BORDERLESS WORLDS FOR WHOM?
ETHICS, MORALITIES AND MOBILITIES

Edited by
Anssi Paasi, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola, Jarkko Saarinen and Kaj Zimmerbauer
The optimism heralded by the end of the Cold War and the idea of an emerging borderless world was soon shadowed by conflicts, wars, terrorism, and new border walls. Migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees have simultaneously become key political figures. Border and mobility studies are now two sides of the same coin.

The chapters of this volume reflect the changing relations between borders, bordering practices, and mobilities. They provide both theoretical insights and contextual knowledge on how borders, bordering practices, and ethical issues come together in mobilities. The chapters scrutinize how bounded (territorial) and open/networked (relational) spaces manifest in various contexts. The first section, ‘Borders in a borderless world’, raises theoretical questions. The second, ‘Politics of inclusion and exclusion’, looks at bordering practices in the context of migration. The third section, ‘Contested mobilities and encounters’, focuses on tourism, which has been an ‘accepted’ form of mobility but which has recently become an object of critique because of overtourism. Section four, ‘Borders, security, politics’, examines bordering practices and security in the EU and beyond, highlighting how the migration/border politics nexus has become a national and supra-national political challenge.

The chapters of this interdisciplinary volume contribute both conceptually and empirically to understanding contemporary bordering practices and mobilities. It is essential reading for geographers, political scientists, sociologists, and international relations scholars interested in the contemporary meanings of borders and mobilities.

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In recent years, borders have taken on an immense significance. Throughout the world they have shifted, been constructed and dismantled, and become physical barriers between socio-political ideologies. They may separate societies with very different cultures, histories, national identities or economic power, or divide people of the same ethnic or cultural identity.

As manifestations of some of the world’s key political, economic, societal and cultural issues, borders and border regions have received much academic attention over the past decade. This valuable series publishes high-quality research monographs and edited comparative volumes that deal with all aspects of border regions, both empirically and theoretically. It will appeal to scholars interested in border regions and geopolitical issues across the whole range of social sciences.

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Ethics, Moralities and Mobilities  
*Edited by Anssi Paasi, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola, Jarkko Saarinen and Kaj Zimmerbauer*

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Preface

Borders and border regions have been popular subjects and contexts in academic research, particularly in political geography, since the beginning of the 20th century. Borders, but also bordering practices, became particularly notable interdisciplinary topics during the 1990s, a period that also witnessed the rise of the borderless world thesis which echoed globalization and optimistic, neoliberal beliefs on the positive effects of expanding global markets. Shortly thereafter, a number of dramatic events led to the rapid politicization of border issues. Particularly critical were the terrorist attacks in the US on 9/11, and later in Europe and elsewhere. These events resulted in massive deliberations on security issues and concomitant investments in practices and technologies related to security, securitization, and border controls. These events also gradually gave rise to wars and conflicts, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, (right wing) nationalism and racism, and to debates on the nature of citizenship. All these themes show that the current political significance of borders can be ascribed to the fact that borders and bordering practices are mirror images of various forms of human mobility. Today, borders and mobilities are viewed as two sides of the same coin in both academic research and politics, as well as in social movements such as ‘open borders’ or ‘no borders’, which increasingly combine these two realms. In conjunction with these developments, borders and border crossings have become ever more burning political issues around the world.

The editors of this book have a long experience of working with research related to borders, border crossings, and the control of such crossings in various forms of mobilities. Borders are critical elements in the debates that challenge the understanding/view of the world as a continuum of horizontally adjacent territorial spaces. This view has been challenged by relational approaches that perceive the world as a dynamic constellation of various forms of spatialities that are constituted in and through complex social relations. This understanding also challenges the essentialist views of national, state-based identities and subjectivities, and of borders themselves. Today ever more often scholars speak about the relational and topologically connected spaces in which we live and move.

The preparation of this book has been possible due to the generous support of several funding organizations. Anssi Paasi, Jarkko Saarinen, and Kaj Zimmerbauer wish to thank the Academy of Finland and the University of Oulu for funding the
RELATE Center of Excellence (Relational and Territorial Politics of Bordering, Identities and Transnationalization, project number #307348). Anssi Paasi and Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola also wish to thank the Academy of Finland’s Strategic Research Council for financing the GLASE project, which has focused on borders and security issues (project number #303527). The editors extend their sincere thanks to all the authors for contributing to the book and for their careful responses to the requests and queries raised during the review process. We are also grateful to Routledge for accepting the book to their Border Regions series and for all the help provided by the publishing house. Particular thanks are due to Ms Ruth Anderson from Routledge for supporting editorial work and reminding us about deadlines! The editors also wish to thank Ms Ina Hourula for her careful work in formulating the final manuscript for the publisher.

Oulu, Finland, 9 August 2018
Anssi Paasi, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola, Jarkko Saarinen and Kaj Zimmerbauer
1 Introduction
Borders, ethics, and mobilities

Anssi Paasi, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola, Jarkko Saarinen, and Kaj Zimmerbauer

Introduction
‘Borderless world’, a catch phrase promoted by Ohmae (1989; 1990; 1995), became highly attractive in border studies in the 1990s. Borders and political cartographies that ‘trapped’ nation-states were, for Ohmae, elements that hindered progress, economic growth, and cooperation in the globalizing market. Even though this idea resonated, especially with the global business economy, Ohmae also saw the borderless world – a geography without borders – as a geopolitical ideal and a valuable model for post-Cold War era politicians and military leaders. He suggested that open cartographies and the ‘opening’ of nation-states would benefit both the global economy and markets. Such cartographies would challenge the dominant state-centric political territories that governments routinely mobilize to control citizens.

Supported by Castells’ (1996) ideas of network society, Ohmae’s slogan took on a life of its own after his manifesto. Currently, the idea of a borderless world is associated with many kinds of social issues and contexts (Paasi, 2019). For some, the idea represents the worst kind of idealism or naïve cosmopolitanism. However, for a number of scholars and activists the notion of ‘open borders’ or ‘no borders’ is increasingly significant, and they push the goals of freedom of movement and a borderless world much further than Ohmae suggested. Radical researchers fervently argue and struggle for a freedom of movement on political as well as economic grounds, but they also emphasize the importance of human rights, morals and ethics.

The title of this collection and introduction poses a critical question: for whom – beyond economic flows – is or can the world be borderless? Although challenging to answer in practice, this question is justified since it forces us to confront how borders and territorial spaces are organized to control mobilities – how they have become historically materialized and achieved specific meanings, and how bounded spaces transform over possibly discernible time-horizons.

Border studies has been a well-established research field for a long time, but a simultaneous expansion and a sort of fragmentation of this research area has occurred since the 1990s (Newman and Paasi, 1998; Johnson et al., 2011; Wastl-Walter, 2011; Burridge et al., 2017; Novak, 2019). It has become clear during the
last two decades or so that the significance of borders is, to a greater extent than before, rooted in the relations between borders, bordering practices, and mobilities. Such relations are multifaceted and in constant flux. Borders are not merely lines that divide state spaces from each other. Instead, they are increasingly complex technical and ideological processes and institutions that states mobilize to control all kinds of flows, not least of all mobile people. Mobile people, for their part, are extremely heterogeneous; they can be explorers, tourists, international students, highly educated specialists, guest workers, forced labour, regular and irregular migrants, asylum seekers searching for refuge, heads of states and governments, spies and diplomats, soldiers, professional athletes, traders, terrorists, and so on (Bulley, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, their statuses are often differentiated by nationality, gender, ethnicity, race, religion, linguistic capacities, and others.

As Bulley (2017) shows, the questions of hospitality/hostility and hosts/guests touch upon many kinds of mobile human beings that can have various kinds of subjectivities, roles, and identities, even simultaneously. Whereas business people, elite travellers, and prosperous tourists, for example, cross relatively soft borders regularly without difficulties, migrants and particularly asylum seekers often face the hard side of borders and bordering practices. Instead of hospitality, they frequently face hostility, prejudice, racism, and xenophobia, phenomena that seem to be the order of the day in many states around the world. Suspiciousness towards mobile people has reached a new level in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US and the later strikes in Europe. As a result, regressive, nationally toned political cartographies have emerged in the US, and in many European Union member states, such as Poland and Hungary, governing nationalistic parties have pushed for stricter migration control. In addition, in the United Kingdom nationalistic voices and purported needs to restrict and control human mobilities have characterized the Brexit process.

Tensions between various forms of mobilities and their relations to borders are the key focus in this edited book. In a situation where every year thousands of asylum seekers and migrants drown in the Mediterranean and Pacific or die trying to cross hot, dry deserts, we are forced to reconsider borders and their relations to social and ethical practices and social justice. Ethical issues also emerge from technological developments. The deployment of big data and the introduction of new border surveillance technologies, through which even the biological features and affective expressions of mobile individuals become objects of suspicion, poses fundamental ethical questions regarding human rights, privacy and identity, and the development of future societies in general (Adey, 2009; Amoore and Hall, 2009; Longo, 2018).

We argue in this book that while borders and human mobilities are among the most significant research themes across social sciences, the debate on the ethical issues has not been as central in border research as it ought to be. One interesting exception is the book edited by philosopher Allen Buchanan and political scientist Margaret Moore (2003) in which the authors look at seven ethical traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, natural law, Confucianism, liberalism,
and international law) in the making and unmaking of state and national boundaries. The conclusion of the book is that since ethical theories are by their very nature universal, they tend to be rather suspicious of borders. Especially liberalism’s emphasis on equal freedom seems to apply to everyone, not merely the citizens of liberal democracies. Geographers Diener and Hagen (2009) note briefly the significance of ethics in their critique of the borderless world thesis. More recently, Espejo (2018) has addressed the moral significance of territorial borders and suggests that the prevailing view among liberal thinkers is that from a moral perspective borders are arbitrary and that borders matter because they differentiate politics on the basis of territorial jurisdictions. Hence state borders are morally relevant and are important because ‘they demarcate places juridically, and because they sustain place-specific rights and duties’ (p. 73). She also makes a useful distinction between the boundaries of belonging and territorial borders. The former mark identitarian memberships, the latter the territorial bounds of legal jurisdictions – a divide that resonates with the current division between migration and border research.

Migration scholars have paid considerable attention to ethical questions and these are becoming ever more significant alongside increasing levels of migration (see for example, Hayter, 2000; Pevnick, 2011; Wellman and Cole, 2011; Carens, 2013; Sager, 2016; Bulley, 2017). The growing numbers of migrants echo complex social and environmental problems, wars and conflicts, natural disasters (droughts, floods), famines, daily amenities, and livelihoods, and also reflect a search for better possibilities in life in the face of often miserable conditions. One additional background factor is population growth, which in many states, especially when combined with conflicts, environmental change, and lack of food, pushes people to migrate across dangerous routes. The lottery of birth seems to determine very profoundly the future life possibilities of human beings. Migration scholars of course also discuss borders, but this rarely seems to be a key theoretical concern or motivation (see the summary by Burridge et al., 2017). For them, borders are usually seen as obstacles embedded in social practices that protect privileges and as instruments that maintain the status quo. Compared to border research, however, migration studies tend to recognize the gendered and intersectional nature of lived mobilities, and how border crossing is an effort that is often dangerous for women and children, for example (Andrijasevic, 2010; Choi, 2011).

Borders persevere

Thus in spite of the increased mobilities of the globalized world economy, borders are not disappearing and we are still far away from a borderless world. Obviously, borders do fluctuate and transform, at times hardening, at times softening. Currently, border dynamics are in many cases moving towards a hardening of borders, reflecting the unsecure and unstable global geopolitical and geo-economic situation and increasing distrust between key political leaders. It seems we are witnessing the return of power politics and a strengthening of the
‘spheres of interest’ thinking in international politics. Although many economic regulations have been removed to boost ‘free’ trade, simultaneously more than a few borders have gained more significance and there has been an unforeseen global tendency to build physical walls on borders between states, often to prevent human mobility (Jones, 2016). Very recently efforts to curtail free trade have also emerged (Nicol and Everett, 2019). Current geopolitical tensions between the EU and Russia, for instance, have again raised borders between the ‘East’ and ‘West’. A good example of this is Barents cooperation in northernmost Europe, where some advocates are concerned that the cooperation might founder or come to an end because of the new, tense political situation (Zimmerbauer, 2018). Yet, while cultural and economic cooperation has in many ways stagnated, post-9/11 security thinking has intensified cooperation in the field of border security, where states are increasingly cooperating with non-national and non-sovereign actors. This has complicated our understanding of borders and bordering, and of where border enforcement actually takes place in space and time, and by whom (Longo, 2018).

Likewise, the borders between Europe and the African continent as well as between the US and Mexico have gained massive attention, not so much as ‘borders’ but as immense fluctuating systems of control and ‘bordering’. The former has become a fuzzy, mobile border that is a graveyard for thousands of immigrants attempting Europe for various reasons related to security, environment, and/or economy. Even nature itself has been put to work in the Mediterranean to create a deterrence and to stop migrants (Schindel, 2019), with the effect that such arrangements blur the boundaries of responsibility in the case of border-related deaths. Efforts to move this border far away from the concrete European state borders and to outsource bordering have been styled as ‘humanitarian borders’ (see Pascucci et al., 2019) in the guise of ‘humanitarian bordering’. Also, the US government has mobilized new ideological dividing lines, most recently manifested in President Trump’s plans to build a concrete wall between the US and Mexico. The wall debate is ideological in the sense that much of this border is already walled and because the wall is used to provoke images of threat, terrorism, crime, and illegality (Nicol and Everett, 2019). The construction of walls is also an example of the fusion of geopolitics and geoeconomics in which populist politics and nationalism are effectively mobilized. Fitting examples of such reterritorialized propensities are Trump’s straightforwardly nationalist Twitter claims: ‘we need a strong border’...‘we have no country if we have no border’. As noted above, such anti-migration tendencies are also evident in various European states (such as Hungary, Poland, France, the Netherlands, and the UK), showing that the state-centric world map continues to provide an ideologically dominating, ‘ethically relevant’ moral geography, a map that should be replaced by a more equitable map that incorporates an ethic of respect for difference (Shapiro, 1994).

Migration scholars argue that borders actually produce migrants, yet simultaneously acknowledge that researchers need to be aware of ethical dilemmas and of their own positioning. De Genova puts this plainly:
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If there were no borders, there would be no migrants – only mobility. Another way of saying the same would be that the elemental and elementary freedom of movement of the human species necessarily posits a relation between the species and the space of the planet, as a whole. From this standpoint, territorially-defined ‘national’ states and their borders remain enduringly and irreducibly problematic.

(De Genova, 2013, p. 253)

A historical perspective shows that the bordering of different groups of people is not only a modern phenomenon. Borders in politics are both persistent and dynamic, as an analysis of the borders in ancient Greek cities and the Roman Empire for example displays (Longo, 2018). The analysis of the ‘no borders’ alternative, which is often presented as a more ethical approach, needs to be broadened from the modern state system to other political units and needs to question what potential there is for political life without bordering effects in general. Open borders without an international system of political protection and management is not necessarily a sustainable scenario (Bauder, 2019). Accordingly, what if it is not borders per se that are the main problem but the shifting neoliberal states that appear no longer to protect their own citizens (Longo, 2018, p. 197)? Ultimately, the neoliberal open borders economic policy has benefited only the global elite, whereas the number of people who face expulsion from their professional livelihoods and from the very biospheres that sustain their lives is continuously increasing (Sassen, 2014).

The earlier optimism associated with the ‘borderless world’ thesis has thus faded for several reasons. Firstly, instead of seeing borders merely as lines dividing (state) spaces, more nuanced views now prevail in academic debates, regarding what borders actually are and what they do at and across various spatial scales in their capacity to permit some and (selectively) restrict other forms of mobility, sustain national(ist) landscapes and mobilize powerful memories. Secondly, many border scholars suggest that the contextual and geohistorical features of specific borders force scholars to approach borders in more sensitive and multifaceted ways (Paasi, 1996; O’Dowd, 2010; Megoran, 2017). Thirdly, contrary to the seamless borderless world ideal, humans live on an increasingly unevenly structured planet where borders are important, and where critical elements of biopolitical control are carried out by states, which leads to ever more discriminating regulation and control of migrants and refugees. Graham aptly reminds that

... states are becoming internationally organised systems geared towards trying to separate people in circulations deemed risky or malign from those deemed risk-free or worthy of protection. This process increasingly occurs both inside and outside territorial boundaries between states, resulting in blurring between international borders and urban/local borders.

(Graham, 2010, p. 89)

Previous tendencies have provided fuel for the open and no borders movements, which are continuously struggling with the idea of a borderless world.
The multiplicity of mobilities and of ethical dilemmas: the question of hospitability

Scholars in the fields of geography, international relations, and anthropology, for example, have challenged state-centrism and methodological nationalism, as well as the ‘self-evidence’ of national states. Similarly, in the context of ethics, Bulley (2017, p. 3) argues that to approach the politics and possibilities of international ethics we must look beyond the ‘statist imaginary’. Yet, he notes, state-based international ethics continues to be important in responding, through humanitarian interventions, to major catastrophes such as genocides, ethnic cleansing, atrocities, and natural disasters. States as institutions are therefore critical in such interventions. Bulley also contends (p. 4) that the practices of hospitality involve not only the construction of ethical subjects (hosts and guests) and their relations (identity/difference, welcome/refusal, safety/threat), but also the production of spaces, a point made also in the context of tourist strategies that generate cities, hotels, cafes, and leisure zones as more or less welcoming. Hospitality for Bulley is the means by which particular spaces are brought into being as ‘homes’, as embodying an ethos, a way of being: an ethic.

The concept of hospitality is also germane to both migration and tourism. Recently, the idea (and process) of overtourism has further challenged the hospitality associated with touristic mobilities and also the idea of tourism as a subjective (human) right. Similarly, as in refugee discourses, overtourism as a crisis of tourism refers to a scale of human mobility, in that there are too many visitors to a particular destination, such as Berlin, Barcelona, Venice, and Reykjavik (cf. Dickinson, 2018). In addition to the simple volume of tourists, however, the characteristics and behaviour of tourists have evolved as well. These ‘new’ visitors use Airbnb or other similar sharing economy platforms and are increasingly entering and occupying spaces that are usually seen as non-touristic and as part of the everyday milieu of local people, challenging the bordering between us and them or hosts and guests. Thus, we suggest, there is an acute need to widen the discussion towards the neglected dilemmas that concern the ethical dimensions of borders and how borders are organized and made to work in various forms of mobility. Hence, from the standpoint of ethics it is important to analyse different aspects and layers of borders and issues of citizenship both generally and contextually, not only from the economic and rights perspectives but also from the angle of citizenship participation, gender (in)equality, and national polarization. As far as different types of mobilities and immobilities are concerned, the ethical and moral dilemmas often appear in highly gender specific ways (Prokkola and Rissanen, 2017; Prokkola, 2019).

In tourism, the ethical component is often evident as a form of code of conduct, targeted to both visitors and the businesses serving them. The World Tourism Organization, for example, has created the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (UNWTO, 1999), which lists ten principles covering the economic, social, cultural, and environmental components of travel and tourism, including
‘Right to tourism’ (Article 7) and ‘Liberty of tourist movements’ (Article 8). Basically, in tourism, the question of ethics is about the balance between the right to mobility and the protection of vulnerable biomes, regions, and cultures. The rapidly growing numbers of international tourists, especially from China and India, have provoked discussions about the limits of tourism. These discussions have not focused on state borders but on sub-state territories within destinations, particularly urban environments, where political protests against ‘invasive’ tourists are increasingly practiced. Indeed, many popular tourist resorts now restrict the numbers of tourists for political, social, and environmental reasons, and they aim to draw borders between the tourists and the local population – and physically keep them apart (such as Cuba, the Gambia, and Iran) – or between consumers and workers/servants. Thus, while there are deepening economic and cultural relationships and increasing ‘rights of mobility’ in transnational contexts (Gibson, 2010), there are also processes that challenge the fluidity of contemporary societies, bordering, and movement (Turner, 2007). From this perspective, globalization and related networks and flows have not fully displaced human territoriality and bordering practices (Paasi, 2009; Timothy, Saarinen and Viken, 2016); even tourism and tourists’ movements are not ‘free in any absolute sense’ (Britton, 1991, p. 452). Thus, from the perspective of tourism as well, the borderless world thesis is more complex than at first appears.

For refugees and many migrants, mobility means above all efforts to leave behind dire, poor social conditions and to start a new life, whereas for affluent tourists mobility denotes experiencing temporarily new, often exotic conditions because they can afford to travel for leisure. Categorization of what is considered tourism and what is termed irregular migration is not as straightforward as it might seem at first. In many cases, people who arrive with a tourist visa become ‘illegal’ migrants if they overstay their visas. In this respect, migration and tourism, in general, should not be conceived of as separate entities but as overlapping processes with potentially changing identities and functions. Migration stimulates the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) type of mobility from and to their original home countries. In addition, migrants do domestic tourism, which is often a highly neglected aspect reflecting an Anglo-Western centrism in research and tourism development policies (see Winter, 2009). Indeed, there remains an underlying and persistent assumption that the activity of tourism remains an essentially Western and white phenomenon, and that ‘tourists’ emanate from and reside in the advanced Western societies of the global North (Gladstone, 2005; Rogerson and Saarinen, 2018).

If the tourist is a complex category, similarly the migrant is far from a self-evident status. Some scholars like Johnson and Jones (2018) are not willing to speak of refugees or asylum seekers at all but only migrants. Their approach accentuates that the status of refugee is state-bound and derived from a UN Refugee Convention (1951) that legitimates some forms of mobility (especially those for political reasons) but does not recognize other forms such as migration for environmental and economic reasons. For open borders and especially no borders movements, such dividing lines are not acceptable.
The current, selective open borders policy inside the EU (Schengen) area, in which EU citizens are allowed free mobility and simultaneously strict regulations are placed on so-called third-country nationals, is often cited as an example of the production of global hierarchies and inequality. Less attention has been paid to regional vulnerabilities and the increasing precariousness of all kinds of workers in the internationalizing labour market, where big companies utilize open borders policies on the one hand and territorial regulations on the other in highly strategic ways. International production networks enable firms and companies to strategically offshore and outsource their labour to countries where labour protection and salaries are lower, thus simultaneously putting pressure on domestic trade unions regarding the lowering of salaries and overall conditions of work. In many states, this kind of strategic use of open borders has produced particular forms of precariousness for both skilled and unskilled workers (Martin and Prokkola, 2017). Accordingly, to function, open borders policy and the withdrawal of state regulation of the labour markets would require internalized global ethics for companies and firms. The open borders question is therefore intimately bound up with the operational logic and responsibilities between public and private spheres, even if they often become blurred.

Geographical contexts and state institutions thus matter more than the borderless worlds thesis suggests. It is possible to pose provocative questions about the morality of the state system and divergent citizen rights and responsibilities from the perspective of labour migration. The question of brain drain, usually from poor countries to rich ones, represents a much-debated ethical issue of migration (Strahle, 2018) that problematizes the praise of open borders. From the viewpoint of border ethics, optimistic claims about a borderless world seem rather superficial; the ethics of borders must be evaluated in relation to both citizenship rights and responsibilities. Many citizenship statuses can represent both a burden and an asset depending on the context, and such multiple inducements should not be discussed as separate spheres; they are all part of the life world of an individual who may at times possess the status of a citizen, a tourist, and a migrant. This kind of argumentation points out that how the political and ethical terms of borders are played out is a contested field.

Seeing through penumbral borders

Thinking in terms of ethics in the context of the state system is in some ways a paradox. ‘Territorial trap’, a term coined by Agnew (1994), refers to the tendency of modern states to abduct the spheres of the national and international and to divide global spaces in statist terms. The state is the key actor in manufacturing our understanding of inclusion and exclusion and hence also in providing a specific perspective on the boundaries of ethics. This occurs through spatial socialization in which citizens adopt a specific understanding of a national state space, the history, and identity of the national community and its borders (Paasi, 1996). As Shapiro (1994, p. 495) has argued, the ‘state-oriented map continues to supply the moral geography that dominates what is ethically relevant’. Borders
are key elements in the process of exclusion and states have a monopoly to control mobilities across them and to define the accepted ethical norms and forms of hospitality towards mobile people.

In general, many economists have seen borders as obstacles to growth and have argued that their role should be diminished to foster a frictionless flow of not only capital and goods but also people. Many steps in that direction have been taken but often they have had only regional or sub-regional significance. For example, a number of cross-border regions have been established in the context of the European Union and elsewhere. Especially in the EU, one of the most important reasons for deepening interaction across state borders (and to overcome some of the problems borders create) has been the aim to reduce political tensions, increase security, and to ensure stability in border areas (Nadalutti, 2019). More recently, wider supra-state regional entities have been established as a response to – and expression of – the neoliberalization of the world economy (Johnson, 2009). Thus, if borders were earlier seen to cause and maintain tensions, currently they are more often seen as handbrakes to economic performance.

It is beneficial to remember that borders are highly contextual, or ‘penumbral’; in other words, they can be quite insignificant (soft) in many practices and instances, and yet at other times and practices they can be (or appear as) meaningful and hard (Paasi and Zimmerbauer, 2016). Thus, borders are penumbral because they are not as such either ‘hard’ or soft but manifest themselves only in certain conditions. They are thus highly selective in terms of flows and closures, or put differently, visible only when the light comes from certain angle.

Related to being inherently contextual or penumbral, borders are also multilayered. In this respect, we can analytically distinguish social, legal, economic, political, and cultural ‘layers’ within borders (Zimmerbauer, 2011). While the social layer expresses communication and mobility of people across borders, the legal layer refers to the sovereignty of states and the potential mismatch in legal systems that can have a negative effect on cross-border cooperation, for example. The economic layer accentuates the different economic systems on each side of the border and the resulting conditions for businesses to make treaties to boost trade. The political layer refers to the ability of states to manage their borders in the politico-administrative sense. In this sense, the political layer resonates with the legal layer. The cultural layer is about the traditions, values, and spatial histories that create a sense of (an imagined) community. It also contributes to the idea of regional identity in the sense that cultural narratives contribute to the sense of belonging. However, regional identity is not solely based on cultural awareness but also on delineations of a more administrative (and legal) nature. Current relational approaches to territory and territoriality have not made borders irrelevant. Instead, they have perhaps showed more explicitly that borders are relational constructs, made in multiple and partly overlapping processes in social interaction that cross scales and spaces, and fashioned by a multitude of human and non-human actors (Keating, 1998; Paasi, Harrison and Jones, 2018).
To summarize, the key motivation for producing this book stems from the observation that contemporary borders can be simultaneously closed and open, have multiple functions, and even locations, as contemporary territories are not merely bounded territorial units but simultaneously also relationally constituted. This is the material and discursive basis for various forms of mobilities and diverging ethical and moral claims that can emerge in relation to rights and responsibilities. In our understanding of what ethics and morality mean, we follow the lead of Lee and Smith (2004), who see ethics as a moral theory and morality as practical action. Thus ethics, as the subject of moral theory, encompasses reflection on moral values, their origin, meaning, and justification. These elements and their contextual meanings are crucial in the case of borders, the practices of bordering and border crossings, but can be fundamental also in de-bordering practices, when for example claims are made about opening or rejecting borders. The following chapters will address these contradictory developments in relation to various forms of mobility and types of borders that have been typically discussed separately (for example, borders and tourism or migration and borders).

Overview of sections and chapters

The chapters of this collection will provide both theoretical insights and contextual knowledge on how borders and bordering practices are mobilized in the case of socio-spatial mobilities. Instead of taking borders (or the pleas to make them to vanish) as normative givens, the articles will consider how the simultaneous ‘geographies’ of bounded (territorial) and open and networked (relational) spaces are realized in various contexts. General perspectives for this approach have been outlined in this introduction, and the three chapters of the first section, ‘Borders in a borderless world’, will raise further theoretical questions. The second section, ‘Politics of inclusion and exclusion’, comprises four chapters that look at bordering practices in various contexts in the framework of migration. The third section, ‘Contested mobilities and encounters’, focuses on another major form of mobility, tourism, which has been for a long time a generally ‘accepted’ form of mobility but which has recently become an object of critique in some contexts/locations because of experienced overtourism. The chapters in section four, ‘Borders, security, and politics’, investigate bordering practices and security issues in the context of the EU, a key context in which the migration and border politics nexus has turned out to be a significant national and European political challenge. An analysis of the US/Canada border, set in a wider continental perspective, offers valuable comparative material for the EU context.

Anssi Paasi examines the borderless world thesis outlined by Ohmae (1990, 1995) and compares this with open and no borders approaches. He suggests that beyond his neoliberal economic ideas Ohmae also had an ostensibly ethical emphasis: politicians should follow the models provided by business life and open borders. Critics of this thinking suggest that in contemporary capitalism the borderless world is an illusion since territory and the state have
continued to be significant for capitalism’s logic, regulation, and control of social relations. This regulation and control of mobilities focuses above all on migrants and labour, whereas the mobility of tourists is embraced virtually everywhere. The open borders and no borders movements push ethical issues much further.

Harald Bauder critically studies the arguments proposed in the open borders and no borders discourses. Bauder shows that the idea of the borderless world entails contradictory possibilities: firstly, an open-border world of Westphalian states that allows people to cross state borders; secondly, a no-border world rejecting the national scale and demanding the formation of new subjectivities. He notes how current changing social practices challenge such neat divisions. Sanctuary cities, for example, work within the framework of national states while simultaneously challenging national scale belonging and membership. Bauder pays particular attention to the concept of freedom – a critical argument for the current debates on a world without borders – as well as to the different concepts of citizenship, and how these resonate with such arguments.

Paolo Novak examines the spatialities of borders and starts from a distinction between border lines and border functions. He suggests that it is important to refocus border studies around an empirical concern with the place-specific and embodied distance between the two dimensions. In analytical terms, this distinction endeavours to recuperate the significance of border lines, as constitutive of the interstate system, while recognizing the multiple locations in which the social control functions of borders are activated, reproduced, and experienced. Politically, this distinction foregrounds the ways in which lines and functions are articulated to reproduce inequalities that are both systemic and situated. His distinction identifies the contextual distance between what is and what ought to be, posing an ethical imperative for intervention and providing avenues to define such interventions.

Aija Lulle studies the migrant accounts in media uses before, during, and after the Brexit vote, pointing out that many young migrants had self-restricted their media practices to protect themselves from the moral panic in the time of Brexit uncertainty. The Brexit decision somewhat changed the everyday moral landscape of Britain, showing that media uses and moralities are not fixed but change over time. Lulle shows the existence of divisions between various people within the state, and how young migrants have to navigate the hardening borders in media and in their daily lives. The study illustrates on the one hand how online and social media cross borders more easily than people, and on the other how everyday bordering occurs in the apparently borderless media space in many ways.

Kathryn Cassidy examines everyday bordering in the context of the British healthcare system and provides an analytical insight into the ethics and morality of Britain’s political-economic rationales regarding migration. She builds her analysis on the concept of borderwork, which refers in her article to the spreading of the responsibilities of immigration control and checks from the state sphere to individual citizens, and to the duty of people working in various
sectors. Cassidy’s analysis shows how healthcare professionals’ decision-making has become a practice of borderwork. Healthcare personnel are required to turn away patients in need of medical care on the basis of immigration status, and when doing so the personnel continuously face specific ethical and moral dilemmas. Cassidy’s analysis shows how the responsibility for conducting the controls in healthcare access for migrants creates friction between the professional caregivers and patients, and subordinates the question of human rights to the state economic rationale.

Elisa Pascucci, Jouni Häkli, and Kirsi Pauliina Kallio examine the spatialities of the so-called ‘refugee crises’ that have characterized Europe and its neighbouring regions over the last few years. Following the recent research, they conceptualize both borders and humanitarianism as topological phenomena constituted through relationalities that are at the same time materially grounded and spatially heterogeneous. Pascucci, Häkli, and Kallio advance current understandings of humanitarian bordering by looking at the ways in which aid workers and migrants negotiate aid provision in both transit camps (Greece) and spontaneous, peri-urban refugee settlements (Lebanon). In particular, they show how the interplay of ethical performativity and enactments of security is central to the constitution of these topological spaces.

Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola focuses on the 2015 asylum reception in Finland from the perspective of gendered national identity by investigating how particular gendered and morally toned categorizations and images of threat were used in the media debate. In her paper, the categorization of people is used to depict the politicization of national identity and to complicate the understanding of border securitization as a question of state versus migrants. She argues for a relational conception of national identity and belonging that pays attention to the multiplicity of voices and struggles over migration policy within the state. The relational conception of national identity critically includes the question of ethics of recognition.

Raoul Bianchi and Marcus Stephenson provide an overview of the evolution and transformation of modern tourism from a privilege to a human right. In the current context they critically focus on the contradictions between the right to the freedom of movement and travel and the right to tourism, and on their intersections. They analyse these rights through the prism of bordering practices and discourses through which different modalities of travel are represented, valued, and policed. By doing so they demonstrate how the unequal geographies of movement are made tangible. The chapter points to a central paradox of global tourism: tourism is often celebrated as an instrument of economic development, peace, and a marker of global citizenship, but securitized border management regimes have increasingly accentuated disparities between those deemed to be lacking the ‘appropriate’ credentials for travel and those whose mobility is defined as ‘legitimate’. They emphasize that tourism should not be seen as an apolitical international phenomenon. Instead, global tourism should be seen as an integral part of the broader realm of mobility politics and structural determinants of immobility.

Arie Stoffelen and Dominique Vanneste’s chapter focuses on the ethical components, viability, and community representation of borderland tourism. Their specific
case is the Iron Curtain Trail and the European Green Belt, located in the German–Czech borderlands. They demonstrate that the analysed tourism projects tend to commodify conflictive borderland histories to gain support for a European-wide cross-border cooperation discourse. However, the Iron Curtain Trail and the European Green Belt projects are contested on local levels, resulting from the selectivity of EU-inspired memory politics and minimal local participation across the border. Similarly to Bianchi and Stephenson, they emphasize the need to see tourism as a political issue in local and regional development contexts. According to them, the recognition of tourism politics highlights crucial questions on equity and regarding whose memory is commodified for which purposes in borderland development projects.

J.J. Zhang examines contested mobilities in border town contexts by engaging tourism with the politics of mobility, morality, and materiality. He discusses the cultural politics of cross-border consumption through shopping activities in the border town of Sheung Shui, Hong Kong. The place is characterized by shopping tourists from the neighbouring city of Shenzhen, and these day visitors are seen as a cause of overcrowding, shortage of goods, and higher rental markets. This overtourism has caused public protests, which have divided the town over conflicting views on the consequences of increasing social and economic integration with the mainland.

Heather Nicol and Karen Everett focus on the ethical and moral management priorities of North American borders. The focus is on power relations that have effect on both the Canada–US and the US–Mexico borders, yet in particular on the questions of why the state of trade matters to Canada–US relations, and correspondingly to the Canada–US border. By discussing ‘thickening’ and unequal borders – as well as border asymmetry – the authors conclude that the result of the new border policy has been a ‘considerable political indifference to inequitable and unjust border management in North America’. The inequitable and morally dubious outcomes that result, the authors suggest, are constructed by and reinforced through both Canada’s responses to US economic and security hegemony, and American policies and practices.

Jussi Laine and James W Scott discuss how ‘identitary bordering’ within the EU is not only fed by social media and populist discourses but is also part of intellectual and philosophical arguments that, for example, interpret liberal, humanitarian understandings of migration and idealistic notions of regional neighbourhood (for example with Ukraine, Russia and the South Mediterranean) as naïve and misguided. At the same time, despite all proclaimed intentions of resetting its Neighbourhood agenda, the EU appears to insist on ‘asymmetric conditionality’ and maintenance of the basic policy architecture that so far has failed to promote genuine partnerships. Laine and Scott argue that one reason for this is related to the maintenance of an EU identity and the fact that the EU’s ontological security is bound up in the continuity and perceived coherence of its policy frameworks. They continue that alternative understandings of Neighbourhood as a context for societal interaction – and not a merely an ‘objective’ policy – are required. In addition, understanding the EU as an integral part of any neighbourhood idea, joint engagement with socio-economic, cultural and group-specific concerns could help
create a new self-narrative of EU actorness and contribute to a more tolerant and ethical border policy.

Elisabetta Nadalutti discusses why it is important to have an ethical code in cross-border governance. She focuses on this question by emphasizing the human ‘layer’ of the borders, which means underlining border zones as spaces for human interaction. An ethical code, she argues, is beneficial in securing a ‘common language’ in cross-border cooperation (CBC). In general an empathic relationship between the border administrators and border people is required for successful implementation of CBC. The ethical-normative approach of the article stems from the ethical values discussed in philosophy by scholars such as Edith Stein, Amartya Sen, and Simone Weil, and the empirical analysis focuses on the Italian–Slovenian border cooperation in the Upper Adriatic Region.

Estela Schindel highlights that in addition to or instead of walls, illegalized travellers are confronted with the hardships of precariously crossing deserts or seas. Thus, environmental factors like geography, topography, and weather are part of border assemblages and imbricated in the complex chains of responsibility and accountability for migrants’ deaths, as well as in what Alison Mountz calls strategies of neo-refoulement. The article discusses the role of environmental factors in the context of EU maritime borders, and claims that what we consider ‘nature’ is key for understanding the problem of ethics, responsibility, and accountability for the deaths at the EU borders. Thus, nature needs to be increasingly disentangled and exposed.

An afterword for the collection has been written by the anthropologist Noel B Salazar. He reflects the significance of various forms of mobilities and puts the chapters of this collection into a wider historical and methodological framework, accentuating particularly the significance of ethnographic approaches. Salazar argues that borders are here to stay, but so too is the human urge to cross them (if needed). Borders, border-crossings and mobilities are thus not only a present-day issue but will be with us also in the future.

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Borderless worlds and beyond


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Afterword


