansen 2006. Studying acts of identification from a grounded theory perspective (see Bucher and Jasper 2017), and sociological inquiries focusing on shifting personal pronouns and we-they relations (see Elias 1978), are also likely complementary approaches. But borders studies can for example also draw on insights generated by historians focusing on how the boundaries of concepts shift over time and place (see Brunner et al. 1984-1992).

[11] While the notion of differentiating between heterogeneities and inequalities presented here heavily draws on the work by Diewald and Faist, I do not suggest incorporating their research agenda into this framework. Not only is their project too encompassing to simply include as one dimension of a research framework, it is also demanding in terms of specific concepts, procedures, mechanisms and methods. As such, I draw on their basic underlying notions, without claiming to integrate the complexity of their approach here.

[12] Diewald and Faist, following Wimmer 2008 refer to this process as "boundary making."

cultural context and varies accordingly in different social contexts" (Diewald and Faist 2011, p.13).[13]

The second dimension of this framework is then very much about identifying which categories are deemed relevant in terms of producing inequalities and how these shift over time, and across cases and places. Analysis of this kind can aim to identify the social mechanisms (see Diewald and Faist 2011, p.8) informing these processes. Following Zolberg and Woon (1999), Lamont and Molnar (2002) suggest that such mechanisms include "processes of boundary crossing, blurring, and shifting" (Lamont and Molnár 2002, p.185),[14]as well as "the activation, maintenance, transposition or the dispute, bridging, crossing and dissolution of boundaries" (Lamont and Molnár 2002, p.187).

The range of possible studies focusing on this second dimension is endless, although conceptually not boundless. To draw some examples from the field of education, one could for example, study how gender, ethnicity, and/or social class of students shapes the educational opportunities open to them across time and space. This could include studying how family histories shape aspirations among adolescence, or how access to (pre) schools influences later educational choices. One could, for example, compare how different welfare state models distribute opportunities across groups (on the relation between social and educational policy see Allmendinger and Leibfried 2003). Alternatively, one could look at the eligibility criteria for affirmative action programs (see Darity Jr. et al. 2011), trace their development over time, or compare across institutions or states. Like Helbig and Schneider (2014), one might, for example, study the interaction and relevance of religious affiliation, diaspora experiences, gender, ethical dispositions, socio-economic status, and the regional availability of educational facilities in regard to educational opportunities across countries and over time. It then becomes possible to trace changes in terms of which of these differences are relevant to producing inequalities of opportunities and outcomes.[15] In all these cases, specific and observable differences (rather than other possible differences) are translated into socially relevant inequalities through complex social processes.

The literature on studying the mechanisms translating differences into inequalities is abundant (e.g. see Hedström and Ylikoski 2010; Demeulenaere 2011), and can provide guidance on how to proceed methodologically. It must suffice here to point to the multidimensionality of studying these processes, and the key role of different disciplines and approaches contributing to their analysis. As the notion of social mechanisms above takes a causal focus, it is important to also stress that discourse analytic (Hansen 2006), or grounded theory approaches (Wilson 2012; Glaser and Strauss 2017) are equally relevant in regard to studying how differences become inequalities. There is nothing in this framework that suggests privileging causal over constitutive inquiries. While methodologically pluralistic in outlook, the framework does suggest that the multidimensional nature of inequality construction is not easily compatible with reducing inequality to one primary perspective or determinant. In this sense, "inequalities […] can […] only be adequately appraised if examined in the plural" (Diewald and Faist 2011, p.6), although a specific research project might decide to focus on one specific inequality for practical reasons.

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[13] On fractal distinction see Abbott 2001, pp. 10–15.

[14] Boundary crossing refers to members of minority groups being accepted into majority groups. Boundary blurring refers to increasing permeability of boundaries and boundary shifting refers to the incorporation of former minority groups into the dominant group (see Diewald and Faist 2011, p. 15). Norbert Elias's figurational perspective on shifting personal pronouns could be one way of studying such developments (see Elias 1978).

[15] On the continued relevance of social segregation (ethnic, economic, etc.) in regard to education see Helbig 2010.

NORMATIVITY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF LEGITIMACIES

While not all differences constitute inequalities, the mere observation of inequalities does not yet imply a specific valuation of these inequalities. How we normatively assess inequalities cannot be directly inferred from the observation of these inequalities, but is linked to some underlying notion of justice, fairness, or legitimacy.

For example, some might consider the unequal rights of citizens and non-citizens to be justified, while others might think they violate basic notions of shared humanity. Similarly, one can think of government resource redistribution to disadvantaged groups in terms of a moral obligation, a basic right, or illegitimate state oppression (on redistribution see Smits 2016, pp.21-42). While all are likely to agree on there being factual inequalities in terms of resources and opportunities available to individuals or groups, they might at the same time fundamentally disagree on whether these are legitimate and whether these give rise to practical redistribution measures or not (see Swift 2014).

On close inspection, establishing the legitimacy or illegitimacy of inequalities is not as straight-forward. Take, for example, the civilian-soldier divide or the distinction between conventional and chemical weapons. The processes determining these distinctions have both constraining and enabling dimensions. While we usually praise the protection of civilians, the dichotomy itself demarcates a space in which killing becomes legal and is marked as legitimate (see Kennedy 2012). While chemical weapons use might be effectively prohibited, this boundary drawing practice also makes it possible to argue the case of using conventional weapons in a way that potentially overlooks broader issues at stake (see Bentley 2015). It might also open space to justify military action on selective claims, thereby making 'humanitarian intervention' possible where it might not be justifiable otherwise. The boundary between legitimate and illegitimate (or even legal and illegal) uses of force is not clear at all (on lawfare see Kennedy 2012). Rather it needs to be continuously navigated and reproduced – it needs to be performed in practice. How we normatively assess boundary drawing processes or their political implications, is then an additional dimension to consider.

For other types of boundaries such normative assessments do not appear to be central or relevant. For example, it is not obvious why barrier zones in the oceans (see Emelyanov 2005), or the tricky question of identifying the atmosphere / space boundary should be studied from a normative perspective. But this is not to say that 'natural' boundaries do not have political or normative implications. How, for example, continental shelves are defined, has immense consequences that are not reducible to 'natural facts'. As Simmel argued, the "boundary is not a spatial fact with sociological consequences, but a sociological fact that forms itself spatially" (quoted in Frisby and Featherstone 1997, p.143).

As such, borders studies are challenged to actively and transparently argue the (il)legitimacy of boundaries, not just their existence. In doing so, the normative assumptions of researchers can be made explicit (on methodological considerations following the interpretive turn, see Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006). Focusing on questions of legitimacy can help to broaden the debates on borders to include not only political, economic, cultural or environmental aspects, but to address the normative desirability of specific boundaries and inequalities. This broadens the frameworks and links it to questions of democratic legitimacy, human rights, and (global) justice. The 'legitimacies dimension' of this framework has an additional aspect worth discussing. The framework does clearly not intend to present a substantive moral doctrine to interpret the (il)legitimacy of boundaries. Alongside inquiring into the (il)legitimacy of boundaries or resulting inequalities, borders studies can also empirically focus on the discursive construction of legitimacy claims themselves. Successful claims to legitimacy can serve to stabilize and reproduce distributive patterns. Challenges to normative justifications and claims to legitimacy can conversely have destabilizing effects. Studying legitimacy is therefore functionally linked to the most basic boundary drawing processes and the inequalities to which these give rise. At a very basic level then,

studying boundaries entails multiple interrelated dimensions. Any border will have ontological-constitutive, political and normative aspects that can be studied in interdisciplinary and methodologically diverse ways. This framework has disaggregated these interrelated dimensions in order to help make borders studies more manageable and integrative. Clearly not all inquiries will have to address all of the dimensions discussed, or themselves be interdisciplinary (although such studies are always highly welcome). Rather, the framework seeks to provide a structure that integrates diverse research into a web of knowledge. As such, this framework not only aims to provide some guidelines for individual borders studies projects, but seeks to provide an integrative space for scholars at all levels (be they students, interested faculty or borders studies experts) and a wide range of disciplines to collaborate.

CONCLUSION – B.I.L. AS A RESEARCH PROCESS

Taken together, the conceptual focus on the stabilization of boundaries, the production of inequalities, and the contested normativity of these practices opens a multi-dimensional space in which to situate diverse but interrelated research projects. Given that this framework was developed in the context of a GLAA workshop on border studies, I will focus the following outline on how the general framework presented above could be fruitfully used by students and faculty of GLAA member institutions. The framework outlined here is conceptualized with primarily borders studies research in mind. But I do not thereby wish to separate research and teaching. Quite to the contrary and in line with the 'Humboldtian model', research and teaching should go hand in hand.
Rather than divide, this framework seeks to integrate borders studies in a number of ways:

- It seeks to facilitate faculty research within and across GLAA member institutions and to provide a point of contact for those looking for a borders studies community. As such, it can help to make visible who is involved in borders studies (both in terms of research and teaching). This can help finding relevant collaboration partners, speakers, experts, and simply good advice. To make this possible, it will be key to establish a web-based home (or homes) to collect projects and data in a way that is accessible to all member institutions and scholars more broadly.
- Increased contact amongst faculty members promises to lead not only to co-authored research projects. It will also help to connect courses, make shared teaching formats possible, and facilitate creating course materials which can be employed across courses and member institutions.
- The broad nature of the framework seeks to integrate both faculty and student research. Student research can take place within courses or as B.A. thesis projects. It could also complement specific faculty research projects. The framework, as well as a possible future database, could provide a valuable resource to students interested in borders studies as well and give them an easy point of entry into the field. For students to successfully engage in these projects, they will need methodological guidance. As such, it would be very desirable to add a collection of methodological reflections or a 'how to' sections to this framework, and we welcome any suggestions on how to structure and design methodological guidelines.

As mentioned above, this framework (and its future forms) will have to be amended by a web-based home suited to systematically collect the research and teaching materials produced by faculty and students and to make it broadly available. Whether or not this will be possible, will depend on the engagement of interested members of GLAA institutions. As such, I view this initial

framework as a call for critique, suggestions and engagement. Possibly creating a home (or homes) for B.I.L. will lead to an increasingly dense web of contributions representing multiple perspectives on boundaries and borders. This could not only provide a valuable resource to future borders studies students, but also allow for the identification of research gaps, and provide us with the opportunity to make comparisons about borders studies over time.

As such, B.I.L is intended to grow as an open platform that serves as a web-based point of contact, a developing conceptual and methodological framework and as a dynamic web of knowledge. It therefore aims to connect faculty and students across borders, to move beyond contemporary disciplinary and methodological confines, and to push the boundaries still separating our institutions.

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BIOGRAPHY

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The Emoji and the Management of Social Boundaries

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ABSTRACT
The emoji offers a rich repertoire of communication via texting and beyond. From ever-expanding varieties of emojis to the stickers available on social media apps, the emoji and its "relatives" have gained a significant status in our everyday communication and relational life. Drawing on qualitative data from interviews of female university students conducted between 2015 and 2017, the present paper identifies and exemplifies three social boundaries concerning emoji use that shape the interviewees' experiences and interactions with others: that is, relational boundaries, gender boundaries, and generational boundaries, all of which lead to various semantic boundaries that co-operate with other relevant boundaries that create subtle differences of meaning attached to a given emoji and the way the emoji is used overall. The paper discusses how female university students demarcate and manage these fluid boundaries that surround the emoji in the emoji borderland where numerous boundaries are intricately fused. The paper seeks to highlight the playful yet powerful role the emoji has in constructing meanings and managing relationships in contemporary everyday life to which mobile communication has introduced numerous remarkable possibilities that were previously unimaginable, as well as new complications.

KEY WORDS
Emoji, Mobile Communication, Mobile Culture, Relationships, Networked Individualism, Semantic Boundaries, Social Boundaries

INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of digital media has facilitated our interpersonal communication in becoming increasingly mediated. The International Telecommunication Union reported that 70% of the world's youth are online as of 2017,[1] which suggests the importance of examining how young people are developing and maintaining their interpersonal relationships using digital media. While early research on computer-mediated communication questioned whether this form of communication is suitable for interpersonal communication because of the limited communication cues that the computer affords, researchers demonstrated how people develop and manage interpersonal relationships with technological mediation (see Walther, 1996, Walther & Parks, 2002). Furthermore, the affordance of digital media continues to evolve giving it the capacity of utilizing a variety of communication cues: mediated communication is no longer just the text-based interactions with which it originally began, but can utilize different modalities including visuals and sound.

The emoji, along with its older and younger "relatives" such as emoticons (e.g., smileys like :) or ☺), *kaomoji* (which literally means "face character" in Japanese, e.g. (>_<)) and stickers, serves as an example of this evolution. The emoji that developed as a part of mobile culture is particularly noteworthy here. Contrary to the computer, the mobile phone has always been considered as a medium for interpersonal communication, being as it is a telephone on the move. Yet the mobile phone has developed into a medium with a much greater role than just a telephone that allows us to talk over distance on the move. Texting has become an enormously important function of the mobile phone, relying on the same communication modality as the early computer-mediated communication. As Rainie and Wellman (2012) have stated, the triple revolutions, namely, the Internet revolution, the social network revolution, and the mobile revolution, exert a considerable influence on the way we interact and relate with others. In the current media environment, the emoji is used across different media platforms and devices, playing a pivotal role in our everyday communication.

This paper draws on the qualitative data collected as a part of an on-going project on the emoji. So far, four group interviews have been conducted between 2015 and 2017, involving 14 female university students. The sample size is admittedly small, yet each interview session lasted 75-90 minutes, yielding rich data to aid in understanding the way these students use the emoji, their sentiments toward it, and their observations about the way others use the emoji. What emerges from the data so far is the norms and expectations that surround the emoji in these students' everyday interpersonal interactions. In this paper, the notion of social boundaries frames the discussion of the data. Fearon (2004) explains Georg Simmel's notion of the social boundary as a sociological fact that shapes experience and interaction. The present paper identifies and exemplifies three social boundaries regarding emoji use that shape the interviewees' experiences and interactions with others, namely relational boundaries, gender boundaries, and generational boundaries. These sociological boundaries are increasingly blurred in the contemporary world, and media technologies play an important role in the boundary blurring process, yet the emoji, as a communication repertoire that came into our life relatively recently, appears to be creating new communication patterns and associated meanings along the lines of these boundaries. That is, these age-old sociological boundaries are being blurred in a certain way, while they are simultaneously "demarcated" and "managed" (Newman 2011) in another way. Furthermore, the interview data suggests that the vast array of associated meanings for a given emoji exist for different individuals and peer/social groups in precisely the same spaces from which the notion of subtle and opaque "semantic boundaries" emerges, that is to say, in boundary areas that are lacking in clear lines.

[1] See: https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Documents/facts/ICTFactsFigures2017.pdf.

In the following sections, the paper first discusses mobile communication and boundaries as well as the relational implications of mobile communication, and briefly introduces how the emoji came into being as a part of the mobile culture. It then develops the notions of relational, gender, generational, and semantic boundaries, and discusses how these boundaries are managed using the interview quotes. Through the lens of these boundaries, the paper seeks to highlight the playful, yet powerful and significant role the emoji has in constructing meanings and managing diverse relationships in the media-saturated interpersonal communication of contemporary everyday life, particularly for young women.

MOBILE COMMUNICATION AND BOUNDARIES

From early on, mobile communication researchers have explored the notion of boundaries as a focal point of analysis. When private telephone conversations became possible on the go, enabling us to always be connected with others, many social boundaries started to blur. One of these boundaries is that between the public and private spheres in our everyday life. Perpetual contact (Katz and Aakhus 2002) blurred the boundary between the front stage and the back stage that Goffman (1959) spoke of, bringing our private conversations to the front stage, where we make an effort to create an appropriate impression on those engaging in direct face-to-face interactions with us, as well as on onlookers who are physically present. Nowadays, it is not so rare to overhear someone having a business conversation, making a dinner plan, or even talking about private health matters on the train. This often-discussed example among mobile communication researchers indicates how the nature of a given social setting has changed on a broader scale; that is, the way that the norms of interactions in various social and relational settings have been altered. As Meyrowitz puts it, "(a) seemingly clear definition of an interaction can instantly be altered by the ring of even one participant's mobile phone or by a news bulletin on a radio or TV station that pulls everyone's thoughts in a new direction" (2003, p.96). Here, Meyrowitz points out numerous "blurrings" of boundaries such as those of here and there, now and then, public and private, the male and the female sphere, child and adult realms of experience, office and home, work and leisure, simulated and real, direct and indirect experience, and biology and technology (2003, p.98). For instance, when a study abroad university student receives a text message from her mother during the class, she can be immediately brought back home experientially, blurring the boundary of here and there, as well as that of public and private. This also changes the definition of a social context; in this case, a classroom space, where learning with a professor and classmates is taking place, is altered by introducing the presence of her mother, home, and private life.

These blurred boundaries facilitated by mobile communication have brought about some important relational implications. One of the most important of these is the way in which we can now feel the presence of our relational partners when they are not physically with us, as exemplified above. Such an absent presence (Fortunati 2002, Gergen 2002) or connected presence (Licoppe 2004) can help us maintain our relationships and make them stronger, yet it can also pose new challenges and complications. For instance, young people report their experience of feeling stressed and frustrated because they feel pressured to reply to their friend's late night text messages, become anxious about not hearing back from a friend or crush soon enough, or worry that a malfunction of their mobile phone would cause misunderstandings and relational conflicts (Sugiyama 2013). The absent presence and connected presence also create the situation of a present absence, which means that we are physically present but our mind is elsewhere, devoted to others who are physically absent. This state of "alone together" (Turkle 2011) highlights another dimension of the relational implications of the boundary blurring.

The age of networked individualism (Rainie and Wellman 2012) is characterized by the internet revolution, the social network revolution, and the mobile revolution, as mentioned above. Rainie and Wellman describe this networked individualism as a new operating system for the way in which we connect and develop our social reality. As Rainie and Wellman explain, under

networked individualism, for which mobile communication is critical, people function as individuals who are connected to many diverse networks rather than embedded into groups and communities of belonging. As mobile technology continues to become more powerful, with increased functionality and connectivity, the social and relational implications of mobile communication merit constant examination. With the prevalence of the smart phone, people's mobile communication involves much more than texting and talking on the move. Social media use on a mobile is the everyday practice of many, suggesting that people manage not only dyadic interpersonal interactions but also interaction with groups of different sizes and audiences. They also follow news, celebrities, and favorite brands and stores, among other connections, via their mobiles. The "telecocoon" that Habuchi (2005) describes refers to the bubble that mobile users create in physical space, for example in the way users can be absorbed in their own world of the mobile in a crowded Tokyo metro, but such a cocoon metaphor can be extended to include the informational and experiential cocoon that connects to the aforementioned blurring of boundaries that Meyrowitz referenced. The telecocoon is an invisible boundary that emerges when people are immersed in the digital space that the mobile phone, or rather, these days, the smart phone, offers. Depending on the specific activity in which they are engaging, from texting, to posting a story on Instagram, to reading what a favorite influencer wore and ate, to reading news on Facebook, the telecocoon can set numerous informational and experiential boundaries shaped by the people and the information a given individual is interacting with and following, and also by the so-called "filter bubble" facilitated by algorithmic biases. The telecocoon as a boundary is something that individuals carry with their own mobile, where they are the center of the demarcation and management of boundaries. As Rainie and Wellman (2012) put it, the user is the portal, and a networked individual navigates disparate social connections using their mobile. Interestingly, the locus of power in the demarcation and management of a telecocoon is not all in the hands of the social elites, as is often the case in the examples Newman (2011) discusses, although the power that major technology companies exert cannot be ignored.

EMOJIS AND MOBILE CULTURE

As discussed above, mobile communication has made various social boundaries blurred and fluid. To some extent, this seems to have created a need to clarify, re-establish, and negotiate these boundaries. One of the significant means of satisfying this need is the use of emojis. The emoji has proliferated in our everyday mediated communication, and has developed not only into a new repertoire of communication but also into a cultural icon. As such, the emoji has started to carry symbolic meanings at the single emoji level (e.g. the "fire" emoji signals both literal fire and that someone is attractive or excellent), as well as at the collective emoji level (e.g. as a symbol of youth culture, fun, etc.), and, by extension, has started to play a recognizable role in the management of social boundaries.

The emergence of emojis can be traced back to the work of Shigetaka Kurita at NTT DoCoMo, a major Japanese mobile communication provider.[2] A team led by Kiichi Enoki, Mari Matsunaga, and Takeshi Natsuno started to work on the development of an innovative mobile service called *i-mode* that allowed users to connect to the Internet from their mobile phone in the late 90s: this service aimed to appeal not only to the existing business users but also to young users (Moggridge 2007). As a member of the *i-mode* development team, Kurita developed the first set of 176 emojis with 12*12 dots limitations (Kurita 2017, p.205). Kurita (2017) explains that his motivation for developing emojis was to be able to express emotions to convey an intended tone for short text messages. To highlight the importance of the heart symbol, he recalls how young

[2] The first emoji appeared on a mobile device offered by J-PHONE in 1997, but it did not catch on because the emoji worked only between the devices and the device itself did not sell very well (Kurita 2007).

people, including himself back then, were using a pager to communicate with friends and romantic partners in the 90s. On pagers, young users were encoding their messages as numbers due to the technical limitations of the device (e.g., 724106, meaning "what are you doing" in Japanese), and a heart symbol was thus highly valued by them: as Kurita puts it, it made the message composed solely of numbers "warm" (Kurita 2017, p.202). Furthermore, in launching the *i-mode* service, DoCoMo needed features that would make it appealing to users, particularly young users, despite further technical limitations such as the display size and the number of characters per message.

The emojis Kurita developed were simple and low definition due to the aforementioned technical limitations that he needed to work with, yet they were nonetheless quite expressive, conforming to Japanese contemporary aesthetics. Kurita states that it was important for him to keep them simple in design so that they would appeal to everyone's taste, unlike the emoji that other mobile providers developed later on, and furthermore, it was important that they functioned as characters/letters ("moji" in Japanese) rather than pictures ("e" in Japanese). The emoji at this time worked only within the boundary of a given service provider and was used as a competitive marketing tool to appeal to a certain segment of users, such as teenage girls.

Now that the emoji has become standardized as Unicode, and has become accessible to people around the world, it has started to take on its own life, just as the mobile phone is seen to carry the *apparatgeist*, namely, the spirit of the machine (Katz and Aakhus 2002). The emoji's presence has become paramount in our everyday interpersonal interactions, to the extent that people notice the "lack of emojis" in messages exchanged. Its presence as a cultural artifact has also certainly increased, as we can see in popular cultural references, such as in music videos, movies, fashion and other consumer products, "emoji art history," and so on. It has gained a certain status in our everyday communication, whether it be for interpersonal communication or in the realm of popular culture. From the news of the Oxford Dictionary selecting the "face with tears of joy"[3] emoji as the word of the year in 2015, to that of MOMA acquiring the first emoji set that Kurita developed, it is clear that the emoji plays an important role in our communication and culture in the early 21st century. As such, it has itself started to permeate, and simultaneously establish various social boundaries.

EMOJIS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL BOUNDARIES

Although past research has identified some basic functions of emoticons, which have been extended to the study of emojis (e.g. the expression of emotions, the clarification of meanings, the management of the communication climate, etc., see Sugiyama 2015), the functions of emojis appear to become more complex as the variety of emojis and their related visual icons (such as stickers, GIFs, and the kind of emojis that incorporate one's own face, e.g. Bitmoji and Memoji) become more diverse, and also, as they are used in numerous contexts across different media platforms. Furthermore, the increased varieties of emojis may appear to give users more precise expressive capacity, but the meaning expressed with emoji in everyday social interactions remains quite ambiguous. Although a resource such as the emojipedia offers an impressive list of emoji with their original and intended meanings, such denotative meanings do not necessarily reflect their connotations. Just like the way that a given word and expression could carry a different meaning depending on the relational, cultural and historical context, the meaning that a given emoji carries also differs across contexts. In fact, the emojipedia also has a blog section that includes entries about how a certain emoji is used. The "fire" emoji is a good example, as briefly mentioned earlier: it could refer to a fire literally, as in providing a way to say that you started a fire in the fireplace in winter, but many use it to say that someone is attractive, or that a sports player is

[3] Also known as "laughing crying", "laughing tears" and so on, according to emojipedia. See: https://emojipedia.org/face-with-tears-of-joy/.

playing really well, and so on.[4] The meaning varies and needs to be interpreted based on the context, but the social meaning of a given context is not so clear-cut as discussed earlier. These seemingly bounded contexts are fluid indeed, yet they simultaneously highlight the significance of this playful yet powerful communication repertoire, as the interview data collected between 2015 and 2017 suggests.

Relational Boundaries

One of the boundary categories that affects the meanings and usage of emojis is that of *relational boundaries*, whether they refer to dyadic interpersonal relationships or to small group relationships. In other words, people use emojis differently depending on the nature of the relationship they have with the interactant(s). For instance, group interview participants in 2015 commented on how they use emojis with their close friends, while they tend to use fewer emojis, or use only some basic ones, such as a smiley face, with their acquaintances, colleagues, or classmates with whom they do not share a personal relationship. This being said, an interview participant in 2017 commented that she also makes sure to use emojis when texting acquaintances such as her classmates with whom she works on group projects. She reported that she had never reflected on why this was, but she explained that emojis are useful to create a positive impression for those who do not know her well, and she wants to come off as nice and cute. She commented, "I feel like we are more approachable when we send emojis," a point on which other participants agreed.

Although participants all acknowledged that the nature of a given relationship guides the way they use emojis, the nature of a relationship and the level of relational closeness are not always so clear. Some commented on how they need to figure out if and how much they can use emojis as they exchange texts. One said, "I always use them when someone else starts off with them first. Someone will send like a winking face or whatever and you're just like, ok we can use emojis" (Interview session 1, 2015). Another participant compared emoji use with cursing by stating, "Well, it's like, […] would I curse in front of my parents? I might say one or two words so maybe, like, a smile or a frown is ok, but my friends and the people I live with hear me curse all the time so I can send them whatever I want and it's fine. My boss? I would never curse in front of my boss, so I would never send him an emoticon. That's a no" (Interview session 2, 2015). These comments explain how the interview participants assess and negotiate a sort of "emoji-readiness" and "emoji-appropriateness" with their interactants.

Within close relational networks of partners and group members, specific norms of emoji use emerge. This also means that these norms resultantly vary across different instances of dyadic relationships and groups. For instance, an interview participant reported how the face with tears of joy emoji, the aforementioned Oxford dictionary word of the year in 2015, was an emoji to avoid in her high school, as shown below:

> Moderator: So it sounds like you just know when to use which emoji.
>
> Both: Yeah.
>
> Moderator: With whom or what context. But that's… how do you know?
> [All giggle and pause]
>
> Participant 2: That's a good question. I… I don't think there's a universal, like, key to it, I really do think as she was saying it depends where you're from. Cuz like, um, in my grade my senior year, it was, like, for some reason everyone hated the crying laughing emoji, so, like, if you sent it, like, people just completely made fun of you but as a joke. No one took

[4] Available at: https://blog.emojipedia.org/emojiology-fire/.

> it personally, but it was super weird, like, that was one I never touched because there was a stigma against it in my high school.
>
> Participant 2: That's funny because that's the one that I aaallways use.
>
> Moderator: [laughs]
>
> Participant 2: But, like, I did before, all these girls were like 'oh my god that one is so cringy' so, like, it really depends. So I personally use that.
>
> Moderator: How many years ago?
>
> Participant 2: Oh it was, like, last year.
>
> Moderator: Last year, right, ok.
>
> Participant 2: Yeah but, like, sometimes I'll send it to my friends from home, like, as a joke, and they'll be, like, "oh my god what are you doing", but, like, I don't know it's just, like… and, uh, I send it to my friends because we have certain emojis that we use and I'll randomly send it to them with a different meaning, so again I think it just depends.
>
> Moderator: Mhm, yeah.
>
> Participant 1: Yeah, I agree with that.
>
> […]
>
> Participant 2: Yeah, that's just, like, from my high school, like, my friends who went to the public school near me, they like had no idea what I was talking about. So again, it's only within, like, sixty girls, but, like, that was the thing but, like, no one else understood.
>
> (Interview session 1, 2017)

These exchanges highlight how a widely used emoji carries some group-specific meanings, which guides the use of this emoji within a group, in this case, the group composed of students in this specific small high school in the U.S.. The interview quotes also suggest that such a group-specific meaning creates a relational boundary between those who understand it and those who do not, that is, insiders and outsiders, demarcating the relational boundary. An emoji's meaning is much more than its originally intended meaning and full of subtle differences and nuances that can be discerned only within a specific relational boundary. That is, an emoji is polysemic, open to various meanings, personal and group associations, and ambiguity.

Yet our everyday interpersonal interactions are not confined within the same relational boundaries. Instead, we navigate numerous mediated interactions, from texting with old and familiar friends, to a new friend that we recently made on a night out, to a potential date. One of the highly discussed emojis that creates ambiguous interactions is the emoji of the winking face:

> Participant 1: I think the winking face is super confusing and you should never use them. I guess unless you really get each other.
>
> Participant 5: I send a winking face all the time.

Moderator: Is this intentional?

Participant 5: Ya, I guess it's, like, I don't know, I'm being silly right now and I send the winking face with the tongue out and the big eyes.

Participant 2: I always send the little one that's the happy face that's winking. Just, like, the little cute winking face.

Participant 1: But those are weird. If you send just the winking face alone without a message it can get weird. It depends on what you're sending it with but other times it's confusing.

Moderator: What's confusing?

Participant 1: Because it makes so many sentences just different. I hate when I'm talking to someone normally but after everything, they say they add a winking face and it's just weird because it's not like they're being funny or like they just said something sexual or something. They just add it on the end and I'm, like, I don't want to talk to you.

Participant 2: In person that would be a very flirtatious thing to do. It depends on who it is.

Participant 3: Imagine if your boss sent you a winking face.

Participant 2: Ya, if my boss sent me a winking face, I would be very suspicious, but if you send me a winking face it would still be ok.

(Interview session 1, 2015)

The comments show how these female students try to make sense of the confusing and ambiguous meaning associated with the winking emoji, particularly when they are interacting with those who are not relationally close, that is, outsiders. Interview participants in 2017 also commented how the winking face emoji should be used with care. They agreed that sending a winking face to a boy they are "talking" to is too aggressive. When the moderator asked if it means "I'm interested," they giggled saying "No, no! Too aggressive!" indicating that they all know what it means (Interview session 2, 2017). This suggests that they have their own agreed-upon meaning for the winking face emoji in a given relational context, although whether a boy receiving it perceives it as aggressive and understands the other meanings hinted at by these female students is unknown.

Such ambiguity of a given emoji also leads the interview participants to decide which emojis to use with whom: explaining why, they report that they use emojis more often and in a greater variety with their close friends. It is harder to figure out emoji-readiness and emoji-appropriateness when interacting with those they don't know well, or with whom the relational nature is unclear. In a sense, relational boundaries that concern the emoji are intertwined with distinct meanings and associations that shift with the more specific relational context and other social boundaries; these boundaries of meaning can be called *semantic boundaries*. Semantic boundaries, without clear lines as they are, are hard to pin point, yet appear to be an important byproduct that co-operates with other relevant social boundaries that surround emoji use. The semantic boundaries that define relationships can operate at the level of dyads, peer groups, or social categories such as gender and generation, but semantic boundaries and other social boundaries do not necessarily align, because various social boundaries intersect in a given exchange of emojis, yielding different possibilities of meaning.

Gender Boundaries

As briefly touched upon in the previous section, gender is another factor that demarcates social boundaries in the use of emojis. In fact, there appear to be certain gender norms and expectations in the way emojis are used. Many interview participants commented on how boys use emojis differently from them in terms of both the amount and the kind of emojis. For instance:

> Participant 2: I think it's a gender thing. Like, guys I know don't really use emojis.
>
> Participant 4: Unless they're flirting with you. The only time I've ever encountered them is flirting.
>
> Participant 1: Or, like, the simple thumbs up. That's, like, the guys' emoji. Cuz it's just the easiest.
>
> Participant 4: A lot of my guy friends really like the GIFs.
>
> Participant 1: Ya, I feel like guys are more likely to use the GIFs.
>
> (Interview session 1, 2015)

In addition to the "thumbs-up" emoji, the "smirk face" emoji was associated with male friends, while the Bitmoji was considered as a "more girly thing", used among close friends, and the interviewees stated that they normally do not send it to male friends, even to their boyfriends, nor do they receive it from them (Interview session 2, 2017). The point here is not to say that these particular emoji instances are associated with a particular gender as a fact, but to show how these female students talk about such gender associations based on their own experiences, demonstrating the way they seek to demarcate a boundary.

The interview participants' perceived gendered ways of using emojis guide their own emoji use. For instance, they report that the way they use emojis with female friends is different from the way they use emojis with male friends.

> Participant 2: I don't really use emojis with guys.
>
> Moderator: With guys, no?
>
> Participant 2: No.
>
> Moderator: Mmm, how about you?
>
> Participant 1: Umm it would depend on, like, the conversation, I guess.
>
> Moderator: Mhm, yeah, depends on the conversation, yeah. And you said you don't use much with guys.
>
> Participant 2: Mhmm.
>
> Moderator: Why do you think that?
>
> Participant 2: I don't know… But usually they don't use it, so I won't use it.
>
> Moderator: Ahh, ok, they don't use it.

> Participant 1: Yeah, or, like, if they start using it, if they started first, I would definitely use it more than, like, just doing it alone.
>
> [Inaudible agreement from participant 2]
>
> Moderator: [Laughs] so if they're using it, you also use it.
>
> Both: Yeah.
>
> Moderator: But you use more with female friends, or your parents?
>
> Both: Yeah, yeah.
>
> (Interview session 1, 2017)

As we can see in the interview extracts, these female students manage the gender boundaries in their everyday emoji use to meet the emoji-readiness and emoji-appropriateness that they set by themselves and with their peers.

A participant in another interview session in 2017 explained how she never uses the face with tears of joy emoji when texting male friends, and does not like to receive it from them either, but she uses it with her female friends. She commented that if a male friend texts her saying "you were so funny the other night, haha", and the face with tears of joy emoji is attached, she tends to take it as a sarcastic remark, although she understands that he is probably just trying to be light-hearted and wants to start a conversation with her. All of these comments highlight the *gender boundaries* of emoji use, which guide not only the interview participants' understanding of how they are supposed to use emojis based on their own gender identification, but also suggest what they expect from others and how they interpret the meanings of emojis.

It should be noted, however, that such expectations and interpretations of meanings are contextual and gender is merely a potential factor, therefore multiple social boundaries are at stake in the creation and negotiation of meanings in interpersonal communication that involves emojis. For instance, the interview comments suggested that the way the interview participants use emojis with their fathers and brothers is different from the way they use emojis with their male friends, and the way they use emojis with their male friends is different from the way they use emojis with their boyfriends. An interview participant also noted that her male friend started to use more emojis because he started to use emojis with his girlfriend. These comments show how gender boundaries are fused with relational boundaries, suggesting that these social boundaries are not static and clear-cut, instead, they are fluid and changeable, affected by numerous factors. This exemplifies what was discussed about semantic boundaries earlier: because of the complex nature of the way these boundaries cross and change, semantic boundaries emerge.

Generational Boundaries

Not only the gender boundary, but the generation, or age difference in general, also contributes to the boundaries that shape the way we use emojis. Most of the discussion regarding emojis and the interview participants' families focused on the way that their parents and other family members use emojis differently from them. A particularly interesting trend was the repeated comment that their parents love to use emojis, alongside their repeated claim that their parents don't know how to use them. For instance, an interview participant in 2017 said that her father is "really into it" and he loves using emojis, but "he doesn't know what he's doing." The same interviewee stated that her mother is good at using emojis, and "it is a way for them to try and connect with us. They think it's super hip and whatever." Participants in another interview session in 2017 agreed that

their mothers send a lot of emojis. A participant also commented about her grandmother, saying how the iPhone "introduced her to the world of emojis" and there are emojis that she never uses and none of her friends use, but only her grandmother uses. These comments illustrate how these female university students see generational boundaries existing, clearly differentiating their use and understanding of emojis and those of their parents and grandparents.

The interview participants' comments about generational differences are not only about older family members. For instance, an interview participant reported the way her former high school teacher posts about her personal life, specifically about her weight loss effort, on Facebook, and uses "random emojis" (Participant in 2017). Furthermore, one of the interview participants in 2017 commented about the way that those younger than her use emojis:

> Participant 2: […] Like, the kids I babysit who are a lot younger, like, in their Instagram bio or in the caption of their photos, they'll have, like, five hundred hearts and I'm, like, oh my god, and they're all, like, different colors, and, like, random things, and it's just, like, they're little kids and, like […] they're having fun with it and probably love scrolling through and just picking it, so it's not like there's a wrong way of using it, but it's just, like, again a generational thing.
>
> Moderator: Mhm, generational, and also just very young?
>
> Participant 2: Yeah, yeah, and they're little so they're just having fun and no one really cares. I mean I didn't even think twice about it, because if you think about their age it's, like, harmless but it would kind of be weird if an 18-year-old girl had, like, five hundred hearts and, like, random things floating around their social media.
>
> Participant 1: Yeah and the same thing on Facebook, like, older people post emojis with their posts and you'll kind of question why they chose those ones particularly because they have, like, nothing to do with the post so, like, it's kind of the same thing.

What is interesting in the way these female university students talk about the emoji use of those outside their own age groups is that they claim a kind of authority: they are the ones who know how emojis should be used. Newman discusses how the social elites tend to establish and manage borders in general, but in the case of the emoji as a part of mobile culture, with numerous references and applications in contemporary popular culture, the youth is in charge of the emoji boundaries, or at least so it appears. This self-claimed authority is demonstrated in the way the interview participants say those of different generations use emojis "randomly," suggesting that emoji use outside of their own demarcated border does not make sense to them. The seemingly random emojis that are not clearly connected to the social media post could make complete sense to others who are relationally close to the older person who posted, or those who identify with the person in terms of gender, age group, or other relevant factors. This demonstrates, once again, the importance of considering semantic boundaries when analyzing the complex border demarcation and management that concerns the emoji.

Staying on the Right Side in the Emoji Borderland

As much as the interview participants notice when some use emojis in the "wrong way," they are self-conscious about the way they themselves use emojis, particularly when these emojis are exposed to a large audience, such as in the case of Instagram posts:

> Moderator: Are there any situations that you think a lot about which emoji to add?
>
> Participant 2: Uhhh, if I'm writing a caption for a photo.

Participant 1: [laughs] yeah.

Moderator: Ohh, ok, Instagram.

Both: Yeah.

Participant 2: Cuz I don't know if it's, like, the wrong one, cuz, like, a lot of people see it, so, yeah, I mean that's usually the only time I think about it. But I'm kind of careless when I text.

Moderator: Texting you don't care, yeah, yeah, so you don't want to do it wrong if it's on Instagram.

Participant 2: Yeah or, like, on some form of social media, just cuz, like, more people are seeing it that I'm not as close to.

Moderator: But it's also interesting because there's like a wrong way of using it too.

Participant 1: Yeah.

Participant 2: Or, like, over using it.

(Interview session 1, 2017)

The interview participants' comments reveal that since they establish various boundaries of emoji use and meanings based on relationships and other social categories, leaving "outsiders" in confusion and unaware of their connotations, they also need to make sure that they themselves stay within the appropriate boundary. Furthermore, the emoji use that is appropriate in texting is not always appropriate on social media such as Instagram. Many commented on how they use emojis to decorate their posts on Instagram to create a certain self-image that they project to a larger and more diverse audience. An interview participant in 2017, who is quite savvy with social media use, commented on how the Instagram bio got her to start thinking about the aesthetics of emojis. She explained some aesthetically pleasing emoji combinations, such as the yellow smiley face and a pink heart, a star with a pink heart, the moon and a purple heart, and so on. They all "look really cute together", she stated. She further explained how she uses emojis of stars, snowflakes, champagne glasses, butterflies and the likes for Instagram for a more poised and curated image, and never uses the emoji of a kissing face, while the kissing face emoji is a part of her texting repertoire with her female friends. Not only is there a distinction between Instagram and texting, but, apparently, there are also different ways that emojis are used for Instagram and Finstagram, a "fake Instagram" that is shared and followed among very close friends. Relational boundaries are more tightly controlled in the Finstagram world, making more casual and relaxed use of emojis possible, or rather, more appropriate and desirable for less poised and more "authentic" self-presentation.

The interview participants consider Instagram posts as the front stage where they manage the impressions they create on numerous interactants and onlookers, and the emojis become an important communication repertoire for making "suitable" impressions. As a part of the group with the authority to demarcate and manage emoji boundaries, they have to use emojis flawlessly, staying on the "right side" of the boundaries that are relevant in a given moment. The right and appropriate emoji use for the impression that the interview participants seek to create differs depending on the different media contexts, whether it be the Instagram, Finstagram, texting, or

numerous others, and in particular depending on the publicness of the emoji, which is intertwined with the media context, because this shapes the complex matrix where relational, gender, and generational boundaries intersect and create semantic boundaries.

In a sense, many of the interactions that these female university students reported occur in the borderland, that is, in a hybrid zone where two "sides" of the border present (Newman 2011). This borderland, however, is not a zone where two areas that are separated by a border simply "meet", instead, it is where multiple boundaries, such as relational, gender, and generational boundaries crisscross, as explored above, further complicating the nature of the *emoji borderland*. Referring back to the earlier interview discussion, whether a boy receiving the winking face emoji understands it as aggressive, a sort of sexual invitation, or a simple friendliness depends on numerous factors, but the way these female students spoke about this suggests that the emoji borderland is like a wonderland, a space in which they and others wonder, analyze, and assess the meanings of emojis.

CONCLUSION

In an age of perpetual contact and networked individualism, these female students are constantly navigating diverse multiple social connections simultaneously. In many of these connections, the nature of relationships is ambiguous and in flux. In managing mediated relationships, these students have to discern the continuously shifting social boundaries that define the meanings of a given relationship, and the connected presence of their relational partners, whether it be their family, friends, or their significant others. The boundaries of here and there are blurred, affecting the way they interact with those absently present, as well as with those physically co-present. That is, mobile communication complicates the management of personal relationships, although it undeniably offers remarkable benefits for relating with others that were unimaginable in the past. In the same way, the emoji, as a part of mobile culture, both facilitates and complicates mediated relationships, as illustrated by the interview participants' identification that they need to use emojis in a way that fits with a given relational, social, and media context. These female students perceive themselves as the ones who are savvy with digital and mobile culture, and indeed as the ones who are in the know of exactly how the emojis should be used, unlike those who use emojis "randomly." As effortless as they make themselves sound in their comments on their use of the emoji because they are "in," they also have to make an effort not to use the "wrong emojis" as exemplified in their interview comments, so that they will not accidentally cross relational and other relevant social boundaries in the emoji borderland.

As Baron (2010) stated in her study of university students, they are "control freaks." They can read and re-read their own messages, posts, and replies. They can read them as many times as they like in order to perfect their messages to their friends, crushes, and significant others, and make sense of replies from all of these, as if they pause, edit, and replay their interactions at their convenience. The emoji certainly contributes to this process. The constructed idea of a proper way of using emojis for a given interactant or social media audience contributes to the students' ability to maximize their control of their self-definition, self-expression, and relations with others. The emoji aids them in adding some warmth of their presence to the messages sent to others who are physically absent, as Kurita originally envisioned, but the warmth needs to be controlled and perfected at just the right level and just the right nature. Resultantly, this "right" level of warmth and other related connotations needs to be assessed based on the norms within a relevant boundary, whether it be a relational or a social group defined by gender or generation, or both. Many boundaries that mobile communication has started to blur become relevant as these female students seek to demarcate and manage.

Some emojis' meanings specific to a dyad or a group are like secret codes, giving them a kind of informational and experiential cocoon that those who are outside of the boundary cannot fully access. The interviews reported here show how these young female students seek to establish

and maintain such cocoons to differentiate the way that they wittingly and playfully use a variety of emojis from the way that others use them. At the same time, they also need to negotiate relational boundaries, namely the level of intimacy and formality, as well as the nature of the relationship, because the kind and amount of emojis that they are supposed to use and the associated meanings differ. Emoji-readiness and emoji-appropriateness need to be assessed relationally and contextually, and this assessment in turn gives these students implicit guidance on how emojis are used.

The telecocoon metaphor, as originally conceived, however, underlines another interesting aspect about boundaries: their potential individualism. The telecocoon is an invisible and transient boundary that mobile users create not only physically, but also informationally and experientially, and they bring their own cocoon to the emoji borderland where they manage boundaries and meanings of emojis. In the emoji borderland, where numerous social boundaries intersect, yielding semantic boundaries, the idea of an individualized boundary that appears and disappears is noteworthy. Although the present analysis of interviews focused on the loosely defined sense of "us versus them," this individualized boundary is quite fitting to the idea of networked individualism, which posits that people function as individuals connected to multiple diverse networks, rather than as individuals who are embedded in traditional groups and communities. Such an individualized, transient boundary that we carry around with us could be making a significant impact on the formation of semantic boundaries that further diversify the already fluid meanings of emojis in the emoji borderland. It could be argued that when enough information and experiences are shared with others, a shared cocoon can emerge in a given moment. This point is a theoretical extension rather than a finding from the interviews, and deserves further exploration with an empirical study.

The present paper has merely scratched the surface of the way some social boundaries operate in the use of emojis, and there are other boundaries that the parameters of the paper were not able to address. Yet the analysis is nonetheless able to illustrate that all of these social boundaries matter despite their fluidity, identifying the emergence of semantic boundaries that co-operate with other relevant boundaries, that together create subtle differences of meaning attached to a given emoji and the way the emoji is used overall. Furthermore, such social boundaries are not static, but rather fluid, and several social boundaries are fused in each given interaction. The role the emoji plays in establishing and negotiating social boundaries in the everyday interpersonal interactions of these female university students is paramount, requiring a notable effort that stands in contrast to the emoji's light-hearted and playful appearance.

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BIOGRAPHY

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Fragment, Reassemble, Repeat: Productive Border-Perforations in Works by Leïla Sebbar, Farah Khelil, and Martina Melilli

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ABSTRACT
This paper investigates the formal means by which three practitioners, French writer Leïla Sebbar, Tunisian artist Farah Khelil, and Italian filmmaker Martina Melilli create cross-Mediterranean Deleuzoguattarian "holey spaces" in their work, that challenge, in particular, the memory borders between North and South. Exploring the use of virtual and actual holes, points, and collages in Sebbar's alphabet book *Voyage en Algéries autour de ma chambre* (Voyage in Algerias around my room; 2008), in Khelil's perspective-bending *Point de vue, point d'écoute* (Viewpoint, Listening-Point 2013), and multi-material, implicitly navigational *Point d'étape* (Waypoint; 2016-), as well as in Melilli's medial border transgressions in her film *My Home, in Libya* (2018), I posit that the disruptive spaces generated by these works reshape the fabric of their Mediterranean pasts and presents. The Deleuzoguattarian notion of "holey space" with which I engage recognizes the multifaceted and multiplied nature of these spaces, neither completely "striated" (controlled by power structures), nor completely "smooth" (free of any state intervention past or present). The perforation of border spaces of the present mines colonial pasts, bringing to light, interrogating, and potentially transforming their contemporary residue.

KEY WORDS
Holey Space, Assemblage, Rhizome, Mediterranean, (Post)colonialism, Memory, Migration

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores creative border crossings as productive perforations in the work of three cultural practitioners, French author Leïla Sebbar (*Voyage en Algéries autour de ma chambre* [Voyage in Algerias around my room], 2008), Tunisian artist Farah Khelil (*Point de vue, point d'écoute* [Viewpoint, Listening-Point], 2013 and *Point d'étape* [Waypoint], 2016-)[1] and Italian filmmaker Martina Melilli (*My Home, in Libya*, 2018). All three engage critically with the colonial and contemporary contexts of the Mediterranean area in which they and their works are situated, and all adopt elements of the collage format in these engagements, piecing together pasts, mixing up presents. It is this shared collage element that suggests a comparative exploration, the interplay of text(s) and images in borderland spaces proving particularly fruitful for exploring their assembled works and enabling affective responses, in particular, those generated by Sebbar's alphabet letters, Khelil's holes and "points", and Melilli's mobile-centered border transgressions.

In mapping examples of these collages and other related features of Sebbar's, Khelil's and Melilli's texts, I attempt to highlight the spaces that the three practitioners (re)create through their works, spaces that link both sides of the Mediterranean in a fragmentary, continually de- and re-assembled way, and that are "holey" in the sense of French philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, in other words neither "striated" (marked up by power structures), nor "smooth" (completely free of state interventions). What emerges from these assemblages, I contend, is borderland spaces that explore colonial pasts and acknowledge their continued traces by perforating, and thereby fundamentally interrogating, contemporary borders. The past connections and contemporary power formations that Sebbar's, Khelil's, and Melilli's formal techniques uncover bore into the culture and borderlands of (collective) memory, and simultaneously and consequentially serve as an intensive reminder of contemporary remains and responsibilities (Zhurzhenko 2011). The creative materials they use to traverse spatio-temporal borders and dig up shared pasts, consisting of single letters, cutouts on colonial or tourist postcards, text messages piercing the screen, holes in painting whiteouts, collections of photos, videos shot on mobiles, and so on, all serve to shake up space, time and the fragmented (sometimes fractious) nature of interstate relationships in a postcolonial world.

HOLEY SPACES: PERFORATED CROSSINGS

That the Mediterranean is implicit as metaphorical and physical divider in the work of all three practitioners seems not insignificant. The sea, on the one hand that apparently ultimate smooth space, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is also, on the other, the space that, because of navigation, was "the first" to be striated, in having these navigational lines and crossings at least notionally marked onto it, precisely the idea of the "waypoints", or navigational directions, with which Khelil works (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.529; Khelil 2014, pp.121-122). Thinking through the Deleuzian permutations of engagements with sea (borders) is helpful here, because, in a Deleuzian sense, a smooth space would mark the "absence of a territory", while a striated space is all about pinning down, reterritorializing, and indeed, as Hamza Safouane puts it in his discussion of why migrants shirk this kind of a space, "capturing" (2017, p.1929, p.1935). Negotiation of holey space is thus always already a negotiation of "the *mixture* of smooth and striated space that characterizes any power formation" (Hantel 2012). The striation of the sea, in recent times and in the contexts of these works – in the Mediterranean, one need only think of the EU's External Borders Fund's financial support of Operation Mare Nostrum and not

[1] Both Sebbar's and Khelil's projects are ongoing and their various iterations can be explored at the Swarthmore College website (Sebbar – see: http://clicnet.swarthmore.edu/leila_sebbar/virtuel/index.html) and on Khelil's website (see: http://farahkhelil.free.fr/).

uncontroversial subsequent instigation of Operation Triton[2] – is reminiscent of the relatively recent post-colonization sea border in/on a space that, in the cases of Italy and France, used to be a space of crossings *inside* a country,[3] or at the least, *inside* an Empire.

Hélène Frichot talks of the Deleuzian sea as an "unruly smooth space[] that [has] fallen under surveillance and control", while Safouane, exploring the experience of crossing into Europe, acknowledges the tensions and complexities of this nexus when mapped onto the contemporary migration context in the Mediterranean area when he writes that "many archetypal smooth spaces like the sea are becoming increasingly captured by nation states' migration management apparatuses" (Frichot 2007, p.172; Safouane 2017, p.1935). At the same time, however, Safouane highlights that "'Fortress Europe' is ridden with holes, gaps and cracks", making it, as cultural theorist and filmmaker Brigitta Kuster also identifies, a space that reveals itself to the migrant as neither striated nor smooth, and that could even offer possibilities for a penetration of state boundaries, and for flight, "a holey space dug into heavy police and state control" (Safouane 2017, p.1935; Kuster 2018, p.63). The implication is that even striated space can be both overcome and reappropriated, also in the literal sense – and indeed, as Nizar Messari also discusses in this volume, "[m]igration is [itself…] a vector of space occupation and appropriation" (Safouane 2017, p.1936). The possibilities for reappropriating these spaces and thereby re-assembling past and present could be seen as the impetus for Sebbar's, Khelil's and Melilli's artistic negotiation of these cracks, for, in the works I will discuss, "cracks" reveal both convergences (productive connections and lines of flight to nomadic space) and stoppages, or state blockages, in the contemporary interconnections between France and Italy on one side of the Mediterranean, and Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya on the other. Frichot deems holey space "metamorphological", a concept that has broadened from the idea of a change in form to suggest "transformation in general" (Wilk 1999, p.71), and it is this transformative state that renders holey space elastic and able to "register the demand for a creative practice of hollowing out regions of escape" (Frichot 2007, p.175). While the "escape" in this sense and in these creative works may be from determined meanings and power relations rather than from watchtowers and searchlights as such, the transformative flexibility of these works nonetheless poses a challenge to, and evocative escape from, the striated, territorialized spaces (or cultural systems) of modern Mediterranean nation states.

RISING FROM THE SUBSOIL: MAPPING LANDSCAPES OF NON-PLACE

Holey space is most closely associated with the Deleuzoguattarian concept of the rhizome – the non-hierarchical multiplicity that does not merely get bigger but is fundamentally transformed by each addition or new sprouting – and it shares the rhizome's unpredictable behavior and its ability to shake up power and meaning. For Max Hantel, writing on Édouard Glissant's engagement with Deleuzian concepts as a challenge to the notion of the nation state, "the rhizome is most productively thought as 'holey space,' or the landscape created by an itinerant artisan who follows the movement of matter-flow to create concrete assemblages suffused with incorporeal affects; […] figured as holey space, the rhizome grows unpredictably in the 'non-place' between content and expression" (Hantel 2012). Hantel's concept of the non-place of the rhizome overcomes the dualism of the content-form binary, proposing instead a productive, re-generative, continuous substance whose "gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes etc.", its self-generated "redirections" of "matter-flows" in other words, function "to frustrate the state apparatus" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.458; Hantel 2012). In the cases to hand, I contend that these "frustrating" acts take the form of a redirection of flows of "accepted" meaning – one need only look at what Sebbar, for example, does with the state-imposed French alphabet, how Khelil's

[2] Indeed, Daniela Ortiz's *ABC of Racist Europe* (2017), which will be discussed below, includes Frontex as its entry for the letter "F". See:
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_14_566.

[3] From its colonization until 1962, Algeria formed three départements of France.

"points" force her viewer to reexamine their perspective and perceptions, and how Melilli enmeshes documentary footage, personal re-collections and mobile photographic interventions in a narrative of post-colonization and migration.

I would further contend that the suspended, evocative structure of the rhizomatic, assemblage-like collage is shared by all three practitioners. In turn, these collages transform and reshape, challenging the borders that seek to confine them, and frustrating the notion of uniform states (in all senses of the word). Writing about the convergences between migration, art and the postcolonial in the Mediterranean, Celeste Ianniciello reminds us that

> art is able to create zones of ontological slippage, spatio-temporal interlacing, contact zones between collective and personal memory, critical and improper, self and other. Interrogating our position, our habitual procedures of recognition and definition, art transposes us into a critical space, beyond the visible, under the "peel" of domesticated time, in a region not delimited by frontiers, closeness, division, but signed by traces, folds, movements, unpredictable currents, migrations of bodies and senses. (2018, pp.2-3)

Here, art's memory work is seen to profit from its side-stepping of the concrete and of a fixing to a single spatio-temporal "territory." Its slipperiness opens it to shifting spaces and times, blurred interfaces between private and public spheres, and has the potential to take us on a "critical" and unpredictable journey of migrational perception.

In exploring how holey space reverberates with the potential for resistance of uniform states, it is helpful to return to Édouard Glissant, whose contrast of the root and the rhizome poses a challenge to *post*colonial "nations" – especially those of the Global South – to enact their possibilities of doing things differently. For Glissant, the inherent problem is that "the history of the West is a history of fixing movement in terms of the static model of the nation-state", and that this history has been perpetuated even in decolonized nations, which largely continued "to form around an idea of power – the totalitarian drive of the single, unique root" (Glissant 1997, p.14; Glissant in Hantel 2012). Hantel further explains how Glissant works to transform this "national root" into a rhizome-equivalent, and the idea of the resistance to "fixing movement" is one that is worthy of pursuit here, for when states change and borders shift, the after-effects of colonization, independence and the memory-connections between countries/states are forgotten, or remembered differently, as Tatiana Zhurzhenko reminds us in her work on memory, its symbolic reconstruction, and its erasure in the "unif[cation of] cultural landscapes" and the creation of new "communities of memory" in the aftermath of conflict and the redrawing of borders (2011, p.63, p.66). Melilli's contrast between the memories of the people and the state-sponsored narrative in *My Home, in Libya*, is particularly evocative here, as we will see, precisely in its creation of space for individual memories to move through and transpierce the official narrative(s) of state-building and the aftermath of Empire(s).

Holey spaces of movement and perforation fragment the border, releasing it from the fixed structures of this side-the other side and before-after ("diesseits-jenseits und vorher-nachher") writes Kuster, who sees any act of crossing as perforation (2018, pp.14-15). In the way Kuster, writing in German, uses "holey space", its perforatory sense comes across even more clearly than it does in the original Deleuzoguattarian French ("espace troué"). Becoming "der durchlöcherte Raum" ("the space pierced through with holes" or "the transpierced space"), these perforations are seen to produce "a montage-fabric of affect that cannot be made to stand still" ("ein nicht stillzustellendes Montage-Gefüge der Affektik"; Kuster, 2018, p.15). The use of the geological term "fabric", the pattern of the rock – both what constitutes it and how this constitution is arranged in space and geometry – does not seem incidental here, referencing actual topography and residue at one and the same time, and for Kuster, "the transpierced space of migration" ("der

durchlöcherte Raum der Migration") is always already lumpy and bumpy, a metaphor of its uneven politics (2018, p.218).

Precisely this notion of transpiercing, combined with the call to follow this fabric of matter in movement in order to supersede spatial striations is key to Deleuze and Guattari's own introduction of holey space in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

> Transpierce the mountains instead of scaling them, excavate the land instead of striating it, bore holes in space instead of keeping it smooth, turn the earth into swiss [*sic*] cheese. An image from the film *Strike* [by Eisenstein] presents a holey space where a disturbing group of people are rising, each emerging from his or her hole as if from a field mined in all directions. The sign of Cain is the corporeal and affective sign of the subsoil, passing through both the striated land of sedentary space and the nomadic ground *(sol)* of smooth space without stopping at either one, the vagabond sign of itinerancy, the double theft and double betrayal of the metallurgist […]. Holey space itself communicates with smooth space and striated space. In effect, the machinic phylum or the metallic line passes through all of the assemblages: nothing is more deterritorialized than matter-movement. […] Here, we would say that the phylum simultaneously has two different modes of liaison: it is always *connected* to nomad space, whereas it *conjugates* with sedentary space. On the side of the nomadic assemblages and war machines, it is a kind of rhizome, with its gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes, etc. On the other side, the sedentary assemblages and State apparatuses effect a capture of the phylum, put the traits of expression into a form or a code, make the holes resonate together, plug the lines of flight, subordinate the technological operation to the work model, impose upon the connections a whole regime of arborescent conjunctions. (2004, pp.456-458)

In their call to "transpierce the mountains", "bore holes in space", and indeed, by implication to rise from the "subsoil", Deleuze and Guattari both infuse the notion of holey space with disruptive movement, and that of the "State apparatus", that seeks to plug it, with fixed meaning. This idea of the "machinic phylum" that is followed precisely to bore these holes in space, and that the state seeks to hold down, requires some further explication. For the philosopher Manuel DeLanda (1997) the machinic phylum "conceptualiz[es] innovation." DeLanda explains how, in Deleuzian theory more broadly, the blacksmith, and, later, the metallurgist, are understood to "treat[] metals as active materials, pregnant with morphogenetic capabilities" – their task being to coax and "guide" form from these materials in their different ways, for the smith "through a series of processes (heating, annealing, quenching, hammering)", for the metallurgist "utiliz[ing] the indentations and accidents of the rock", until what is ultimately produced is "a form in which the materials themselves had a say" (DeLanda 1997; Faure in Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.456). Yet it is the metals themselves that are the "catalyst", "interven[ing] in reality, trigger[ing] effects, caus[ing] encounters that would not have taken place without [them]", while they themselves are "not consumed or permanently changed in these interactions, so that [they] can go on triggering effects elsewhere" (DeLanda 1997). Thus, it is the burgeoning form of the metal, in this in-between non-place of the space transpierced with holes, that "act[s] on an initial set of merely coexisting, heterogeneous elements, and cause[s] them to come together and consolidate into a novel entity" (DeLanda 1997).[4] This notion of a self-generating fabric of matter followed through lines of metal

[4] Explaining the "phylum" of the "machinic phylum", DeLanda (1997) points to its biological definition as a category "above class", drawing the conclusion that "we are also related to non-living creatures […] through common 'body-plans' involving similar self-organizing and combinatorial processes" – suggesting we are also part of, or inherently enmeshed with, the lines of metal in the rock that we are

is particularly evocative for the collage work done by Sebbar, Khelil and Melilli, as we will see, especially in the way Sebbar's work and its interweaving of text and image pushes the reader to follow the "metal" letters of her alphabet book, the way Khelil's perforations and waypoints direct the gaze, and the way Melilli's texts, images and videos flood and pierce her projected mobile screen.

Hantel (2012) takes the doubled problematic of holey space and its propensity to both connect *and* conjugate further: "connections imply an intensification of different deterritorializing flows that reciprocally accelerate; conjugation, on the other hand, 'indicates their relative stoppage' because the flows are brought under the control of a single code." Holey space both actively resists and is inherently susceptible to Glissant's "national root" that surrounds it, because, as Maria Mayr explains, it must work with what it has: "in the midst of dominant structures", it "subverts not by imposing something completely new and foreign upon the received space, but by transforming that which is given, by following the metal flow" (2010, p.32).[5] That which is given, here, is two forms of bordered national spaces – that of European memory culture and that of the contemporary postcolonial nation state itself as threatened by (clandestine) migration.

The self-perception of modern nation states as threatened by migration is evocatively addressed by Kuster, who asks us "What more is holey [transpierced] space than that of the transnational connections and routes of migration which do not dissolve or attack the state-entity, but rather churn through it? Hole by hole, migration has bored corridors and tunnels under the seas that are supposed to separate continents" (2018, p.216).[6] And yet, "churning through" in resistance relates in my mind not just to migration, but also to one of the propellants of that migration: Robert J.C. Young's concept of dynamic postcolonial remains, "the ongoing life of residues, living remains, lingering legacies" (2012, p.21). While these remains "move" less obviously and less "actually", so to speak, there is a Deleuzian intensity inherent in the residue that causes the past to churn through it and into the present. What emerges from these transpiercings is, then, "the continuing projection of past conflicts into the experience of the present, the insistent persistence of the afterimages of historical memory that drive the desire to transform the present", where the present is itself "ceaselessly transformed" by the socio-political "configurations" these remains have themselves generated in it (Young 2012, p.21). Like metallurgists, who Deleuze and Guattari (2004, p.457) suggest "kept up the mines, boring holes in European space from every direction", I contend that Sebbar's, Khelil's and Melilli's collage-assemblages mine into memory culture *and* into the configurations of the present. Both minings imply that generating new holey spaces is a "subterranean and hidden" act of resistance (Frichot 2007, p.170), "a subversion from below, [… and] a space of political intervention and interaction" (Blankenship 2002, p.8). The collages mine the "field" of the mid-Mediterranean region "from all directions" as their elements "rise" into contemporary France and Italy as nations of the Global North(ern Mediterranean).

Following Hantel, Kuster, Frichot, Blankenship, and Deleuze and Guattari themselves, holey space is thus always already transgression, boring holes into country spaces to allow for

following. Phylum, here, arguably functions as a synonym for rhizomatic assemblage, with "machinic" implying the ways in which this assemblage works (both on itself and in and on the world around it).

[5] In her PhD thesis, Mayr makes a further distinction between the possibilities afforded by holey space and those afforded by the more well-known spatial notion of the Deleuzian line of flight, linked to smooth space: "For Deleuze and Guattari, the line of flight […] is: *a line that delimits nothing, that describes no contour,* that no longer goes from one point to another but instead passes between points [...] and that is as alive as a continuous variation [....]. By virtue of its definition, a line of flight can never arrive, does not allow for a settling. Holey space, on the other hand, is a place of – at least temporary – refuge" (2010, pp.29-30).

[6] "Was ist der durchlöcherte Raum anderes als derjenige der transnationalen Verbindungen und Routen der Migration, welche die Staatlichkeit nicht auflösen oder angreifen, sondern durchwühlen? Loch für Loch hat die Migration Gänge und Stollen unter den Meeren, welche Kontinente trennen sollten, durchgebohrt."

cross-border movement, "routes" and "connections", where precisely the fragmentalization of the collage mechanisms making these holes allows the collage itself to be a statically intense "kind of rhizome, with its gaps, detours, subterranean passages, stems, openings, traits, holes, etc." (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.458). In this sense, the very "holes" themselves are the intensive memory affects that break down borders and allow for "unpredictable growth" (c.f. Hantel 2012). These collages-as-holey-space are tied to the state actors who formed the territories they tunnel in the first place – striated space being always "conjugated" into meaning with the "arborescent conjunctions" of state borders and historical "codes" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p.458) – but their intensiveness makes for "deterritorializing flows" that churn up and churn through the sea border in question in all cases.

BORING THROUGH IN ALL DIRECTIONS

Holey space is fertile for creative engagements and "material journeys", journeys that are "as intensive as they are extensive, but […] are always invented and, as such, constitute vital acts of creation" (Frichot 2007, p.176). Frichot speaks here of actual refugee journeys across space, but the subversions and sproutings of Sebbar's, Khelil's and Melilli's collages, I argue, produce just such an apparently contradictory entanglement of movement capture and meaning evasion in their productive convergences, providing for an intensive journey of multiple virtual crossings and transgressions on the spot.

Arguably the most important mode of fragmentation, both operating on (and in) and simultaneously producing borderlands, is the deterritorialization of "national" memory – also that of the present. As Zhurzhenko explains, borderlands and their "geopolitics of memory" are important for memory recovery, as well as for memory renegotiation and contestation (2011, p.65). The question Sebbar, Khelil and Melilli grapple with in their work is that of what we do with common memories shared between spaces that are now striated into different states (and have the painful past of colonialism). Explaining how collective memory is "related to territory", and how the claiming of territory in turn emanates from "sites of memory […] concretized as locations", Zhurzhenko warns against a "state-led politics of memory" (2011, pp.71-72). The fragmented, assembled, and reassembled form of the collage frustrates any notion of sites and always already destabilizes the concrete, making of it a "zone[] of ontological slippage" (Ianniciello 2018, p.3).

SEBBAR: A DISORDERLY ALPHABET OF ECHOES

Leïla Sebbar's *Voyage en Algéries autour de ma chambre: Abécédaire* (Voyage in Algerias around my room: An Alphabet Book, 2008) is the third text in her apparently personalized "Algerias" trilogy. It is preceded by a "travel notebook" and a journal, with all three linked by their cover appearance, the use of the first-person possessive in each title, as well as the pluralized "Algerias", and their own inherent "plurality" of form, as text-image-fusions of short sections clustered around a theme, a date, or a letter, and compiling collected, often material, memories, both Sebbar's own and those of family, friends and acquaintances, as well as material vestiges of the Franco-Algerian past, in short, the convergences between Algeria and France that (apparently) refract Sebbar's subject position, as the child of an Algerian father and a French mother, herself born in Algeria when it was still a part of France (see also Gueydan-Turek, 2014 and Wilson, 2018). For Alexandra Gueydan-Turek, the texts are plural at every level, the page itself functioning as a visual and textual palimpsest where "different strata" form combinations, acting on each other: "new elements are added and subtracted in the combinatory of signs that defines the narrators and these signs are reorganized at each new encounter"[7] (2014, pp.107-109). Yet, I would posit that Sebbar's

[7] "De nouveaux éléments sont ajoutés et soustraits à la combinatoire de signes qui définissent les narrateurs, et ces signes sont réorganisés à chaque nouvelle rencontre" – she later refers to this structure

"Algerian" alphabet book goes further than her previous two texts, as arguably by far the most experimental of the trilogy. In some ways, we can see this from the cover of the alphabet book itself, the background reproducing each of the words chosen to represent the alphabet (an apparent striation of form somewhat undone by the multiplicity of words for some letters and the disappearance of the representation of others, as I will explain below), while an image of Sebbar's bookshelf in her room in her Paris apartment, with its jumbled mix of referents and media is superimposed over the elements of her "alphabet", sitting prominently in the center of the cover, surrounded by the text's title.

The choice of an alphabet book as the vehicle for Sebbar's third installment of her (re)assembled, collected memories of Franco-Algerian pasts begs further investigation. In the context in which it is presented (the "Voyage in Algerias") the alphabet book is also an inherently colonial form, always already implicated in the "state apparatus", where the learning of the French language within an imported, colonial French education system was fundamental to the controversial *misson civilisatrice* (see for example Spolsky 2018).

Children's literature researcher Clare Bradford outlines how alphabet books have long functioned as entries into "cultural systems", implicated as they are in constructions of fixed cultural identity and of racial and colonial hierarchy (2011, p.275).[8] For Bradford, the alphabet book is tied up with language and identity from the beginning, and this reveals itself especially in terms of Nodelman's discussion of it as a "puzzle" that children solve by matching up text and image, where the combination resultantly generates specific associations with words, and children are drawn to follow these associations in turn, entering into the "shared" cultural meanings that these text/image fusions ultimately project: what Sonia Wilson calls their "understand[ing of] both word and image together as representations of an object in the world" (Bradford 2011, p.275; Wilson 2018, p.89). Bradford further emphasizes the importance of problematizing Nodelman's "us" thus formed, especially in terms of the way this "us" of shared cultural meaning elides the role of the alphabet book in supporting "cultural and ideological" systems that have already "normalise[d]" notions of an us and a them, namely of "who is included and who is excluded from the audiences they imply" (Bradford 2011, p.275).

However, just as leaders of freedom movements emerged from the French education system across France's colonies, so too does Bradford subsequently demonstrate how contemporary indigenous and postcolonial authors are resisting children's entries into these colonial and ideological systems in producing their own "reclaimings" of the genre as they fundamentally reshape the books themselves, and by extension the identity positions the books produce, "exploiting the possibilities of a form deeply implicated in the production and reproduction of the values of dominant cultures, […] engaged in building repertoires of knowledge, values and affect" (2011, p.275). The resistance central to the projects of the contemporary authors Bradford discusses also lies, she notes, in "demonstrating that the meanings of words derive from the ways in which they are used" (2011, p.277), and it is here that I contend that the notion of holey space becomes particularly evocative. Sebbar begins with a series of letters, to which she matches words significant for the intertwining, cross-border nexus of Franco-Algerian relations. Yet, each of her letter/word combinations functions as an intense point that is made to go on a journey of its own, akin to Deleuze and Guattari's metal catalysts that produce unpredictable paths, "lines", that criss-cross the Mediterranean in dynamic and apparently random ways, thereby fundamentally shaking up and changing the meanings of the words to which they relate, and by extension, the identities and relationships that those words may once have implied.

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as a chronotopia with topographic potential, in the mixing up of time and space on the page (Gueydan-Turek 2014, p.109). I have elsewhere described this same characteristic of Sebbar's first two *Algéries* texts as Deleuzian plateau-assemblages (Roy 2010).

[8] Sonia Wilson also references the alphabet book's role in colonialism, arguing that identity formation and the developing understanding of identifying cultural elements and selves are an inherent part of learning to read (2018, p.92).

For a condensed form that demonstrates the reshaping of alphabet books as resistance to fixed meaning emerging from the subsoil of an apparently striated space, we can turn first, briefly, to the Peruvian-Spanish artist Daniela Ortiz's *The ABC of Racist Europe* (2017).[9] Ortiz's ABC book (also exhibited in multiple European locations as a wall collage)[10] consists of letters whose illustrations – their image content – as she explains, are each compiled of a collage of racist images from actual historical European ABC books, sometimes also superimposing historical and contemporary images of resistance, as seen in the example of the letter F below (SAVVY Contemporary 2018; Burke 2018). For Harry Burke (2018), Ortiz's collages "challenge the ways in which oppressive thinking is endemic in even the earliest introductions to language and epistemology" and begin to map a "dystrophic psychogeography" which paves the way for the reshaping of "the process of subjectification itself." In her *ABC of Racist Europe*, Ortiz takes on a number of overt border contexts and institutions, succeeding in flipping the subject to underline the power relationships under which the border operates.

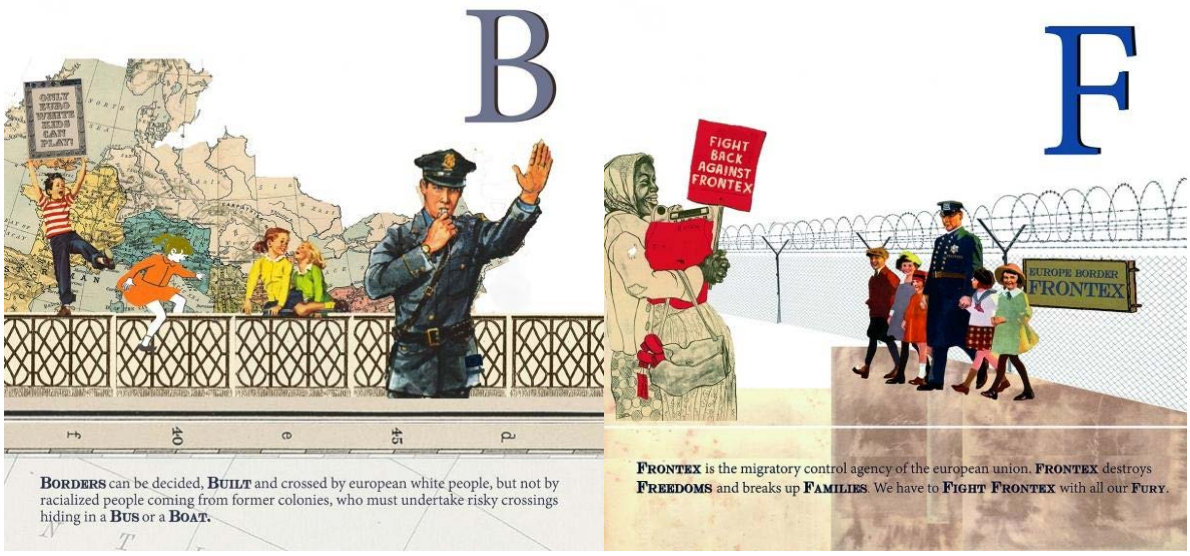

Figure 1: "B" and "F" from *The ABC of Racist Europe* by Daniela Ortiz are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Significantly for the present context, not only does Ortiz set her sights on "Border" and "Frontex", but her "M" stands for "Mediterranean", with the accompanying text: "The same MEDITERRANEAN is the sea where the white european [*sic*] MIDDLE CLASS enjoys their holidays, the same sea where more than 50,000 MIGRANT people have died or disappeared" (Ortiz 2017). In this sense, Ortiz's project uses the letters of the alphabet and the systemic cultural form of the ABC, mining the images of the past to overlay their remains with a resistance, a creative political intervention of the present. The static journey Ortiz's letters and the innovative permutations of their associated words take us on essentially rewrites, and thereby disruptively cracks the edges of Europe.

In the same way, as Wilson also identifies, Sebbar's implementation of the *abécédaire* quite clearly goes beyond "imposing order" on her compiled "mass of textual fragments, images and objects": it is demonstrably evocative of the alphabet's role not only in the development of literacy, but also in the entry into a system, "framing" the way we see and read (Wilson 2018, p.89). For

[9] Ortiz's alphabet book is available online at: https://archive.org/details/TheAbcOfRacistEurope/page/n3/mode/2up.
[10] I viewed it, for example, at SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin in October 2018.

Wilson, "to enter Sebbar's 'room' is to learn the alphabet anew", as we find ourselves in the position of the new reader, again "hav[ing] a code to crack" (Wilson 2018, p.89). I concur with Wilson that Sebbar's alphabet resists the order normally inherent in the form, and by implication, the linguistic and identitarian control seen in the theory explored above. Quoting Coats, Wilson implies the progression of the alphabet book from A to Z: "'When you get to Z, you should close the book.' Yet Sebbar's alphabet leaks letters" (Wilson 2018, p.92). It is not just that Sebbar's alphabet proliferates some letters[11] and omits others – it also "leaks" in other ways, indeed the letters actually bleed into each other like unruly ink via their image components, where some "visual" elements of the previous letter or the letter to follow are to be found in the page space of the next or the previous letter (e.g. pp.74-75 where "Conquête" (Conquest) actually begins in "Colon" (Colonial, noun) via one of its images, or pp.12-13, where there is an image for "Abécédaire" (Alphabet Book) in "Abeille" (Bee; Sebbar 2008).

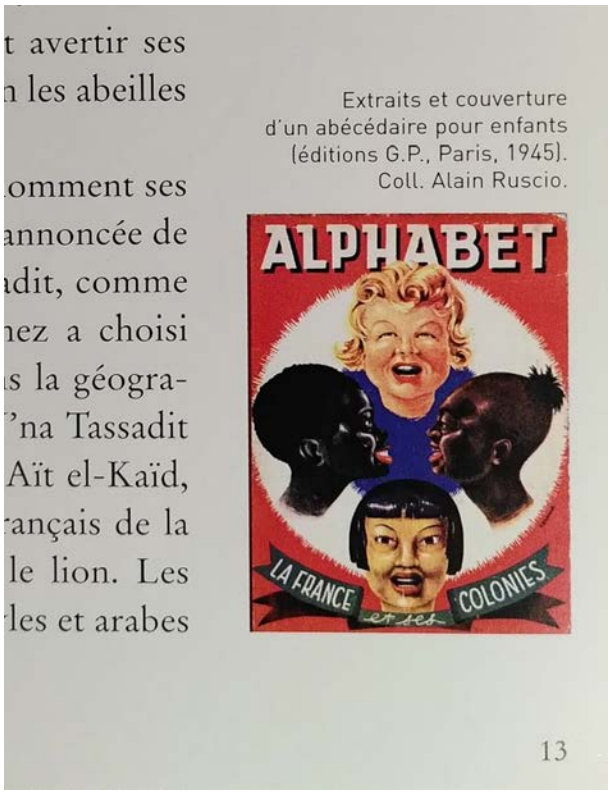

Figure 2: Alphabet book cover image within the entry "Abeille" (*Voyage en Algéries autour de ma chambre*)
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Both Sebbar's prolog and her approach to her first entry demonstrate that she knows what is at stake in her adoption and shake-up of the form of the alphabet book: she speaks of "searching, then searching again, with neither a method nor a system, carried by the whim and the random chance of the immobile voyage" ("Chercher, rechercher sans méthode ni système, portée par le caprice et le hasard du voyage immobile") and of weaving "an affective link with Algeria" ("un lien affectif avec l'Algérie"; Sebbar, 2008, p.10). This "routes not roots", rhizomatic impetus that is reminiscent of Glissant's call to morph the national root into a rhizome, an inherently non-static flow, and of Mayr, quoted above, for whom following this (metal) flow inherently transforms the "given", is continued in the choice of illustrative entries: "the companions, female and male, of

[11] Interestingly, Christiane Chaulet-Achour and Brigitte Riéra's *Abécédaire insolite des francophonies* (A Strange Alphabet Book of Francospheres, 2012) resists form and "leaks" in similar ways, with multiple entries for some letters.

my Algerian routes. All those who live in my French room colonized by my Algerias and an imaginary Orient, in the affective disorder of the arbitrary alphabetical order I impose […] It is not the scholarly and rational collection that moves me, but the variations on the motif, to infinity"[12] (Sebbar 2008, p.11). The motifs, variated and pushed to infinity, proliferated, are themselves very often already imbued with a sense of travel, however that sense may be inflected: bees, (shared) animals – especially birds – and trees, the banlieue (suburbs, often translated as migrant housing spaces), cinema, colonials, the author Rimbaud, stamps, dreams, voices, voyages, and the names of a host of Algerian cities, towns and villages, experienced by a variety of travelers, letter writers, and artists, whose writings and art are now situated in France. Similarly, the modes of storytelling Sebbar references in her prolog seem significant here, especially those of tattooing, weaving, and mural painting, all modes that challenge the boundaries of individual entities, and bleed or collect stories. The multiple reference to "affect" (a term also used by Bradford above in describing the indigenous and postcolonial rewriting of the alphabet book), and especially to "affective *dis*order", in the volume's prolog suggests the impact Sebbar's infinite series pile-up of voyaging motifs could have on the reader:

> I fabricate, in this prosaic and lettered game of echoes, baroque associations, strange correspondences (color, gaze, sound, smell, gestures) a great living body from the Orient (Algeria, metaphor of the Orient) to the Occident (France, metaphor of the Occident), an unheard of tribe, enigmatic, mythological, a choral song to accompany my father.[13] (Sebbar 2008, p.11)

A number of the word choices in this prolog extract seem significant in light of the text's overarching, mobile system: "baroque", in the Deleuzian sense, suggests a unified form that folds in on itself rather than having an inside or an outside (Deleuze 1992), while "insolite" (which I have translated here as "strange", for me, implying outside the given order), is the same word as that used by Chaulet-Achour and Riéra (2012) in the title of their postcolonial alphabet book. The term "chant choral" also has Deleuzian inflections (as a returning refrain, echoes that transform the present), while "tribu", or tribe, is estranged via the dual meaning of "inédit" as both "unheard of" and "unpublished", depriving the concept of a static territory: in neither sense can this tribe be "known" or pinned down. All of this suggests we are confronted here with an active and continuing reshaping of memory that points towards new and possible configurations and a folding of memory into the present, and not the simple nostalgia that Sebbar's mention of her father might trick us into "seeing" at first glance.

Gueydan-Turek certainly sees Sebbar's *abécédaire* as breaking down national borders, but for her, while this is a result of the "movement" inherent in the book despite its static nature, it effects an overly "positive rewriting" of Franco-Algerian history which elides different identitarian categories and privileges a utopian "imaginary geography", an archiving, and personal and cultural rift-patching, that redraws a "mythic" Mediterranean community (2014, pp.110-111). Of the trilogy, it is especially the *abécédaire* that shapes this "mythic" community, argues Gueydan-Turek, in its marking as "a great 'living body' or living body OF WORK" ("un 'grand corps vivant' ou corpUs vivant") that joins together East and West, and in its refusal to "commentate" or "guide", which problematically enables an "escape" from any idea of hierarchy between the elements that

[12] "[L]es compagnes et compagnons de mes routes algériennes. Tous ceux-là qui habitant ma chambre de France colonisée par mes Algéries et un Orient imaginaire, dans le désordre affectif de l'ordre alphabétique arbitraire que j'impose […] Ce n'est pas la collection savant et rationnelle qui me touche mais les variations du motif, à l'infini."

[13] "[J]e fabrique, par le jeu prosaïque et lettré des échos, associations baroques, correspondances insolites (couleur, regard, son, odeur, gestes), un grand corps vivant de l'Orient (Algérie métaphore de l'Orient) à l'Occident (France métaphore de l'Occident), une tribu inédite, énigmatique, mythologique, un chant choral qui accompagne mon père."

Sebbar has collected together on the page, whether these emanate from her own story or those of others (2014, p.111, p.113). Gueydan-Turek takes issue with the way Sebbar produces transcultural memory and breaks down borders of "history, identity and geography": for her, the seamless transfer between Sebbar's material choices, such as sexualized colonial postcards, functions as a problematic equalizer, as these Orientalist images (and thus power constructions) that Sebbar is apparently trying to critique are simultaneously accompanied by a descent into "nostalgia" that Gueydan-Turek reads from the autobiographical text collected in the same entries, such that she ultimately accuses Sebbar of having "archive fever" (2014, p.114, pp.116-119).

I do not dispute the problematic nature of the materials Gueydan-Turek discusses, nor the risk she sees Sebbar as running, and yet, what she seems to miss here is that there *is* a mode of commentary and subversion in Sebbar's *abécédaire*, and that this in fact comes in the *form* of the text. The striation into a colonial alphabet book, the teaching implement of the French state, is punctuated by bleeding letter-components that escape their categories, and by the confusion generated in the matching up of text and image, or in the multiple words associated with a single letter, frustrating any specificity of word associations, any ultimate equivalence of word and object.

Figure 3: "Abécédaire" entry from *Voyage en Algéries autour de ma chambre*

Sebbar's "A" is for "Alphabet Book" ("Abécédaire"): "I love alphabet books. Letter and image […] Teacher-mother, I embroidered red, green and gold alphabet books while my sons read aloud from their schoolbooks"[14] (2008, p.12). The image collected under the same entry is of a colonial *abécédaire*, a direct reference to the colonial system, and, much like my own from Ortiz above, its letter choices do not seem insignificant. While "D" and "L" stand for the flag of the Empire and the loyalty of the colonial troops protecting its borders and "liberating it" in the Second World War, "A" and "V" show cross-border pollination in other ways, where the products of the colony make a fundamental contribution to the metropole, both practical ("alfa", derived from the Arabic in "Algeria" is a plant whose fiber provides paper, while also a homophone for the first letter of the Greek alphabet), and in the realm of taste (Sebbar 2008, p.13).

Briefly exploring the components of two of Sebbar's *abécédaire*'s longer entries takes us on similar material journeys. "Colon" ("Colonial", noun) begins with her own reflections about Hennaya, and lists a series of writers who were "colonials" and opposed the colonial system, while also noting that "Algerian-Algerian" writers were not able to express themselves openly (Sebbar 2008, pp.62-63). However, it also includes an initially random painting of Corsica by Sebbar's son (Sebbar 2008, pp.64-65), not linked until several pages later to the long extract of reminiscences of a "colon", Roger Azzopardi, "exiled" to Corsica, whose wheat-farming background explains pp.68-71's farming images and diagrams from the Berliet company of Vénissieux, near Lyon (this cereal production company, we are told in the caption, was also operative in Algeria). The "Cocotier" ("Coconut Tree") entry from the colonial *abécédaire* graces page 72 ("The **C**oconut Tree from our **C**olonies gives us **C**opra out of which we make oil"),[15] and an engraving from an early twentieth-century book entitled *Algérie*, which depicts "le vaillant zouave" ("the valiant Zouave"; Sebbar 2008, p.74), clearly precedes its section, "Conquête" ("Conquest"), which begins on the following page. The "C" entry "Colon" (one of twelve "C" entries) is thus always already implicated by and infiltrated by the notion of conquest that enabled the colonial presence, and by the colonial system implied by the alphabet book where the coconut tree provides a key colonial resource. All of these notions are further drawn together by the letter "C" into an affect-producing "montage-fabric" of cause, effect, and socio-political residue.

The "Voyage" entry (one of two "Vs", and the second-to-last entry) is loosely (and significantly) structured around the travels of a group of teachers under colonial patronage and on an Algerian "study" and "discovery" trip in 1902, for the purposes of the "regeneration" of the colonies via education. Lines emerging from the fabric of this entry's structure include what the teachers wrote about, their obligatory tourist moments, and the places they visited. This first thread critically interweaves the teachers' reflections with those of famous travel writers like Maupassant, Fromentin and Daudet, for example on the notion of irreducible difference between Arab and European, on the (lack of) depiction of Algerian women before the time of the female travelers and colonizers, barring Fromentin's "Haoua", who welcomed the narrator-traveler to her home and whose "tribe" had allied with the French, and by implication on Jewish women, whose spaces and images are depicted in two paintings within this entry, now part of the Bibliothèque Nationale's collection (Sebbar 2008, pp.191-193, p.195). The teachers' obligatory tourist stops are connected with an image of racially-stereotyped colonial figurines in a photograph also on that page (Sebbar 2008, p.191), that echoes the colonial *abécédaire*, traveling "tourist" objects, and with the teachers' own collection of "scenes and types"-style photographs and descriptions, for example in their valorization (and that of other travelers) of the Kabyle people, and in the racist descriptions of black servants in the narratives of Fromentin, Maupassant and the teachers that have their echoes in traces of colonial advertising in the Paris of 2008 (Sebbar 2008, p.194, pp.196-197, pp.199-200). The text takes us on a journey around colonial schools with the traveling teachers, a story of state

[14] "J'aime les abécédaires. Lettre et image […] Mère institutrice, j'ai brodé des abécédaires rouge, vert et or, cependant que mes fils lisaient à voix haute les livres de l'école."
[15] "Le **C**ocotier de nos **C**olonies donne le **C**oprah dont on fait de l'huile."

institutions, and of Algerian teachers as "auxiliaries" of colonization and "civilization", collecting images, impressions, and products that the teachers saw and/or consumed on their voyage, such as perfumes and oranges (Blida) and the colonial bust of Pélissier who asphyxiated whole tribes in caves (Sebbar 2008, pp.197-198). Simultaneously, this journeying is interwoven with a string of photos of "Madame B." returning to visit her former Algerian home, twenty years after independence, a painting of the desert by Sebbar's son, and an engraving depicting an odalisque and her servant from a book on "French Africa" (Sebbar 2008, pp. 197-202). The entry exudes the conclusion that these teachers were fully implicated in the colonial project, but ends on a note about the left-wing teachers of the 1950s and 1960s who supported Algerian independence (Sebbar 2008, p.203). Indeed, while the teachers' voyage gives an obvious "state" direction and striation to the entry, "Voyage" is shot through with moments of resistance that the text encourages us to follow beyond, outside the parameters of the teachers' narrative: for example, the Kabyle reference includes a mention of their resistance to colonial rule and the deportation of the Mokrani, as well as the imprisonment and burial (without tombstones) of other "insurgents" on the Île Sainte-Marguerite, and there are many textual traces of colonial resistance in the locations of the schools (e.g. Sebbar 2008, p.196). The holey space of this "Voyage" throws up some evocative "lumps and bumps" of memory.

As we have seen in the examples from Sebbar's *abécédaire*, if the alphabet references are always already mixed up we cannot extract a coherent narrative from each entry, and cannot generate the specific associations we are "meant to." As Bradford notes and Ortiz demonstrates above, meanings are derived from the way the words are used, and in this alphabet book, the order of the colonial language is always already shaken up, the supposed monolithic schooling instrument shoots off in all directions, and each letter-entry becomes a holey space, a mixture of the striated and the smooth, an intense "here and there" at once. The materials of the montage-fabric of Sebbar's text have their own say, and allow for a critique of colonial residue to rise from apparently nostalgic subsoil and transpierce the Mediterranean.

KHELIL: PUNCTUM AND POINT OF VIEW

The work of Tunisian artist Farah Khelil, who has exhibited extensively on both sides of the Mediterranean, stands out in particular for her striking, multiplied use of holes and points that "bore through" her materials both literally and figuratively, and her thought about direction and perception that complements this: indeed, when asked to sum up her work in a single idea she has chosen to describe it as a "waypoint" (Scarborough 2018). Khelil's points and holes are employed to challenge perspective, and in her PhD thesis she explains how her exhibitions themselves function as a sort of collage, using the example of *Point de vue, point d'écoute* (Viewpoint, Listening-Point) and the modular construction of the space of the gallery ("une construction modulaire de l'espace de la galerie"), which enables her to put different elements in relation with each other, together, so they come to "fit" in different ways, as in a pictorial system (2014, p.147). Khelil writes that in her gallery spaces, her emphasis is on connecting disparate elements ("des éléments disparates") and making of them a "virtual" or a "real" collection, in the Deleuzian sense, where the real, or actual, is what is present in the gallery and the virtual is the connections that are made beyond the gallery space, and the sensations the space and its connections produce (2014, p.152). In designating her galleries virtual or real gathering "places – or non-place[s]" ("des lieux – ou non-lieu[x]"; 2014, p.152), Khelil seems to suggest that her modular interventions hold the potential of creating a holey space out of the gallery itself.[16]

[16] I saw Khelil's work, including extracts from *Point de vue, point d'écoute* (Viewpoint, Listening-Point), in this format at her solo exhibition *Transduction* at the Mamia Bretesche Gallery (Paris) and at the group exhibition *Safra* at NEF de la Halle Roublot, (Fontenay-sous-Bois) in March 2016. The title for the exhibition *Safra* was chosen as it denotes a voyage in Arabic – a deliberate singular, because everyone has their own voyage (Souad Mani in fsbFontaneyenscenes 2016).

In her own PhD thesis, Khelil reflects on the etymology of the word "punctum", quoting Barthes: "*punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole – and also a cast of the dice. A photograph's *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" (2014, p.240).[17] She also extends Barthes' definition to encompass a tiny portion of time (and of space), different modes of perspective, and a punctuation mark that we can assume calls the viewed into question, an intense point, in the Deleuzian sense, pierced into our perspective and taking it on a line of flight, out of her work(s) of art (Khelil 2014, p.240).

Like punctum, "point of view" is one of Khelil's central concerns, and one of the keywords of her thesis (2014, p.400). For her, it references the idea of the mediated gaze, and the notion that whether this is optical, political or personal, it is never objective, and indeed rests on opinions and judgments: "Point of view is also the expression of an opinion on a subject, a position-taking, a posture, a choice or a vision that's given. It's also what we are given to see, what is in our field of vision", for what is visible to us cannot be "detached", writes Khelil, from our subject position in the world, "[the notion of a point of view] is in some way the direction we navigate in, the point on a line of the horizon" (2014, p.17, pp.121-122).[18] And yet, referencing Deleuze, Khelil also reminds us that lines and points are never static and point of view is "by definition dynamic" ("par définition dynamique"), and enables a work to act as a guide, like the metallurgist, guiding form from our perspective that pushes it beyond our subject position (2014, p.122, p.371).

Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I & II)

Khelil's works *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I & II)* were exhibited together in her solo exhibition Punctum at the Galerie Mille-Feuilles in Tunis in 2013. *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I)* is formed of a series of twenty canvases, painted over in white, the whited-out images consisting of boldly-colored touristic depictions of Tunisia painted by local artisans (Khelil 2018). The white paint "effaces" typical stereotypes of Tunisia, re-producing, as Cécile Bourne-Farrell puts it, "the perspective-settings known by all" ("les mises en perspectives connues de tous"), precisely by escaping representation of them (Bourne-Farrell in Punctum 2013), and then by marking circles of vision that demonstrate how our perception is shaped, all the while preventing us from seeing "the full picture."

The "whiting-out" effectuated in *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I)* echoes the idea of smooth space, a space and a perception at once that cannot be territorialized, as discussed above. It also echoes similar moments in the work of Franco-Algerian artist, Zineb Sedira, for example, or Moroccan writer Abdelkébir Khatibi, both of whom use white-outs to destabilize their work, and to prompt revisitings and reshapings of what lies behind (Roy 2009, p.276, p.278). Khelil herself writes

> The solid color of the white paint, often perceived by the viewer as a paper collage, simultaneously veils and reveals the original scene so as to better sound it out […,] letting the elusive edges escape. This white hiding-place sets itself up as a visualization mechanism. Like a blind spot in the scene's display, it resists and thwarts perspective. Meaning is only ever produced at the edges. (2018)[19]

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[17] Khelil quotes from Barthes' original French, I adopt here the 1981 Howard translation (Barthes 1981, p.27).

[18] "Le point de vue est aussi l'expression d'une opinion sur un sujet, une prise de position, une posture, un choix ou une vision donnée. C'est aussi, ce qui nous est donné à voir, ce qui est dans notre champ de vision. [… La notion de point de vue] est en quelque sorte la direction vers laquelle on navigue, le point sur une ligne d'horizon."

[19] "L'aplat de peinture blanche, souvent perçu par le spectateur comme un collage de papier, voile et dévoile à la fois le paysage source comme pour mieux l'ausculter […,] laissant échapper les limites de l'insaisissable. Ce cache blanc se place comme un dispositif de visualisation. Comme un site aveugle, met en vue le paysage, il y résiste et déjoue la perspective. Le sens n'a jamais lieu qu'à la limite."

Khelil seems to suggest here that it is only by "sounding out", and thus following the holes in the screen (the metal in the rock, the meaning at the edges), letting them envelop us like a soundscape, that we can come to understand how our perspective is striated by stereotype, and how we might begin to break down the borders of perception to revisit these tourist-marked spaces and see them for what they might become, or how they could be different, rather than for what we expect them to be.

Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés II), also exhibited at Punctum, is formed from a series (or, as Bourne-Farrell would say, "archive"; Punctum 2013) of postcards of the past and present, bought by the artist in both Tunisia and in Paris, but generally (on their downturned fronts) depicting the Maghreb. However, Khelil displays not the front of these postcards, but their backs, leaving visible the messages written on them, "intimate correspondences, as well as stamps of the era" ("des correspondances intimes ainsi que des timbres d'époques"; Bourne-Farrell in Punctum 2013). The postcards, "points of view and of correspondence" ("points de vue et de correspondances"; Hedi Khelil in Punctum 2013), traveling touristic elements, are further marked where the artist cuts out their main shapes (in the examples in Figure 5 below, camels, a traditional building, a vessel). These shapes become empty holes, that again signal the escape from (stereotypical) representation. In Khelil's own artist's statement on her work, she writes:

> By arranging the cards in a display case to show these fragments of writing, I mask the often stereotypical photographic content, cutting out the outlines of figures that allow [this content] to reduce a city to its clichés [also "camera shots" in French, KR], denying the knowledge of a place through the superficial visiting of its tourist attractions. (Khelil 2018)[20]

Knowledge is power is representation, and Khelil's comments here only reinforce Young's ideas about the power relations and residue of the past that have "remained" in the socio-political configurations of the present – here, who can travel as a tourist and collect and form perceptions that mark "other" spaces (Young 2012, p.21).

Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I & II), in their employment of and subversion of tourist objects (postcards, souvenirs) rest on the notion of (cross-Mediterranean) tourism, "one of the most prominent forms of border-crossing", that is, according to Border Studies theorists Alexander Diener and Joshua Hagen, all too often discounted (2012, 98). The tourist, always already an "imposter", is undercut for their "partial and absent-minded observation of the real" ("l'observation partielle et distraite du reel"), and the artist seeks to highlight this very imposture with "subtraction", "collection" and "indexing" ("des gestes de soustraction, de recouvrement et d'indexation"; Verhaeghe 2018, 49). According to Antoine Lefebvre, perforation *creates* these viewpoints and listening-points for Khelil because it pierces "the real" ("le reel"), exposing the way we see (and societies see) the world around us, and thereby enabling Khelil to highlight what has been invisible, the virtual that exists in her gallery installations (Lefebvre in Punctum 2013). Khelil's (re)shaping of "the perceptible in absence" ("le sensible dans l'absence") is effected through the "overturning", "redistribution" and "multiplication" of codes "to create new significations" ("pour créer de nouvelles significations"; Lefebvre 2013). The collector of postcards and tourist images, the artist, recomposes and reinstalls these in exhibitions, fundamentally changing their "sense", both by putting them into contact with each other and by perforating them. With her white-outs and face-down, perforated postcards, Khelil hinders representation, building a landscape that is difficult for the tourist to see[21] and mined through and through, more than an "interpretation of

[20] "Inciser les contours des silhouettes lui permet de réduire une ville à ses clichés, réfutant la connaissance d'un lieu par la visite superficielle de ses attractions touristiques."

[21] Diener and Hagen argue that "draconian" border crossings contribute to the "perceived distance" and excitement of the tourist experience (2012, pp.98-99).

Figure 4: *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I)*. Acrylic on canvas. Paintwork over paintings by artisans. Reproduced with the kind permission of Farah Khelil and ProLitteris

Figure 5: *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés II)*. Postcards of Tunisia from 1980-1990, manually incised. Reproduced with the kind permission of Farah Khelil and ProLitteris

the contemporary history of her country" (Bourne-Farrell in Punctum 2013), that highlights past configurations projected into the present, it takes the Tunisia of the present beyond representation.

Point d'étape

Khelil's more recent *Point d'étape* (Waypoint) series functions as something of a "best of" of her material compositions, collages and techniques. The example I employ here, *Point d'étape* #1 (2016), was featured in the *Voice of the Border* exhibition at the Selma Feriani Gallery in Sidi Bou Saïd, Tunis. This exhibition sought to express the "general feeling of estrangement" felt by Roberto Bolaño's character Oscar Amalfitano in the novel *2666*, itself set in a city of "fragments" from whose radio station the exhibition's title is taken (Cheffi 2016).

Figure 6: *Point d'étape* #1 (2016), books, documents, glass, marble, framed Fine Art photographic print 40 x 50 cm, base 100 x 70 cm. Featured in the *Voice of the Border* exhibition at the Selma Feriani Gallery. Reproduced with the kind permission of Farah Khelil and ProLitteris

"I like all media equal, and that's what I'm trying to do with the series called *Point d'étape*", says Khelil in her interview with James Scarborough (2018), later explaining that this combination of material in her *Point d'étape* installation renders the materials evocative in the relations they make and the sensations they provoke (Verhaeghe 2018, p.48). *Point d'étape* gives Khelil the ability to connect heterogeneous elements and make them "coexist", to put together "things that exist equally and separately in the world, without any value or hierarchy" (Verhaeghe 2018, p.47; Scarborough 2018). That "point d'étape" signifies "**way**point", the terminology used by navigators, seems particularly significant in view of the mixed media presented here, especially

when Khelil describes it further as a direction of thought and a "mental map" ("carte mentale"; Verhaeghe, 2018, p.47). "Waypoint" suggests a striation of the sea, but what we find in *Point d'étape* is a series of cross-Mediterranean jumbled objects – a book by Camus, another by Diderot, Khelil's own hands, images of Tunisia, perishable materials, and "points" conveyed by marbles sitting on the texts. Khelil's "navigation" is always already confused, broken down, by the way she puts together these heterogeneous elements from different points on the map and lets them work on each other, grow unpredictably in *de*territorializing flows within the space of her collage installation.

Farah Khelil's *Point de vue, point d'écoute (Clichés I & II)* and *Point d'étape*, read together, change our direction, encourage us to realign our Mediterranean waypoint(s) as we direct ourselves toward the horizon, Khelil's holes and points drawing our gaze and encouraging us to transform our perspective by collectively encountering the perception-bending materials she has collated.

MELILLI: A SCREEN PIERCED THROUGH WITH HOLES

Martina Melilli's documentary film *My Home, in Libya* (2018) weaves together the memories of her grandparents, who were born there when it was an Italian colony, and left in 1970, after Gaddafi came to power, with the Libya of the present as mediated to the filmmaker via the messages, images, and videos sent to her by the Libyan student Mahmoud, whom she engages to trace the remains and residue of her grandparents' Libyan pasts.[22] The communication with Mahmoud is rendered in the film by a chat animation, which reveals itself as filmically simulated via its old-school smileys and heart emoji-graphics. This very new film is all about borders, with many of its features motivated by one of the border's most practical nation-state-striations: while Martina's general mobility (her frequent travels to Brussels and Paris) is contrasted with Mahmoud's statement "I never go out from libya [*sic*]", the two must communicate via their mobiles because neither can get a visa to cross the Mediterranean and into their respective spaces (Melilli 2018). In light of the theme of this volume, there are many topical aspects to this film, but my present focus on holey spaces draws me to explore two of its formal aspects in particular: the collage that is in preparation throughout the film, and the "punctuation" of the screen with text messages, images, and video, that provide almost all the material for this collage, and that are themselves a result of the medial border-crossing enabled by mobile communication.

My Home, in Libya begins with a dictated "note", the subtitles appearing over a collage background of photos of Martina[23] herself, surrounding a central image of a wire-netting fence with the sea in the background, her "identity", her "selfness", immediately entered into collage with the border:

> Voice note I was born in Padova Italy in 1987 punto [period][24]
> New line
> My father was born in Tripoli comma Libya comma in 1961 punto My grandfather comma was born there too comma in 1936 punto
> New line
> Space During the years of Fascism Libya was an Italian colony punto
> New line
> Over the years I asked about this story many times punto They never talked about it punto Until now puntini puntini [dot dot dot]. (Melilli 2018)

[22] I am grateful to Martina Melilli for generously providing me access to her film during my research and writing process. I first saw the film, followed by her Q&A, at the Locarno Film Festival in August 2018.
[23] I will refer to the film's narrator and protagonist as "Martina", and to the filmmaker herself as "Melilli."
[24] The voiceover is in Italian. The film's subtitles translate the Italian "punto" with the British English "full stop", however I prefer to use the Italian term here to keep the punctuating, "pointed" tone of the original, and the fullness of its meaning (for example, spot, point, place, dot, stitch).

Punctuated by the idea of the holes in her family's story, the repeated "punto" of the voiceover chases and perforates "Italy" and "Libya", boring into the colonial past, its apparent finality hinting at a striated present of a here and a there. The final dictated and suspenseful "puntini", conversely, immediately lead into a close-up of Martina's hands sifting through photos she is cutting out for her collage, always already enmeshing the two features, the possible reading of "puntini" as "little stitches" suggesting that the collage will assemble the striated space of the sea between Italy and Libya anew. Punti and ellipses continue to mark Martina's reflections in the notes she superimposes over images of her childhood and includes in her collage, and, as here, they often create doubt, holes, gaps in knowledge, and even in any certainty about the present: "HOME WAS A PLACE, PHYSICAL, SIMPLE, CLEAR. NOW… I DON'T KNOW." (Melilli 2018). The persistent holes of memory transform and destabilize Martina's Italian present, the puntini enmesh her in her own collage.

Martina and Mahmoud's exchanges punctuate the screen: about the story behind Martina's project, the colonial past, the Gaddafi takeover, and, simultaneously, as the exchanges of two twenty-somethings, about their own lives, relationships (first dates, first kisses), studies, food, and daily life, including vicarious, cross-border mediated experiences of routine, like traveling on the metro. Mahmoud's contemporary experience of a post-revolutionary state leads his messages to idealize the Tripoli of the past, while Martina actually sounds a more critical note, demonstrating awareness of the impact of colonialism on Libyans themselves, and also felt by her grandparents as part of the "return" and reluctant reception of 35,000 Italians in 1970: stuck between two nation states, they flee the police at one end, only to receive a police reception at the other ("we were foreigners", says Martina's grandmother, "they wanted to check if we were civilised enough to live in town"; Melilli 2018). Later, Martina and Mahmoud's exchanges provide a window on the Tripoli of the present that is not reflected in the European media or in Libya's own state-sponsored memory of the present, with live narration of the "sounds of war" (Melilli 2018), the imposition of a US-French no-fly zone, and photos of bombed buildings and a man dead on the street (which appears in the nascent collage before Mahmoud "sends" it in the film, destabilizing notions of filmic time). Here, the mobile's transmission of these images, an almost literal flight out of "state blockage", produces "holey space dug into heavy police and state control" (Safouane 2017, p.1935).

From the moment that Martina first makes contact with Mahmoud, to his last message to her (see Figure 9 below), their text messages are synonymous with holes in the screen leading from Libya to Italy and vice versa. A series of three pulsating punti frequently provide a refrain as the text messages are preparing to arrive, the chat animation mimicking the mobile screen. These punti often make us wait, and they always enhance the notion that the messages are piercing space, boring through the borders the two text-writers cannot themselves cross. The text messages often appear against a black background, an indistinct background, or the sea (with the sound of the movement of the ship against the waves, its horns, etc.).

Images and videos similarly punctuate the screen, tunneling through time and space, as moving images, Kuster's montage-fabric of affect that cannot be made to stand still (2018, p.15). The sequences depicting Martina's grandparents watching Mahmoud driving around Tripoli, re-visiting the places they used to live and work through his windscreen, with the even further enhanced framing of the computer screen (see Figure 7), are particularly evocative of this spatial penetration: in at least one video, they, and we, can also hear the sounds of the city, such as the music on the radio and the call to prayer, making for a multimedial experience, a soundscape, like those of Khelil's Listening-Points, that they, and we, cannot control, and that can make our perspective take flight.

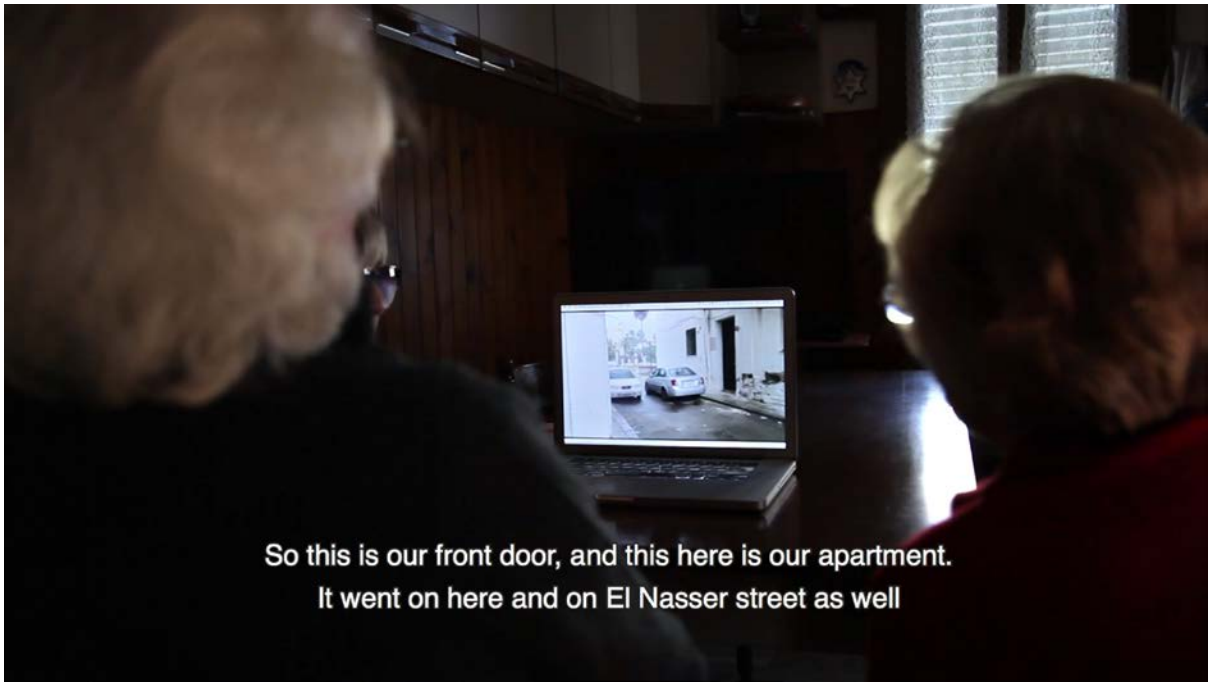

Figure 7: Still from *My Home, in Libya*. Reproduced with the kind permission of Martina Melilli

In these journeys into Tripoli via Mahmoud's phone and windscreen, Mahmoud himself is searching out the points Martina's grandfather has marked on a map, until he redraws this map with his own interpretation of these points after determining that some sites are impassable in the contemporary Libyan situation (one is a militia base, for example). The map has changed – and indeed it seems no coincidence that everyone is carrying maps, making, and re-making them, as they guide this journey into the past and present, and points in the map become deterritorializing lines of the collage-assemblage. Also making their way into the collage (reminiscent of Sebbar's *abécédaire*, and similarly mobile in meaning) are photos of the cross-border plants, animals and objects that appear in the film's frame as Martina's grandparents narrate their memories of Tripoli and of their reluctant journey "back", their supposed "repatriation" by the Italian state: cacti, the African parrot (returning repeatedly as refrain), the few souvenirs, in the truest sense of the word, that they managed to bring with them, a brass coffee set, stuffed toy camels, sand, etc. As in Khelil's *point d'étape*, these heterogenous elements are caused to come together and "consolidate into a novel entity" (DeLanda 1997).

Martina's words "I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PUT PIECES TOGETHER FOR ALL MY LIFE, AND IT TURNED OUT BEING MY WORK." (Melilli 2018) – and again, this projected handwritten statement ends with a punto that intensifies this expression of her fragmented identity – are superimposed over a shot of her sitting on the floor of her warehouse art space cutting out pieces for the partly-formed collage on the wall behind her. The generation of this collage is a constant process in the film, indeed, the film is punctuated with the putting together of the collage, an unpredictably growing entity, that, because of the filmic medium, moves, is superimposed and has other scenes superimposed on it. In this vein, in addition to the collage components mentioned above, a major (moving) element of this collage is the sea, as it moves from behind the frame of the camera or video to a momentarily static state within the projected collage, before returning to the camera's live focus. There is much framing of the sea from the windows of boats – first, in the grainy home-video footage of the grandparents' journey "back", voiced over, and thus marked up with the sea's striation by the state(s): their memories of leaving the house, giving up the keys, the watching police, and spliced with official footage of the reception at the quay in Naples, with its flag waving. Subsequently, the framing, or "forming" is produced on Martina's voyage to Sicily to attempt to overcome precisely this striation of the sea, and get as physically close to Mahmoud as

possible – the sea of her images looks smooth, as if it might join the two spaces, yet, as we have seen above, it is always already spliced with the sea of her grandparents' policed boat.

The sea of Melilli's film is thus a holey space "par excellence." It enables Mahmoud's narrative to "rise from the subsoil" and challenge the Italian radio's negative depiction of cross-Mediterranean migration (that we hear as background audio over visuals of the grandparents' house in the film), as that of men leaving women and children behind. The visuals, multiple distressing images of dead children on the beach, that Mahmoud subsequently sends, and that shoot onto the black screen, repeatedly punctuate it, accompanied by a sound simulating the arrival of a mobile message, produce Blankenship's holey space as a space of "political interaction and intervention", a space further pierced with Mahmoud's texted words "Dead in sea they going to Italy" and "we found them" (Blankenship 2002, p.8; Melilli 2018). Yet the sea also enforces state boundaries by implication. While Martina and Mahmoud can send images of and from both sides of the sea (she from Sicily, he from Tripoli), and while, as the film draws to a close, their shared videos and films show them moving closer to this apparently-shared sea, the final view of the sea from the point where Martina is told she would almost have been able to see Mahmoud ultimately fades to a shot of the completed collage superimposed with the residual traces of that previous shot of the sea and the note "BUT IT'S ALL SEA." (Melilli 2018).

These final words from Martina and their accompanying "punto" do not seem innocent. The collage bores holes in space and shares past and present in a multitude of ways (the protagonists' exchanges, the mix of public and private materials, the objects it collects) but it is always already marked by the protagonists' inability to cross this particular sea border in any legal, state-approved way. Both this penultimate layered shot of the collage and the sea, and the film's actual final shot of a text message from Mahmoud that is never delivered, and remains as three pulsating punti on the screen while the background music begins to punctuate the silence, leave us, the film, and all that is shared on the sea, in a masterful state of disruptive suspense that leaks the politics of past and present. The holey space of Melilli's sea is ambiguously both striated and susceptible to boring through.

Figure 8: Still from *My Home, in Libya*. Reproduced with the kind permission of Martina Melilli

Figure 9: Still from *My Home, in Libya*. Reproduced with the kind permission of Martina Melilli

CONCLUSION: CONTACT ZONES AND MEMORY FOLDS

To briefly conclude this unpredictably growing piece on holey space in the works of Sebbar, Khelil and Melilli, it perhaps suffices to say that, as we have seen, the dynamics set in motion by these three practitioners serve us up creative cross-Mediterranean spaces that are "bored through" in every direction with holes, and, resultantly, lumpy and bumpy with the residue of the socio-political configurations of European memory culture of the past and of its resurgent implications in the present. Sebbar's, Khelil's and Melilli's collages, whatever form they may take, function as "concrete assemblages infused with incorporeal affects" (Hantel 2012), and they share flows of subversion and resistance in the dynamics of their gaps and detours, that are all in some way critiquing (post)colonial residues, while also sidestepping their simple representation. The affective *dis*order of Sebbar's alphabet book, the new "forms" of perception that Khelil's holes force us to follow, Melilli's layered sea, all of these bring Young's (2012) "ongoing life of residues" from the subsoil to the surface, while refusing to be "captured" by them, in other words to conform to them, beyond highlighting, and thereby implicitly subversively reshaping their presence. The self-generating fabric matter of image and text that these practitioners draw on takes us on material journeys through productive cracks in North-South Mediterranean borders mined in every direction.

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BIOGRAPHY

Kate Roy is an Adjunct Professor in Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Franklin University Switzerland. She holds a PhD in German and French Studies from the University of Manchester. Titled "Cartographies of Identity", her thesis focused in part on the concept of borders in literature

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Challenging State-Centered Geopolitics with Migrant Narratives: Reflections on a Moroccan Conversation

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ABSTRACT
This contribution is the outcome of several conversations I personally had with migrants and refugees in Morocco. More often than not, the current discourse around migration is one of exclusion, painting migrants as inherent threats to the security, stability, economy, and culture of their host countries. While the Westphalian state seeks to further strengthen its borders against these migrants in the hopes of fulfilling its security obligations, the narratives shared by the interviewed migrants reveal that such a traditional understanding of international politics provides only a partial picture of the currents that are shaping world politics. In recognizing the voice, agency, and experiences of migrants, I posit a different understanding of space which is dynamically altered by human decisions and movements, and by the stories of these human agents: stories of hope, stories of suffering and hardship, and stories of resilience. In other words, while individuals and non-state organizations may be hindered by states and borders, these states and borders do not stop them from acting or moving around. Instead they are able to redefine and narrate space according to their needs and priorities, even amidst legal and security obstacles. My analysis of these migrant stories, situated in North Africa and the Sahel, therefore concludes that space *does* matter, though perhaps in a manner distinct from that defined by the traditional state.

KEY WORDS
Space, Geopolitics, Voice, North Africa and the Sahel, Borders/Migration

INTRODUCTION

Space matters. That is as far as I can agree with traditional, state-centered geopolitics. My objective here is to explore how space matters for different players – other than the state – of the political and security games in North Africa and the Sahel region through the context and medium of conversations I have had with migrants and refugees in Moroccan spaces.

The field of International Relations was dominated, until very recently, by globalization and its interpretation as the reduction of space and time. Recent debates and publications have shown a return of the importance of space in general, and of geopolitics in particular.[1] My argument here is slightly different from what the literature has been bringing back, as I affirm that the traditional Westphalian political and security space, i.e., the state, which frames our understanding of international politics, provides us with only a partial picture of the currents that are shaping world politics.

The traditional Westphalian, state centered, framework speaks of "disorder" and "power vacuums" when states are weak and unable to fulfill their security obligations (Rotberg 2004). However, in fact we can argue that there is no such a thing as a "power vacuum," since someone, some group, will hold power if states cannot do so. Aside from the state, other actors are playing a key role in the increasing relevance of space.

In order to make this argument, I explore how space and power interact for different non-state actors – individuals, and more specifically migrants and refugees, as well as non-state organizations – and I also address the impact on states and supra-state actors. As I do so, I want to argue that states are not the only shapers of world politics. Instead, they have been very often reacting to the moves of other actors. As they do so, they contribute to the shaping and framing of world politics, but they are far from being the defining and determinant players in that game.

I develop these ideas in what has been referred to as the Global South, more specifically in North Africa and the Sahel. Traditionally, North Africa has been considered part of the MENA region, i.e. the Middle East *and* North Africa, whereas the Sahel is considered part of a different regional security complex. However, over the last few years, it has been increasingly the case that if scholars or policy makers want to understand what is taking place in North Africa in terms of security challenges, they should expand that "regional security framework" and include in it the Sahel. Consequently, groups like Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQMI as it is known under its French acronym, have spread havoc in Bamako (Mali), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Grand Bassam (Côte d'Ivoire). This was also until very recently the case with ISIS, this is also the case with Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria, with Shabab in parts of Somalia, and with other groups in several other regions of the world. Space and power go together, and states holding power is only one rendition – certainly a dominant one – of that relationship.

I begin with a general background before exploring how space matters for non-state actors, and discussing how states in the region have been reacting to this before I draw some conclusions on what I term migrants' "redefinitions" of space.

BACKGROUND: MIGRANTS' BORDER CROSSING IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE SAHEL – CONTEXTS AND STATE RESPONSES

The stories I present and expound upon need to be put within a broader context. This is the context of the fall of the Gadhafi[2] regime in Libya and its consequences on the whole region. But this is also the context of a violent radicalization that has been taking place in the region for far

[1] For a critical perspective on the return of geopolitics, see for instance the edited volume published by Stefano Guzzini (2012).

[2] I employ standard US transliterations of Arabic names throughout.

longer. I will start with the latter, in other words with the violent radicalization of the youth in the region.

Algeria

When, in January 1992, Algeria's military intervened and aborted the electoral process that was about to send the Islamic Salvation Front (or FIS according to its French acronym) into government, Algeria was thrown into a civil war that lasted a decade or so and during which it is estimated that between 300,000 to half a million people lost their lives (Willis 1999). These deaths were the result of the violent repression of Islamists by the regime as well as the violent reaction of these Islamists, such as the Armée Islamique du Salut or AIS, which became the military wing of the then outlawed FIS. The GIA, Groupe Islamique Armé, also born then, was one of the main and more violent Islamist groups of that period. After the end of the civil war and the defeat of the Islamists by the regime, the GIA was dissolved and some of its remnants and more radical former members created the GSPC, the French acronym of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat which, in its turn, declared allegiance to Ben Laden's Al Qaeda and renamed itself and was transformed into Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQMI according to its French acronym. It is this group and its associates and affiliates that took responsibility for the recent violent and bloody attacks against the Radisson Blue hotel in Bamako (Mali), Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) and Grand Bassam in Côte d'Ivoire, not to mention the multiple attacks in Algeria proper, such as the 2013 attack against the gas plant of Ain Amenas. In sum, a radical group, initially established in Algeria in order to tackle an Algerian situation, progressively adapted to new realities and adopted new targets and objectives. This means that radical groups are becoming not exclusively state based, but region based, and their aims are not state defined but regionally established. They are not restrained by the logic of the states and they deny this logic. These groups adapt to new situations and challenges, explore opportunities and establish new objectives.[3]

Libya and Mali

The fall of the Gadhafi regime had significant consequences not only in Libya, but also in many neighboring countries. The chaos that followed the fall of the regime resulted in a flow of weapons and money to many different groups. Some of these were criminal groups, while others had political objectives. Groups that existed before the end of the Gadhafi regime, but were relatively powerless, were fueled by the flow of money and weapons that came from Libya. AQMI, and later ISIS, even if in a far smaller proportion, took advantage of that new flow of money, weapons and manpower, as did other local groups in Mali such as Groupe autodéfense touareg Imghad et alliés (Gatia) and Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA loyalists) among many others.

A caveat is important at this stage: Mali's internal situation was unstable before the fall of the Gadhafi regime and Tuareg groups were organized and rebelled also before the fall of the Gadhafi regime in Libya (Lounnas 2019). However, the fall of the Gadhafi regime provided a favorable environment for forces and causes that already existed in Mali to prosper, and allowed what were previously weak and powerless groups to act and cause heightened tensions in the country. In Mali, the beginning of the revolt against the central government, and the French military intervention that followed it, threw the country into a deeper level of instability, and although tensions and the instability have since diminished, Mali is still unstable and the central authorities still do not tightly control all of their territory. Moreover, this state is being challenged by a local group, Al Murabitun, which has recently joined forces with AQMI, signaling that the Jihadist groups of North Africa and the Sahel are far more integrated than the states where they act.

[3] What applies in the North African context to AQMI applied until very recently – and may still apply – in the Middle Eastern context to ISIS. ISIS infiltrated Syria and Iraq, challenged both these states and other states, and also targeted states outside of the region in which it initially operated.

State Responses

In Mali as well as in Libya, Algeria and Morocco are fighting for influence. Instead of coordinating their efforts to fight what might be considered a common enemy, they compete with each other for who will hold more influence in both Mali and Libya. Although there are strong indications of close cooperation between Algerian and Moroccan intelligence agencies in fighting terrorist groups, at the same time – and this may sound contradictory – diplomats from both countries keep accusing each other of bad faith, and the land border between both is being reinforced by both countries with fences and trenches to make the crossing far more difficult, if not impossible. The dispute over the Western Sahara makes matters even more complex as both countries mistrust each other in this regard, and defend very different positions. As a matter of fact, Morocco, which controls the Western Sahara politically and militarily, claims its legitimate sovereignty on the territory based on historical reasons as well as on long existing tribal links (Cherkaoui 2008). Meanwhile, Algeria supports the independence movement in the Western Sahara, and provides it with refuge in the refugee camps in Tinduf, as well as with political support (Zoubir and Voman 1993). The dispute, which is considered as a fight between both countries for hegemony over the region, has hindered all attempts at establishing cooperation between both countries and in the wider region, and has mobilized the capabilities of both countries, and more acutely those of Morocco. The result of the dispute is that both countries mistrust each other, do not cooperate with each other, and ultimately, harm the potential of the region to establish a virtuous cycle of development, or to find positive outcomes for the stability of member states, such as in the case of Mali and Libya.

In the case of Morocco, migration and violent radical groups offer distinct and opposed alternatives. With migrants, Morocco finds itself playing the Gendarme (or Gatekeeper) of Europe, as it cooperates with the EU in general and Spain in particular in controlling the access of migrants to that country (Messari and Van der Klaauw 2010). Abuses of human rights, mistreatments, and other forms of violence form some of the tools used by Moroccan police forces to control migrants. The consequence is Morocco's poor reputation with the migrants and their families. In fighting violent radical groups, however, Morocco provides Mali, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and others with police and intelligence support, as well as with training for their Imams (or religious leaders) in order to better train them and avoid youth radicalization through extremist discourse. In a way, this represents Morocco's use of soft power in West Africa. Moreover, Morocco is itself embroiled in a constant struggle to prevent a terrorist attack on its territory. Every few weeks, cells of would-be terrorists are dismantled, weapons are found and attacks are aborted (Messari &Van der Klaauw 2010). For how long this efficiency can be maintained is a pertinent question.

In this sense, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and the Sahel are reacting to developments and actions of migrants, violent extremist groups and other traffickers rather than establishing the agenda and leading the debate. The actions of individuals and groups of non-state actors in migration, terrorism and trafficking are shaping both debates and policies, and states are merely reacting the best way they can. When we talk to people and policy makers both in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, we hear the same reasoning: before the attacks against Ouagadougou and Grand Bassam, the question was not whether attacks would happen but where and when.[4] This clearly illustrates how states are reacting more than shaping the framework within which actions are taken.

MIGRANTS CHALLENGING BORDER DIMENSIONS: MOROCCAN CASES

I begin this exploration of active migrant interaction with border spaces with two stories. These stories are not fictional. They are reports of what two individuals told me, real stories of real people.

[4] See for example the interview of the President of Senegal, Macky Sall, in the French weekly magazine *L'Express*, in which he stated that no countries of the region were safe from an eventual terrorist attack (Sall, 2016).

Although one can legitimately question the authenticity of what these individuals told me, I choose these stories because they are similar to what many other migrants have told me and many others over the last few years. Methodologically, I take the lead from an approach David Campbell spelled out some years ago. In an analysis of the work of Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado, Campbell distinguished between the work of Salgado and that of other photographers on methodological grounds. Salgado approaches the subject of his photography on a personal basis, and humanizes him or her or them (Campbell 2003, p.74). The story and eventual tragedies of war and destruction that are reported by Salgado are told through narratives made by individuals and through individual stories. According to Campbell, subjects in Salgado's pictures are almost speaking to us because the photographer makes them speak and tell their stories (Campbell 2003, p.74). This is what pushed me to go and talk to migrants in the streets of Morocco, in their informal camps and in assistance centers in order to humanize them and listen to their stories.

The Minor

The first story is that of a young boy who presented himself as being 17 (i.e., a minor). He said that his village in Northern Nigeria was attacked by Boko Haram, and all of the members of his family had been killed. He joined one of the few older survivors from the village who told him that they should flee the region. The young man added that, later, the older man told him that they should seek refuge in Europe. They were undocumented but they went from one country to another, crossing all borders illegally of course, until they reached Morocco. When I talked to him in February 2016, he had been in Morocco for eight months, and in one of his attempts, with his protector from his village, to enter Melilla, a Spanish enclave in Northern Morocco, illegally, his protector managed to make it while he did not. He had since lost contact with his protector, and was on his own. He told me he was going to keep trying to cross the border and go to Europe until he would either succeed or die. Similar stories are told by different migrants in Morocco, although not all of them are from Nigeria, as some are from Mali, others from the Central African Republic, and others from Côte d'Ivoire, to give just a few examples of countries of origin.

"The Libyan"

Story number two is of an older man who looked to be in his forties, who was referred to as "the Libyan" by all of his companions, and whom I met in May 2014. The "Libyan" was originally from the Central African Republic, and he had been living as a guest worker in Gadhafi's Libya for a number of years. After the fall of the Gadhafi regime, he lost his job and his house, and he reached the conclusion that the best solution for him was to try to make it to Europe. I also want to note that he told me that before these incidents, he had had no desire to go to Europe, since he was able to support his family back home with his job in Libya. However, after the fall of the Gadhafi regime, which he supported, Europe became his only option. After trying and failing several times to cross to Lampedusa, he decided to try his chances from Morocco. I never saw him again. He may have made it to Europe, but he may equally be back in Libya or in another Moroccan town, or, worse, he may even be dead.

I could add many similar stories, from Senegal, Mali, or even more remote places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, not to mention, obviously, stories of refugees from Syria. What these stories tell us is that space matters to migrants, and, as Sarah C. Bishop writes, the stories that these migrants tell about space "hold the power to fashion the world around [them]" (2019, p.2). In other words, space matters for them *and* they have a significant impact on the space in which they find themselves.

Challenging Border Dimensions

I want to focus here on a particular dimension that these stories illustrate very well: the dimension of borders. In general, borders in North Africa and the Sahel are easy to cross, not only for migrants, but for many others. This is proven in the case of Morocco and Algeria, where the

Moroccan-Algerian land border is officially closed, and although visas are not required, Moroccans and Algerians need to fly from one country to the other. However, both Moroccan and Algerian authorities continuously accuse each other of not cracking down on smugglers. Algeria accuses Moroccans of smuggling out drugs in oil, which is heavily subsidized in Algeria, whereas Morocco accuses Algerians of smuggling goods to Morocco from Algeria.[5] In sum, traffickers of all sorts – very likely including arms smugglers – manage to cross supposedly closed borders with ease.

In the case of migrants, borders do not protect individuals from external dangers and threats, and borders do not provide them with safe places in which they can construct their future as well as a family. The threat some of these individuals with whom I spoke were fleeing was an internal danger (be it in Northern Nigeria with Boko Haram, or in Côte d'Ivoire and in Mali with their respective civil wars, or even in the Central African Republic). The inside/outside dichotomy that is so central to the narrative of state sovereignty, with peace within and security without, does not hold for them.[6]

Moreover, borders are not a clear and stable division between us and them, safety and threat. Borders materialize under different shapes and forms, from the window at the EU consulate to the physical and impressive separation between Ceuta or Melilla on the one side and Morocco on the other. And borders keep moving: when the borders to Ceuta and Melilla and the Strait of Gibraltar and its surroundings became extremely difficult to cross, the Canary Islands became an option, and when crossing to the Canary Islands from Southern Morocco became difficult, Mauritania, Senegal and even Cape Verde became an alternative. More recently, Turkey and Libya became alternatives to enter Europe, although both options have been becoming increasingly less important, while Morocco's importance has been growing again as an important entry point to the EU (Frontex 2019). From the point of view of these migrants, it is in their own countries, on their side of the border, where the major threats reside, whereas on the other side resides the promise of opportunities for a better life. Crossing the ultimate border and reaching European territory is the final step towards reaching lasting safety.

Because of these reasons, borders do not stop migrants from moving. These individuals not only do not hold passports or even think about applying for a visa, they are also not intimidated by the existence of borders, visas and border patrols. They hitchhike, board buses when they can afford them (or are allowed to be in them, since in some countries, one needs an ID card to board a bus, which most of them do not have) or walk and keep walking, cross borders and follow their objectives.

Of course, there is a limit to this narrative of individuals not taking note of the existence of borders: all of those in Morocco I spoke with over the last couple of years feel "stuck" or even trapped in Morocco because the EU borders have eluded them. Nonetheless, they do not feel intimidated by these EU borders, and although several civil society organizations – and UN agencies – in Morocco offer the possibility to return home to those who want it, very few migrants resort to that alternative (for some, there is no "home" to return to; for others, would be a humiliating defeat; for others still, there is still the fear of letting their families down after so many sacrifices).[7]

This is despite the fact that these EU borders are where they get beaten up by the Moroccan police or the Spanish "Guardia Civil," where they get badly hurt, where they lose their friends and protectors. Thus, for them, there are two kinds of borders: the regional borders that they cross fairly easily, and those that they fail to cross, for which the EU border is the major symbol.

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[5] See for example Lounnas and Messari (2018).

[6] See Waltz (1979) for the articulation of the argument and Walker (1992) for its critique.

[7] See the following section, "Giving voice to migrants is giving voice to the silenced", for some of these voices.

GIVING VOICE TO MIGRANTS IS GIVING VOICE TO THE SILENCED

In the West, but also elsewhere, one aspect of the current debate about migration emphasizes the threat migrants represent to the security, stability, economy and culture of host countries (See for instance Buzan et. Al., 1998 and Bigo 2002). Threats are emphasized, and the necessity of protecting Europe or the US from being invaded by migrants – and sometimes, even refugees – is the priority. Discourses such as those of US and European leaders about the necessity of cracking down on migration, as well as maps, such as that of Frontex, the main European Union agency for border management, control and protection, which shows a Europe under siege by migrants and employs threatening multi-colored arrows showing the routes migrants take to reach European territory (Frontex 2019), are a good illustration of this turn of the debate. The voice heard in the debate is that of potential host countries, where those authorized to speak in the public sphere are "the governments and media that frame immigration for their audiences, rather than the [migrants] themselves" (Bishop 2019, p.5). The feeling of being invaded permeates the debate, and the necessity to protect those host countries from potential invasions provides the rationale behind the actions of the EU or US authorities.[8]

However, another narrative that allows us to look at our present in a more comprehensive way *is* possible. This is why I attempt here to give voice to the migrants and listen to them to try to understand why they engage in such dangerous journeys. In the conversations I have held with migrants over the years, I observe three types of narratives: stories of hope, stories of suffering and hardship, and stories of resilience. One single migrant can, in one conversation, present all these types of stories, but it is more often the case that different individuals present one or two types of these stories only.

Stories of Hope

Hope is one of the main incentives behind the decision to leave home and start a long journey to Europe. Migrants, who leave their families due to economic hardship, hope to reach Europe, find employment, earn a living, and be able to take care of their families back home. The example of boys being lured by human traffickers for the chance of gaining entry into prestigious European teams provides an interesting case here.[9] These traffickers ask the families for money, which the families manage to assemble. Very often, families select the fittest among them, sell what they have and make other sacrifices in order to send their boys abroad. Moreover, on the way to Europe, these migrants sometimes receive more assistance from their families. Unsurprisingly, the boys are abandoned very early onto the journey, and often as soon as they have crossed the first or second border, in order to ensure that the boys will not be able to return home.

[8] Although not framed in terms of migration, the Nineteenth Century case in both Africa and Asia, when European colonialism was translated, among other things, into wide population movements from Europe to the colonies, and to a far lesser extent, from the colonies to the lands of the colonizers, should be mentioned here. Although this type of migration was a privileged one, as European colonizers were met with very favorable conditions of integration, the individuals and their families created roots, brought habits and traditions, and learned other habits during their stay in the colonies. In a similar irony, in the case of the US, Bishop laments "[b]y what means do immigrant activists confront foundational notions that predispose many US citizens to believe that the United States is simultaneously a result of the labors and dreams of an ideal class of immigrants and the victim of a new class of unworthy and illegal job stealers who refuse to 'get in line' for citizenship?" (Bishop, 2019, p.5).

[9] This is the group of teenage boys who were lured – jointly with their families – by human traffickers who told them that they were extremely talented football players, and offered to take them to prestigious European teams to train them and help them reach their full potential and eventually become professional football players. The narratives of these teenagers are all very similar and troubling, and it is difficult to be certain that they are not made up by the boys.

In all cases, however, and not just in this specific example of these boys, families are present in migrant narratives of hope, since very often, they have supported them – both financially and emotionally – in their migration. But it is not just financial hardship that appears as a push factor in narrative of hope, there are also migrants who have fled their countries of origin fearing violent political or social repression and who simply hope to reach a safe place in which they would no longer be the target of organized violence. This group includes individuals who have fled political instability, individuals who have fled civil wars, and individuals who have fled violence perpetrated by non-state groups.

In these stories, hope is actualized when these migrants manage to settle in a place they never thought of as a country of residence, and I mean here Morocco. Morocco, which is still a significant migrant-sending country, has become over the years a transit country, and more recently, has also become a country of residence for some of these migrants. The securitization of migration was the main motivation behind the Moroccan law of 2003, which[10] was the first explicit Moroccan legal text to deal directly with migrants and migration in the country. That law considered migrants as an eminent security threat and equipped Moroccan authorities with the necessary legal tools to expulse migrants from Morocco. However, progressive changes have taken place in Morocco since then, and the year 2011 can be considered a turning point to this extent.[11] The new Moroccan constitution allowed migrants legally resident in Morocco to vote in local elections, and in 2013, the Ministry of Moroccans Abroad had added to its duties the file of migration in Morocco (MarocainsduMonde). Policies have been put in place to smoothen the integration of migrants in Morocco, mainly in terms of access to education and health, and since 2014, there have been two campaigns of regularization of foreign migrants in Morocco (MarocainsduMonde). Yet there is still a lack of a systematic integration policy for migrants in Morocco, since Moroccan authorities situate their different initiatives within the prism of humanitarian obligations and solidarity rather than in terms of rights. On issues such as housing and job access, almost no progress has been made. Moreover, and despite all this evolution, the securitization approach remains strong: makeshift migration camps are periodically surrounded by police forces and migrants are isolated and their freedom of movement hindered. Very often, these police operations result in having the belongings of migrants – such as tents, blankets and clothes – burned (Bishop 2019).

Stories of Suffering and Hardship

The second category of stories brought up by migrants who leave their families and their countries of origin speaks of fleeing difficult conditions back home. Some of these conditions are related to economic hardship, whereas others are related to political instability and lack of security in the migrants' countries of origin. A few individual migrants give both types of stories as explanation and justification for their choice to migrate.

As for economic reasons, many different reasons push individuals to leave home. On the one hand, there is poverty and economic hardship and the resulting lack of job opportunities. On the other hand, droughts which are the result not only of natural environmental cycles, as shown by the UNDP report of 2009 (UNDP 2009), but also of man-made developments – including climate change – impact poor rural communities by changing their survival economies. Migrants are selected by their families in order to go to Europe, be employed, start to make a living, and then support their families back home. In stories told by migrants, this means that many sacrifices are made by the whole family to support them in this journey. According to them, their families mobilize all their savings in order to make the trip happen, and sometimes, these families seek loans in order to support the member who is leaving for Europe. Migrants insist that these are not

[10] For a detailed discussion of this law, refer to Messari and Van der Klaauw (2010).

[11] For more details about the evolution of Morocco's policies and challenges in dealing with migrants, refer to (Mouna et. al., 2017).

irrational moves since families estimate that they will be compensated for their sacrifices once the member of the family reaches Europe and starts working. This support is not limited to the initial moment of departure, as it is extended throughout the journey. Indeed, cellphones allow contact through text messages and banking allows relatively easy and fast money transfers from one country to the other. In other words, poor families become even poorer in the hope of allowing one of their members to reach a place where they would be able to find a job and start supporting – and paying back – their families.

It is important to note here that hardship is not limited to migrants' living conditions back home. During their journey, these migrants suffer from many different kinds of violence (from both the police and other migrants), from rape,[12] as well as from verbal and moral, rights-based abuse. Indeed, they lose any reference to a place they can call home, and live in makeshift shelters, vulnerable to weather conditions, without proper food or care. Racial discrimination, both by Moroccan police and by the people around them, adds to their hardship during their journey.[13]

Stories of Resilience

Because of all of this, these migrants usually show strong resilience and keep trying to cross to Europe and to not stay in Morocco or go back home. Morocco is not an option, not only because of racism and other forms of discrimination, but also because there are no jobs in Morocco, and because they often meet Moroccans who are also trying to cross to Europe. As for going back home, and despite the best attempts of international and local organizations to provide individuals with support to go back home, very few of them come to accept that as an option. After the sacrifices they and their families made, they feel that going back home empty handed is not an option. They feel that they would be humiliated because they have disappointed the hopes their families put in them. In their narratives, death would be preferable to giving up and that is what motivates them to keep hoping and keep trying.

Indeed, following Bishop and her recent work on undocumented storytellers, it is precisely in listening to these burgeoning voices of the silenced that their "disjointed, partial" stories are able to "open up a discursive space" that forces us, and other actors to think about how the on-the-ground realities of these migrants are "constituted, reified, and remembered" (Bishop 2019, p.2).

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[12] A special category of migrants is women with babies, and in particular, babies who were born during the journey, very often as a result of unwanted sexual relations. These women very often find themselves in vulnerable positions in which sexual relations are forced upon them, both by fellow migrants and by locals, including those vested with legal authority, who are supposed to be protecting them. When these women realize they are pregnant and decide to keep the child, they find themselves in precarious conditions of pregnancy and eventually of motherhood. Because a pregnant woman is easily visible, human rights organizations very often manage to provide them with some support, but once the babies are born, these women find themselves left on their own. In their narratives, they usually mix sadness with hope. They remember the episodes of sexual violence with anxiety but they do not transfer those feelings to their babies. In their case, their hope is to be able to protect their babies and to provide them with a decent life. Although some of them have benefited from the two regularization campaigns organized by Moroccan authorities, many have not and are left on their own, begging for help in Moroccan streets. In interviews and meetings with illegal migrants in Morocco, it is constantly reported, and indeed equally possible to observe that the number of women migrants who have been giving birth during their journey to children conceived violently has been on the rise (as reported in a testimony by two of these mothers on March 2017, at Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane, Morocco).

[13] The site of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (or AMDH according to its French initials), the most independent and active human rights organization in Morocco, dedicates a special cover to human rights abuses against migrants in Morocco. See https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/country/Maroc/

DIAGNOSING WITHOUT SILENCING THE OTHER (THE MIGRANT'S VOICE)

The voice of the state from the North is still the dominant one in the debate about migration. The securitization of migration and migrants results from actions and policies followed by the states from the North. However, states from the South are, in some aspects, not very different from those from the North: states from the South cooperate closely with states from the North to stop migration by accepting several coercive measures against migration, and by playing several roles in blocking migration (both national and international). States from the South also often consider migrants as a threat to their national security, although this aspect has evolved over the last few years. In sum, not all states act in the same way, but there are far more similarities between the states from the North and those from the South than there are differences.

To diagnose the present without giving voice to the silenced would be at best an incomplete diagnosis, and most likely an incorrect one. Migrants are among the many who are silenced, or at least, whose voices are not heard. As long as our sorrow when we learn about yet another capsized boat full of illegal migrants trying to desperately make it to Europe and the many resulting deaths does not result in the acceptance of another narrative about migration and migrating, the silencing of the voices of migrants will keep resonating as an unheard but very loud cry.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

I begin my concluding remarks with a paradox: migrants in makeshift camps in the outskirts of Moroccan cities very often regroup based on their national origin. According to them, this is due to a shared language, similar references, and compatible cultural and religious practices. Football, which is one of their main distractions, also reinforces their national belonging, as they cheer for their respective national teams in different football competitions. The more the state seems to be weak and un-representative of its people, the more it bounces back and affirms its importance on the small scale, the "mask of the border" as van Houtum (2011) terms it. But again, my purpose here was not to affirm that the state is disappearing, but rather to state that it is not necessarily in the driver's seat when it comes to issues of terrorism and migration in North Africa and the Sahel.

In this paper, I have shown that while individuals and non-state organizations may be hindered by states and borders, these very states and borders do not stop them from acting or moving around within their (narrated) parameters. They are able to redefine space according to their needs and to their priorities, "fashioning the world around them" in their stories, despite the fact that they sometimes stumble on some hard-to-overcome obstacles. Yet, even then, they do not stop, as the constant tragedies of border crossing in the Mediterranean show us, and the multiple terrorist attacks throughout the region re-affirm. In sum, space matters, but not necessarily in the way traditional geopolitics defines it.

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BIOGRAPHY

Nizar Messari is Vice President for Academic Affairs at Al Akhawayn University in Morocco. His areas of expertise and research are in International Relations Theory and Critical Security Studies. More recently, he has focused on the issue of migration, and has criticized the securitization of the topic. Nizar Messari has published in several journals, among which are *Security Dialogue, Cultures & Conflits, Contexto Internacional* and *Refugee Survey Quarterly*. He is a member of the editorial board of several journals, which include *International Political Sociology* (IPS) and *Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences* (PARISS). He is also the co-author with João Pontes Nogueira of *Teoria das Relações Internacionais - Correntes e Debates* (Campus, Rio de Janeiro, 2005).

Whiplash: Shifting Positionalities and Disciplinary Cross-Fire in the Study of Borders

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ABSTRACT
How should we engage in the study of borders and what are the ethical challenges involved in the study of migration? In what follows, I discuss the tensions that academics face when trying to study borders, and I describe how a visit to a refugee camp in Lesbos, Greece exposed disciplinary fault lines that underscored the difficulties of doing collaborative and interdisciplinary work. This essay describes the whiplash that occurred when academics, humanitarian stakeholders, and asylum seekers met each other to discuss borders. In the end, it is my contention that the study of borders requires work that is participatory, transdisciplinary, and multilingual and that border work must center the experience of asylum seekers and decolonize the gaze of academics.

KEY WORDS
Border Studies, Migration, Positionality, Psychology, Interdisciplinarity

INTRODUCTION

Recently, I attended a workshop and conference on borders in Athens, Greece. This conference, hosted by the Global Liberal Arts Alliance, stemmed from an earlier conference held at Franklin University Switzerland in Lugano, Switzerland, in which academics from various fields got together for a week and discussed (and sometimes argued over) the meaning of borders.[1] In this second conference, a smaller cohort of social scientists wrangled more specifically over the utility of borders, as well as the politics and consequences concerning the mass regulation, warehousing, and processing of people who have crossed borders. In what follows, I discuss the tensions that academics face when trying to engage in the cross talk of borders, and of the ethical challenges involved in the study of migration. In particular, I will discuss the borders workshop that I attended in which we visited a number of sites at Lesbos, including a refugee camp, and discuss the dilemmas that were encountered when we study (or some would say gaze upon) others who have crossed borders. To explore these issues, this paper is organized in four parts - first, I describe the process of how academics engage in such cross talk (looking at each other) and then I detail encounters we had at a refugee camp (looking at others). Following this, I elaborate on the utility of our work as academics (looking at ourselves) and conclude with a review of issues and questions that we should consider when studying people whose lives are in transit (looking beyond).

LOOKING AT EACH OTHER

It had been a very long week. We were a small but diverse group of activists and academics, mostly hailing from the humanities and social sciences, who had all gathered together for a week at the American College of Greece for a workshop on borders. In the humanities, we had individuals representing film studies, cultural studies, geography, and literature; while in the social sciences, anthropology, communication, education, economics, environmental science, geography, international relations, political science and sociology were represented. Additionally, there were scholars from disciplines that spanned borders, such as history and women and gender studies - and then there was me.

The only psychologist in the group, and one whose discipline was squarely located in the natural sciences, I was clearly on the fringe from the onset. Psychology, unfortunately, has not contributed as much to the field of migration, despite the fact that its explicit and detailed focus on understanding behavior does indeed have much to contribute to the field (Palmary 2018). As a clinical psychologist, I was trained to pay close attention to behavior, to try to understand its antecedents and consequences. Schooled as a positivist, my training was not to inquire about the existence of things *per se*, but rather to try to faithfully describe what I observed, so that I could help provide specific and applied interventions that would lead to greater improvement and functioning. This training, with its focus on discrete units of behavior, at once set me apart from my peers who were much more focused on larger structural determinants of behavior.

Given this diversity of disciplines, how was this conference going to proceed if everyone had their own way of framing the issues? For some, the crucial questions that needed to be asked first concerned the very existence of borders themselves: *What are borders? What functions do they fulfill? And why do we need them?* On the other hand, for others like myself, the desire was not so much to discuss the *concept* of borders, but instead to discuss the *consequences* of borders. And more specifically, how do we help those who find themselves in between borders? In fact, it was not only that we all had different questions but that some of us could not even understand the very questions that others were asking or even comprehend their terms of reference. *Was this a migrant*

[1] For Ann, for helping me think about the world in fresher and newer ways. For your boundless energy and curiosity. For our budding friendship. In loving memory.

crisis or a crisis of the state? I don't know, I shrugged, and does it really matter at all? Unable to comprehend the terms used, unable to understand the utility of the questions posed, and unable to follow the discursive loops of my peers, I could feel my patience run thin. Locked in this Tower of Babel, I could see no benefit in these discussions and, indeed, saw them as digressive - and in my least charitable moments, as self-indulgent. Recently, the IRIN, a news agency for humanitarian relief, commented on the tensions that are sometimes experienced between those who are in the field versus those who study the field. At the peak of the migration waves in Europe in 2015, they remarked that "*agonising over labels and language risks overshadowing the need for more coordinated responses and a better understanding of what is driving people to embark on these journeys."* At what point do our attempts to understand hinder action?

It was as if our own disciplinary practices – borders in their own ways, if you will – were preventing us from discussing borders in the first place. Newman (2006), a geographer who has written extensively about the interdisciplinary nature of border studies, notes that, rather than increase understanding, interdisciplinarity can, in fact, make us "territorially fixed" within our own disciplines. Furthermore, "(f)or the traditionalists among border scholars….these more abstract notions of borders appear incomprehensible, written in a foreign language which the crossing of the disciplinary boundaries has not helped to alleviate" (Newman 2016, p.172). How were we ever going to talk to one another when we could not even agree on the terms we used?

I felt frustrated - not only with my colleagues, but also with myself. Why was I reacting this way? Why, as someone who was trained to listen, was I having such a hard time listening? Academia, of course, has its own borders which we reify by using discipline-specific jargon, methodologies and frames. Perhaps my frustration was a way of defending my own discipline's borders and masking my own disciplinary insecurity. More crucially, perhaps I did not allow myself to understand because understanding would mean that I would have to reconceptualize how I thought of borders. Borders, as I understood them, were real, if at times unfortunate realities. But what if, rather than automatically accepting borders as stable realities, I allowed myself to rethink the necessity of borders? What if I could think beyond borders? Furthermore, would reconsidering the utility and function of borders mandate reconfiguring my own discipline's response to this crisis? Where and who, in fact, should the analytical focus be on when we study migration? (Saharso 2019). In other words, perhaps the words we use to describe the mass outflow of people really did (and still continues to) matter, because when we shift from describing it as a *crisis of refugees* to a *crisis of government*, a different set of responses is needed to ease human suffering.

Thinking like this literally hurt my head, so I was quite relieved when, at the end of the week there was a change in venue. Following our week in Athens, we were scheduled to travel to Lesbos to visit a refugee camp. This visit, we were told, would be an opportunity for us to see for ourselves the reality of the issues we were discussing. At the time, I had thought that such a site visit would, to use my peers' lingo, "disrupt" their own academic understanding of borders - so that they would finally understand how the true brutality of these systems mandated quick and efficient responses, *not* long mediated discussions on semantics. And so, I was quite willing to go to a site of such discomfort, to view the suffering of others, in order to validate my own disciplinary perspective. Although I was relieved that we would stop talking and (hopefully) start doing something, I was also uneasy because this would not be my first time visiting people caught in between borders.

A few years prior, at the very beginning of the exodus from Syria, I had interviewed parents and children who had fled from Syria to relocate to neighboring Jordan in the wake of the Syrian war (IMC 2014). The interview experience had been difficult, not only because of the scale of trauma I witnessed, but because of the level of intimate contact I was given with people who had experienced so much disruption: "*I was just like you*" I remember one father told me "*I had a nice house and a pool and after work, I would rush to take my children to after school activities. Now I live in one room with my four children and my daughter cries all the time because she wants to go back. But there is no Syria to go back to because there is no Syria, so what do I tell her now?*" These were my most haunting experiences –

the times when parents made attempts to break the walls or borders that separated them from me by invoking our shared experiences as caregivers. *Do not look away because I am just like you,* they said. Carling, Erdal, & Ezzati (2014) note how migration researchers often reflect on their own positionality by assuming, quite inaccurately, that ethno-national differences between researcher and migrant will always dictate insider-outsider perspectives. However, positionalities are shaped by context and can shift during contact (Ryan 2015). And, in fact, these changes in positionality can often be requested, or demanded, by the very people we hope to understand.

Still, in truth, this father and I were not completely similar. I was as an American observer, who had the privilege to come and go from the camp with ease, while he did not. Hence, while we shared the category of caregiver, I also held a number of other superordinate categories (as a researcher, as an American) that marked me as different and gave me more freedom. I often experienced this same tension when I first began doing psychotherapy as an intern in the U.S. Ohio prison system. I can recall how easily my body could come and go in between such highly regulated spaces and how the system privileged the movement for some and the immobility for others. This whiplash was even greater during the times when I went home to see my family in New York and visit my own brother in prison. During those times, and in those particular spaces, I was no longer a psychology intern observing pain but a grieving sister experiencing it. Still, I told myself, if I wanted to help others, then I needed to go see this camp because, as with those Syrian parents, as with the visits to my brother, there can be no justice done by closing your eyes.

The night before our trip to Lesbos a number of us went out to eat and wondered if there was any sense in going to bed given our early flight the next day. Our flight from Athens to Lesbos was at 5:45 in the morning, which meant we had to depart the hotel at 3:45AM. We did, of course, sleep despite claiming that we would not, and then we slept some more on the rather surprisingly crowded flight. When the migration wave hit the island in 2015, tourists had stopped coming to Lesbos and so I had assumed that this flight would be empty. As one Greek tavern owner recounted to a newspaper reporter, tourists had stopped coming to the island because "They told us they did not feel like seeing all this misery" (Valery 2019). Today, however, tourism is creeping back slowly, and more people, like us, were visiting. But unlike us, they weren't visiting to see the misery.

At Lesbos, we made a number of stops prior to visiting the camp. Our first stop was to the Observatory of Migration and Refugee Crisis. The Observatory functions, in its own words, for the "systematic and comprehensive recording of multiple dimensions of the refugee and migration crisis, both historically and on a daily basis: demographic, economic, institutional, political, religious, and cultural" (https://refugeeobservatory.aegean.gr/). In particular, this organization is interested in using bottom-up approaches that rely on observations directly obtained from migrants and first-responders. When we arrived, we were given a series of presentations about their newest projects and one, in particular, captured the attention of my group. In an effort to document the lives of migrants who were leaving the island, researchers had collected the refuse left behind by migrants to see if this material could be used to reconstruct the lives of migrants. In his book, *Land of Open Graves* (2015), the anthropologist Jason De León documents the paths of Mexican migrants who have crossed the U.S.-Mexico border through an analysis of the personal effects and objects that were left behind or discarded in their journeys across the desert. Although such a research endeavor literally and figuratively runs the risk of objectification, De León has been careful in trying to document and reconstruct the lives of those who have died so that such documentation serves as testimony and tribute.

Still, the point of how objects are used to represent the lives of the dead is an ethically fraught issue, inevitably causing questions to arise in our group about who ultimately owned these discarded objects. Was it fair to assume, my colleagues asked, that just because someone discarded an object that another person could own it? In fact, individuals may have discarded objects precisely because they wanted no one to own, much less, showcase their belongings. Similar questions were raised about the articles on the website. *Who is ultimately responsible for the construction*

of the stories that are put on the website? How are these articles framed? Who is responsible for the framing of these stories? Once again, I felt my frustration level rise at my colleagues' questions. I had thought that some of these questions were rather unkind and accusatory, especially when one considered the very little funds that this organization had received to document these events.

Still, I wondered: what were the effects of so much data gathering? Who was the data for and for what purpose was it being used? Prior to this, I had believed in the power of documenting and witnessing but at what point does observation become voyeurism? Although I left feeling grateful for the work carried out by the Observatory, I was also troubled over the hyper-collection of objects that occurred as a result of border crossings.

In her book, *Undocumented to Hyperdocumented* (2011), Assistant Professor of Education, Dr. Aurora Chang details the intensive collection of documents that she and her family amassed in an effort to become "legal". Her work poses a poignant question: *How does one acculturate without decluttering?* While migration mandates and fetishes the hoarding and collection of certain documents (e.g., passports, green cards), the journey of migration can also lead to the discarding and stripping of other documents and objects. How are our identities, our cultural selves and our sense of belonging, shaped by the hoarding and discarding of such documentation?

Afterward our visit to the Observatory, we headed for lunch at a restaurant called NAN (i.e., Bread) in Mytilene, the largest town and capital of Lesbos. NAN was the brainchild of four women who decided to create a restaurant that could serve as a place where people from different backgrounds could come together and, figuratively and literally, break bread. NAN was conceived as a way to introduce the local community to the variety of dishes from the Mediterranean and the East, which were areas where many of the refugees and migrants from Lesbos stemmed from, while also providing employment for those migrants who could not leave the island. As we were informed, though Greece was once considered a country of transit, migrants are increasingly choosing to stay within the country (Kuschminder 2018), thus creating economic pressure. This restaurant, therefore, served many unmet needs.

At NAN, everything was made from scratch. Tables, made from upcycled pallets, were constructed by refugees, and all the food was made using only local products. As their website pointed out, 'No funding has come from any government or EU grant." In short, this local business model was created *for* the community and supported *by* the community, and in this way, appeared to support the two often-stated goals of integration: socio-cultural and socio-economic immersion. Indeed, current research indicates that these types of business ventures can help all the parties involved feel more connected to each other, as they encourage cooperation and exchange in the pursuit of a mutually beneficial outcome (Stoyanov 2018). But could this type of work, founded on horizontal relationships, be implemented by academics? I was intrigued. That is, rather than gazing could we actually do something in full and equal standing with others? Could we move away from observation and charity work to other types of models that were empowering to all? Was it possible to do things differently?

After lunch, I went for a walk with a colleague. A curious, but rather predictable, thing had begun to occur during our workshop. It was not only that people from the same disciplines began to cluster with one another, but also that people from similar ethnic and racial backgrounds, began to seek each other out for company and understanding. And so while I initially felt estranged from others because of my own disciplinary background, I too found myself gravitating towards others like me. It therefore didn't strike me as completely surprising when my colleague announced during our walk - *Don't you think it's funny, that here we are, two Puerto Rican academics, studying borders in Lesbos when we, ourselves, are so far away from home?* Yes, it was funny, I said, but not completely surprising. We are attracted to borders because we, ourselves, are border subjects. As a commonwealth of the United States, Puerto Rico occupies a liminal space that leaves a number of its inhabitants – and second generation descendants, like myself – in a perpetual state of citizenship limbo. It naturally follows that on this tiny Greek island, thousands of miles away from the United States, two Puerto Rican academics would huddle close together to seek comfort and solidarity. To quote Gray "it

may be the case that the practice of migration, which necessarily involves imaginings about how things might have been (had she stayed or left), and constant encounters between migrants and non-migrants, may itself produce an everyday reflexivity" (p.944). And for us, this everyday reflexivity sprang from our shared history of colonization.

We were now ready to go to Kara Tepe, the refugee camp at Lesbos. All aboard the bus.

LOOKING AT OTHERS

Winding up dusty roads, our bus moved along the rocky path toward Kare Tepe. I knew we must have been approaching it when I began to see people walking pass our bus. "Those people are leaving the camps and going to do their shopping in town" we were told. *Oh, they can leave the camp?* I thought, *well, that must be a good sign*. But it was a long walk to the center of town and it was *extremely* hot. In fact, at the time of our visit, it was the hottest June *ever* recorded for both Europe and the world. (Climate Copernicus Change Service 2019) How hot? Well, according to the popular news site Buzzfeed it was so hot that roads in central France buckled and a bicycle in Berlin melted, leading one meteorologist in Spain to tweet: "Hell is coming" (No 2019). But I could not feel the heat, as I sat there in our air-conditioned bus, with my nose pressed against the window, watching the many women and children walking along the dirt road to do their shopping. From my seat, I could see them, but they could not see me. Masked in anonymity, this did not feel like an auspicious start.

Up past some further roads, we turned past the sign for another camp: Moria. Moria is what is known as a "hotspot". Created during the height of migration influx by the European Commission, hotspots were facilities designed to help European member states, specifically Greece and Italy, with the initial reception and processing of migrants (European Commission 2015). Within these member states, hotspots were specifically constructed on islands such as Lesbos in Greece, where migratory pressures were more intense due to their respective proximities to other countries. For example, at its closest point, Lesbos is only approximately six miles, or ten kilometers west from the eastern coast of Turkey, making it a prime site of entry for those fleeing the wars in Syria and Afghanistan and seeking entry into Europe. Indeed, in 2015, over half a million migrants traveled through Lesbos, the most in Europe at that time (Jauhiainen 2017). This proved difficult for the island to handle because, despite being the third largest island in Greece, Lesbos is rather small, consisting of only 1,600 square kilometers with only 86,000 native residents.

Hotspots were, therefore, constructed in order to relieve such migratory pressures. However, instead of decreasing this pressure, the hotspot approach led to an increase in the number of applicants seeking asylum (Papadopoulou, Maimone, Tsipura and Drakopoulou 2016), and caused greater delays in the registration of new arrivals than ever before (Scammell & Rantsiou 2015). Additionally, for many asylum seekers, the construction of these hotspots did not relieve suffering, but instead created it. (Human Rights Watch, 2016) As a recent report by the International Rescue Committee (2018) noted:

> Moria has been problematic from the outset. Currently, more than 8,500 people are crammed into a site which only has the capacity to host 3,100. 84 people are expected to share one shower. 72 people are expected to share one toilet. People must rise at four in the morning to stand in line to get food and water, which is distributed at eight. The sewage system is so overwhelmed, that raw sewage has been known to reach the mattresses where children sleep, and flows untreated into open drains and sewers.

Thus, rather than ease pressure and suffering, the construction of these particular sites caused greater pressure and pain. And so, in such a relatively short amount of time, Lesbos

transitioned from an island of leisure to an island of suffering. Still, we were told that borders at this site were being used to *protect* this population, because crime in Moria was quite high. According to news reports, and reports from NGOs such as *Médecins Sans Frontières*, Moria is rampant with sexual assaults and other forms of violence. For example, there are stories of migrants setting fires to the camp and children as young as ten attempting suicide. (MSF 2018; Nye 2018) But where does this violence stem from? Are we constructing borders to save us from violence, or does the construction of borders instigate violence? A recent study by Eleftherakos et al. (2018) found that "the main camp authorities, who are responsible for the provision of accurate information on asylum procedures, security and proper living conditions did not fulfill their protective role. On the contrary, as was repeatedly expressed by most of the participants, their behavior was more of an abusive kind." Thus, in this case, border agents did not prevent, but rather initiated violence. It is therefore these kinds of institutional abuses that contribute to violence of all kinds, ineffably impacting not just the body but one's mental health as well.

To be clear, however, Kare Tepe, is *not* Moira. Located only three miles away from Moria, Kara Tepe is a much smaller camp which functions primarily as an overflow center run by the local municipality in Lesbos. Smaller in scope, Kare Tepe (ware)houses far fewer residents than Moria, although all asylum seekers who arrive in Lesbos must first be screened at Moria before being placed at Kare Tepe. If migrants are identified as being "in high need" they are then sent to Kare Tepe, indicating Kare Tepe's primary purpose is to house those who are considered "vulnerable populations" – namely, women and children. *This camp is different*, we were told. And, indeed it was. A recent survey indicated that residents at Kara Tepe felt safer than those at Moria and that close to a majority (46%) felt that they were treated well (Jauhiainen 2017).

Structurally, the camp at Kara Tepe was also different from Moria. At Kara Tepe, as opposed to Moria, families are housed together and in shelters designed by the social entrepreneurial company BetterShelter.org, in partnership with the UNHCR and Ikea. These award-winning shelters are sturdier than typical refugee tents, with some even being air conditioned. Additionally, at Kara Tepe, families were now allowed to cook their own food rather than having to form long lines to secure food as many do in Moria. Thus, in many ways, Kara Tepe's model made attempts made to restore the privacy and autonomy of individuals at the camp. People were being housed in homes rather than tents – because, after all, the typical displaced person lives in these types of accommodations for a number of years. So why would we provide tents if these people are not going camping?

Yet, as a number of architects have noted, there are problems with even with these newly designed "homes," as cultures differ in how they believe a home should be organized. For example, in cultures where women are typically sheltered from the public eye, a home that is equipped with large windows to promote ventilation would be frowned upon (Jacobs 2017). Additionally, as one of my peers noted, if the focus of Kara Tepe was on restoring a person's dignity why was this camp located next to a garbage dump? Furthermore, if this camp was supposed to help embed and center these individuals in the local community, then why was this camp located on the outskirts of town? Architecturally and metaphorically, then, these camps belied their true intentions.

Similar to the rise of Kirkbride mental asylums of the early 20th century, with their emphasis on incarceration and regulation, refugee camps are just another iteration in the long line of punitive architecture for those who break and cross borders (Anderson 2017). Similarly, whether guided by the principles of moral treatment (as asylums were) or built for the protection of the most vulnerable, refugee camps, like asylums, are just another means of warehousing humanity. And so, while Kara Tepe is different, it is still a site of containment and suffering. Additionally, we were there at Kare Tepe to view the most vulnerable during a point in their lives when they *were* the most vulnerable - a point that made me feel even more uncomfortable once I found how different Kare Tepe really was.

After driving past Moria, we turned up to the gates of Kara Tepe. Here, we were greeted by the camp director. A large and imposing figure, dressed in green military fatigues with yellow combat boots, he welcomed us heartily to the camp. We were his *invited guests*, he told us, and put out chairs for us to sit on. He wanted to introduce us to this place and then proceeded to give us a long and rambling speech about the site… right after telling us first how much he did not like to make speeches. *What was the purpose of this place?* he asked us, *and what was it for?* Curious to hear his answer, I leaned forward in my chair, to hear him say, quite slowly: *to help establish normality for these people and to make them human again.* I then sat back fully into my chair trying to process what he just said when he continued.

A commanding figure in the fullest meaning of the word, our camp director explained how this camp is different because, indeed, it was not a camp. "*We do not use the word 'camp' here. Instead, this is a village and, in this village, people have neighborhoods."* As I was learning, the words we use matter because words can either clarify or obfuscate reality. Was this really not a camp? I wondered. Did the people housed here really believe that? Then why was it that when one of our Arabic-speaking peers spoke directly to one of the inhabitants of this site, she was told "*No, this is indeed a camp and not a village.*" Why? Because in a village, one is free. But at Kara Tepe, a camp, one is not. However, by using such language the camp director could manufacture an alternative reality for us that envisioned "his camp" and borders, in general, as benevolent and caring, *not* as physical structures that curtailed movement and reduced autonomy.

Still, while the camp director may have had his own personal reasons for using such coded language, a more urgent question for me was why were there still so many of us ready to believe him. Could it be that we too were eager to use such a term because "village", in effect, dissolved us of our own responsibilities? Consider, for example, what would have occurred if we were told that we were visiting a detention center and not a village. In such a reality, we would have had to acknowledge that we were there not only to see this site of containment but that we were, in various degrees, in tacit agreement with its function. For you see, when we visit a detention center we become observers, but when we visit a village we become guests devoid of any reporting responsibilities. In effect, by using such coded language and calling the refugee camp a village, it helped blind us to the effects of such a totalizing institution and mandated that we think differently about the function of this site and the purposes it serves.

Before this workshop, I would have considered the aforementioned discussion a clever game of semantics. And yet here at the camp, I began to see how the words we used did indeed affect the reality I perceived and how this knowledge began to reshape and reconfigure the way I envisioned the solutions provided by my own field. Case in point: Are the boats that people take to cross the sea life boats or death boats? Are we visitors or intruders? As I was to later found out that, almost two years to the day of our visit, a young Kurdish woman, who was interviewed about her experience living at Kara Tepe, replied *"I'd rather you put me in a plane and fly me back to Syria than keep me here indefinitely or take me back to Turkey. I know I'd die, but I'd rather die in my homeland than live this life without dignity"* (Hoe 2017). No amount of semantic wordplay could, therefore, disguise the effect that such restrictions in movement could have on a person.

As I sat there in this existential malaise, our enthusiastic camp director continued his speech. Unlike me, he was not full of self-doubt, but rather exuded a messianic confidence that was equal parts electrifying and terrifying. He spoke loudly and clearly, modulating not only his voice but body, and clearly illustrating that the manner in which we deliver a message can influence how much others believe in that message - even if the message is factually incorrect. To this end, we are more likely to be persuaded by speakers who use louder, rather than softer, voices (Kimble & Seidel 1991) and speakers who end their sentences with falling, rather than rising, intonations because we interpret such moves as vocal and bodily confidence and conviction (Brennan & Williams 1995; Guyer, Fabrigar, Thomas & Vaughan-Johnston 2019). Additionally, since he expressed no vulnerabilities, and since he welcomed us so warmly, how could we have any doubts

about his virtue and the virtue of this enterprise? He was there, he said repeatedly, to restore normality and give people dignity – and who could object to that?

After his speech, he took us on a tour of the village so that we could see just how clean and beautiful the village really was. However, before our tour began, we were told that while we were free to take pictures of the various facilities that were used for programming, we were asked not to take pictures of the residents in their homes. These were their homes, after all, and would we want someone coming into our home and taking pictures? I already felt ashamed, but now I was also feeling confused. Historically, NGOs have supplied the public with a steady stream of poverty porn in order to generate our concern and increase our donations. From a psychological perspective, however, we donate not only because we believe ourselves to be good people but because we wish to decrease the discomfort we feel when we view these images. However, at this camp, we were specifically asked *not* to take pictures of others in an effort to preserve the dignity of the recipients. So, did this mandate against taking photos have another function, I wondered, and was this request not to take pictures, in fact, a new way to generate funds? That is, were we now presented with images of self-sufficiency and hope because these types of images solicited more donations than images of despair? Did we donate now, not because we wished to diminish our discomfort, but because we wished to support the empowerment of good people? And did we donate now because it solidified our own world view that we are good people helping other good people? While I didn't believe it to be good practice to take pictures in any case, I did become suspicious of the way the camp director configured the mandate. However, in either case, it didn't seem to matter to others because no sooner were we told not to take pictures when someone in our group took a close up shot of a woman in her home. So much for creating safe and dignified spaces...

We rounded the camp and came across children playing in the street. Unlike the adults, many of the children wanted to come talk to us, as we seemed like a welcome diversion to their day. *See, the children laugh and play here*, *like in a village,* we were told. No, this was not a village because life here felt regimented and segregated. Additionally, if they were so happy, then why were so many of us nervous to be there? Without a common language, many of us felt lost, unable to communicate with *them.* It was as if all of those metaphorical borders that we had been talking about earlier in the week had crystallized - and there we were, all in the same space and yet separated by our positionality and accrued privileges. And to make matters worse, I not only felt alienated from them, but I felt alienated from myself.

Our tour ended once we reached the community tent. A large circular enclosure, with bench style seating, we were led to one side of the tent and asked to sit down. Here in the tent, we were able to get shade from the punishing sun, and were given refreshments. But as soon as we entered the tent an invisible border quickly arose - on the one side of the tent sat all the migrant men, the furthest away from us, followed by a small group of boys and girls who served as a buffer between our group. Ours was a small mixed group of men and women, mostly White American and Greek academics, alongside a few professors of color like myself.

It was not lost on any of my peers that the very space we were invited to sit in and connect with the migrants resembled a circus tent. As the camp director sat us down to once again speak of his little village, some of my peers could not help but dryly comment, "This circus is constantly repeated". *Here in this village, there is no them, there is no us,* he explained *because we are all people.* "Neighborhoods" in Kara Tepe were not stratified by religious affiliations but rather were purposefully integrated so that people were made (forced?) to establish kinships across different groups. Additionally, neighborhoods were intentionally named after Greek heroes so that the residents could be introduced to Greek culture. But can effective intergroup contact be established in such a coercive environment? Can integration occur without choice and power? Moreover, as one of our peers commented, insisting that everyone at the camp was the same was a form of epistemological violence that was grounded on erasing difference. To her, this concept of humanness meant that people were stripped of their identity, and for some of my peers, it appeared

as a Christian intervention meant to destabilize Muslim sectarianism. Thus, in an effort to increase group cohesion, groups were denied their own respective identities and forced to live apart from their community members, in neighborhoods named after the very people who constrained their movement. Most troubling, however, was that by enforcing a commonality based on a distilled essence (*we are all human),* the camp was operating under the presumption that these individuals were perhaps never human to begin with.

His speech, meant to evoke compassion and concern, was redolent with a benevolent racism that denied the agency and personhood of others at the camp. In his theater in the round, he consistently sought assurances from the crowd, calling on men randomly to offer their support for his enterprise. And to be sure, similar to a call and response in an apostolic church, people did give testimony, with some men even using the word "father" to describe the camp director. And so, paradoxically, while he talked about not wanting to dehumanize others, he ended up doing just that by the very way he would pick on men in the crowd to stand up and bear witness. These men, who had risked so much, were thus reduced to obedient and grateful subservients.

Condescending? Yes. Sexist? Yes. But were there still other ways to understand the camp director's behavior? That is, could it be possible to explain this person's actions and behaviors using an even wider lens that took into account his own unique circumstances? In other words, rather than only see his actions as a product of toxic masculinity, or of his domineering or authoritative personality, could we also understand it in the context of other forces as well? For example, how much of his behavior was a reaction to other pressures that he was facing from other stakeholders? To be sure he was giving a performance, but to whom was he performing and why? Who were his typical audiences? And what was he trying to convey and gain? And how often does it happen that a group of foreigners come to "visit" this "village"?

Furthermore, were there other ways to explain the behavior of the migrant men in the tent? Much of the work on refugee subjectivities has focused on their subjectification. That is, attempts to understand the inner world, experiences, and perspectives of refugees has focused on their experiences as the dejected, disenfranchised, and discriminated. But, of course, the subaltern can speak and asylum seekers, in particular, may be motivated to present a particular picture of themselves in order to get access to resources. As Häkli, Pascucci & Kallio (2017) note, we can all become attentive to our positions and refugees are no different. In this way, "refugeeness" is also a performance. However, what are the psychological consequences when subjectification becomes objectification?

Following the camp director's speech, we were then introduced to a group of young NGO volunteers, all young White American women, possibly fresh out of college, who told us about the various initiatives that their respective agencies were running at the camp. As they spoke my mind wandered. *How does this work?* I wondered, *how do these women do programming with these men?* when I then noticed, that very startlingly, that there were no migrant women in the tent. Perhaps it was the intense heat, or the intensity of the toxic masculinity that filled the space, but I felt like I was suffocating and knew that I had to leave this tent quickly. Fortunately for me, it was at this precise moment when the young group of American women announced that everyone in the tent was going to play a game together based on American trivial pursuit. And since I could not think of a more pointless and agonizing way to spend my time, I capitalized on the moment and quickly slipped out of the tent.

Once outside of the tent, I found another fellow female academic who similarly escaped just a few moments before. This professor was sitting outside the tent nursing her own baby who she had brought to the workshop. *I just needed to get out of there,* she told me as she sat beside a refugee mother who also had her child with her. And it was there, in this outdoor space, outside of the tent, that I sat and watched these two mothers interact quietly without many words. This young mother, I was told, had just given birth at the camp, and her main concern was the heat. And I sat there and marveled. What a different experience this was – sitting with these mothers outside of the tent, versus sitting inside of the tent watching all of the men perform for us. I

thought of the parents that I had met in Jordan and how we had sat together, once, many years ago, and also talked about the fate of our children.

The "visit" at Kara Tepe then ended and we all headed toward the bus.

On the bus, there had been some discussion that perhaps we could make another stop to visit Moria. Let's go and see. *Oh no, let's not*, I thought. As we approached Moria, some of us stood up in the bus to take pictures of the camp. *Why?* I wondered, *why are they taking pictures?* and I just looked away. When we finally arrived at Moria, we were turned away. I was relieved because, with our entry denied, what more would there be to see? While no justice can be done by closing your eyes, at a certain point witnessing can just become voyeurism. The rest of the ride from the camp back to the hotel was a blur. There could have been conversations or there could have been silence but I just don't remember because all I know was that I just wanted to sink deeper and deeper into my seat, and just disappear.

We arrived back at the hotel well before dinner, though that evening at the hotel was disorienting for everyone. Here we were being housed at this lavish hotel, when only miles away people were locked away in camps. What was this feeling about and what did it mean? This is whiplash, I thought, and I have felt it before. Part of the reason that many of us felt such discomfort in visiting this site is because we were, in essence, reifying the border with our visit. To cope, some of us went swimming afterwards, but I just went to sleep. It had been an early morning and I hadn't slept much the night before, but the truth be told, I think I just needed to shut down. I felt disoriented and tired. The whiplash hurt.

LOOKING AT OURSELVES

Social scientists have long written about the importance of reflexivity in our academic studies. However, with regards to migration research, only recently have there been focused discussions on the role of reflexivity in border studies. This workshop proved so powerful, not only because of the disciplinary borders encountered, but also because it forced me to think about the multiple borders that I straddle – my own positionality as an academic, as a female academic, and more specifically, my status as a professor from an immigrant background who is interested in studying borders. These multiple identities sometimes worked against each other so that I sometimes approached the border work dispassionately and sometimes felt so engulfed in the work that I had to step outside.

I, however, was not alone in my discomfort, as there was an extended discussion among our group as to whether we should have approached our visit to the refugee camp differently. For example, should we have brought items or gifts to the camp? But what were the specific needs of the camp? And what did the camp residents themselves need at this site? Additionally, there were still a number of us who believed that our visit was a "missed opportunity" for us to really know what camp life was like because, in fact, the camp director had put a limit on our participation and set the frame for our participation as well. Hence, rather than be subjected to such an orchestrated exhibit, a number of us had wanted an opportunity to talk more in depth with migrants at the camp to hear their stories.

But for whom was this a missed opportunity? Wasn't this visit, in truth, more for us than for them? More to the point, why did we feel that we should have such intimate access to the most vulnerable? In reflecting back on this experience, I believe that many of us yearned for a more personal connection with the people at the camp because we wish to reduce the guilt that came with gazing and objectifying others. Still, while it may be understandable that we wish to have more personal contact with others, we also needed to realize that seeking such intimacy could also be inherently problematic and voyeuristic.

Additionally, I believe that there can be a value in being uncomfortable, and that we should not always be trying to reduce our discomfort. As one peer noted: "If we are not feeling it then we are not in it." Moreover, when we feel this need to reduce our guilt we often do so by engaging in charity, but does engaging in charity overly simplify the solutions needed for such complex problems? Perhaps what we need to do is to come to terms with the fact that our role, as academics, is not only to witness and document, but to also engage in active collaboration – *not* in charity – with those directly affected. By engaging in more participatory and collaborative work, we can perhaps mitigate the very violence that occurs when people of unequal status encounter one another. Margaret O'Neil has written extensively on how we need to reimagine how we do migration research and has documented how simply engaging in a collaborative walk with someone, where they lead the way and document to you their path, their struggles, and triumphs, can help us understand better the lives of migrants. Walking becomes the method by which we can conduct interviews and gather data (O'Neil & Roberts 2019). In this way, we use our methods to get closer to our participants, not farther away. Using more ecologically valid methods also means that further ensure the validity of our findings. Such methods are not only more collaborative but also have the potential to be more emancipatory. What I learned from this experience is that our visit, or more accurately, our intrusion, was itself a violent encounter where effective intergroup contact could not occur because of the power differential between the groups. The group encounter was not based on equity.

Furthermore, even within our group of academics each of us came from different backgrounds, and thus viewed our own roles differently in this encounter. Namely, for those of us who had come from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, we engaged in this viewing with the understanding that, if things had been only slightly different, it could have been one of our own family members at this camp. To this point, a fellow academic and I wondered whether our own experience (and discomfort) with this trip was further moderated by our own respective backgrounds. In psychological research, one's group membership, or more specifically one's attachment to your group, affects not only what you see but how you interpret the actions of others. As a result, we interpret things differently based on how much skin (literally) we had in the game. Hence, it was not only the whiplash of being in such different spaces that proved difficult for many of us, but also the awareness and the fear that the reality we saw could have been our own if only under slightly different circumstances. Thus, while our positionality does not only depend on our ethno-national backgrounds, as my earlier experiences have noted, it is no doubt that these categories can and do shape how we view and frame the world.

The worst experience, however, was that once these specific concerns were voiced, many of us felt that the academics who expressed this were just being rude. Initially, I was chief among that group who, in the beginning, felt that we should have shown more restraint in our critiques. But as the workshop progressed, I began to wonder what is the right space to express this outrage? And, as one of my peers noted, why aren't academic spaces the space to express these issues? Rather than consider this a form of navel gazing, why couldn't we listen to these critiques and understand them for what they were meant to be – a more urgent call to arms?

LOOKING BEYOND

At the very end of our trip, one of our group leaders noted something very strange. As we were approaching the end of the visit, and we were getting ready to leave the camp, she noticed that the children in the camp were putting down the mats on the ground and shouting "Cinema! Cinema!" at *us*, as if they were watching us were a movie. Thus, we were not only viewing them, but they were viewing us as well. The circus, does indeed, constantly repeat.

As we continue to study the lives of migrants, we need to understand more about how they view their own agency. To do so we need different ways of understanding migrant stories. Rather than viewing migration as a process that occurs to migrants, migration can be

conceptualized as an active and embodied form of protest, where individuals are constantly trying to maximize their chances for survival. In this vein, migrants are not passive but are engaged, and engaged in viewing.

So what are the alternative ways that we can engage in border studies? Perhaps the first step is to investigate the very terms we use. When we say borders what do we mean? When we speak of integration what does this mean? Integration is not a one-size-fits-all approach, and indeed, a number of researchers have been critical of the very concept of integration because such policies (camps included) are there not for the benefit of the refugees but rather to produce good European subjects. The study of borders requires a closer look at such integration programs. What are the goals of these programs? Are these programs truly aimed toward empowerment? To this end, a newly proposed model of relational integration defines itself as "the process of boundary change towards more relational equality" (Klarenbeek 2019). Perhaps, rather than do away with borders, (a project which currently provokes massive political resistance), we should be engaging in border movement and transfiguration. What is needed then, is a new way to study borders that would be transdisciplinary and multilingual and would center the experience of border crossers so they could speak directly to the experience of migrating. By prioritizing the voices of those who move, and engaging in more participatory research, we can then help to decenter and perhaps even decolonize the gaze of academics.

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