

The 34th ASEN
Conference

Nationalism & Borders

23-25 April 2025
Budapest

Programme

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Contents

Welcome from Jonathan Hearn	3
Useful Information	4
Wednesday 23rd April	5
Thursday 24th April	...	...	...	...	6
Friday 25th April	...	...	...	...	7
The Gellner Lecture – Michael Mann	...	...	...	...	9
Plenary 1 – Erin Jenne	...	...	...	...	10
Plenary 2 – Gordana Uzelac	...	...	...	...	11
Plenary 3 – Pieter Judson	...	...	...	...	12
Special events	...	...	...	...	14
Abstracts	...	...	...	...	15
Panel Session A	...	...	...	...	15
Panel Session B	...	...	...	...	27
Panel Session C	...	...	...	...	40
Panel Session D	...	...	...	...	54
Panel Session E	...	...	...	...	67
Panel Session F	...	...	...	...	82
Panel Session G	...	...	...	...	96
Panel Session H	...	...	...	...	109

Welcome from Jonathan Hearn

On behalf of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism, I am delighted to welcome you to Budapest and to Central European University for our thirty-fourth annual conference.

There can hardly be a better location for a conference on borders than Budapest as we feel the effects of the fall of the Habsburgs even today. There can also hardly be a better location for a conference on nationalism than Central European University. Like ASEN, CEU was founded in the wake of the fall of communism and has been at the forefront of nationalism studies for more than three decades.

This leadership is due in no small part to Ernest Gellner who, among his many achievements, founded the department of nationalism studies at CEU. 2025 marks the centenary of his birth and we are particularly pleased to welcome Michael Mann to give the lecture named for Gellner this year at the department he founded.

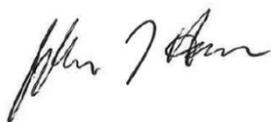
Our plenary speakers – Erin Jenne, Pieter Judson, and Gordana Uzelac – speak to different aspects of the complex intersection between nation and border. I am delighted they can join us.

Almost two hundred papers being presented – a record for our conferences – on topics from the environment to gender, across epochs from the sixteenth century to the twenty first, covering every continent, and with a dizzying range of approaches and cases.

Finally, I would like to thank the team that have put the conference together – all the panel chairs; Szabolcs Pogonyi & Michael Miller from CEU; Karolina Lendák-Kabók; the ASEN coordinator, David Landon Cole; and Suhani Joshi & Konomi Hori from the University of Edinburgh, who put together the panels.

You can find out more about ASEN, including membership, events, and our journals, at asen.ac.uk

We very much hope you have an enjoyable and productive conference.



Jonathan Hearn,
ASEN President.

Useful Information

Plenary and Panel Rooms

Plenaries take place in the main theatre.

For each panel, the number indicates which the room it takes place in.

Rooms 1, 2, and 3 are on the first floor; room 4 is on the second floor; and rooms 5, 6, 7, and 8 are on the third floor. They will be clearly signed.

You are welcome to leave bags in the atrium area where registration takes place, but this is at your own risk.

Wifi

Eduroam is available throughout CEU and can be accessed with credentials provided by your home institution if it offers the service.

Alternatively, you can connect to the 'CEU Guest' network. The password is displayed around the building, including at the reception desk.

Social media

The hashtag for the conference is #asen2025 – we'd really appreciate it if you could use the tag on any social media posts.

You can find us on at [asenevents.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/asenevents.bsky.social), [facebook.com/asenevents](https://www.facebook.com/asenevents), [threads.net/@asenevents](https://www.threads.net/@asenevents), [x.com/asenevents](https://www.x.com/asenevents), and [youtube.com/asenevents](https://www.youtube.com/asenevents).

Support

The reception desk will be staffed during the conference day or you can reach us by WhatsApp or telephone on +44 78 85 99 16 33.

Wednesday 23rd April

- 0930 Conference welcome and plenary 1 – Erin Jenne
- 1100 Coffee break
- 1130 Panel session A
A1 – The Borders of Britain
A2 – Reconfigurations of the Central & North American Borderlands
A3 – The Ambiguity of (Non-)Interference: Cross-Border Relations between Carinthia and Slovenia during the Cold War
A4 – Borders in Spain
A5 – Beyond Albania’s Borders
A6 – Borders and Gender (1)
A7 – World War II and its Aftermath
A8 – Online Borders
- 1300 Lunch
- 1430 Panel session B
B1 – Theoretical Perspectives
B2 – Gellnerian Perspectives
B3 – Militarized Borders
B4 – The Borders of China
B5 – Borders in the Nineteenth Century
B6 – Languages and Borders
B7 – Refugees and Borders
B8 – The Borders of India
- 1600 Coffee break
- 1630 Panel session C
C1 – Online Border Tensions
C2 – Borders as Symbols
C3 – Nations Across Borders
C4 – Local Identities
C5 – Border Securitization
C6 – Theoretical Perspectives (2)
C7 – Borderland Towns and Cities: Nationalism, Identity, and Division
C8 – Usages and Meanings of the Past across the Post-Yugoslav Space
- 1800 The Gellner Lecture – Michael Mann

Thursday 24th April

- 0930 [Panel session D](#)
D1 – Marrying Across Borders
D2 – Kin-states
D3 – The Far Right’s Use of Borders
D4 – Hadrian’s Wall: The Anglo-Scottish Border
D5 – Global Perspectives
D6 – World War II Europe
D7 – Borderlands
D8 – The Online Borders of Ukraine
- 1100 Coffee break
- 1130 [Plenary 2: Gordana Uzelac](#)
- 1300 Lunch/Meet the editors
- 1430 [Panel session E](#)
E1 – Borders and Gender (2)
E2 – Kurdistan’s Borders
E3 – Mapping Borders
E4 – Immigration and Borders
E5 – Commemorations
E6 – The Impact of Covid on Borders
E7 – Colonial and Postcolonial Borders
E8 – Writing the Nation
- 1600 Coffee break
- 1630 [Panel session F](#)
F1 – Israel and Palestine
F2 – Borders and Arts
F3 – Bessarabia
F4 – Borderlands
F5 – Natural Resources and Borders
F6 – Borders in Interwar Europe
F7 – Ethnicity and Borders
F8 – Nationalism and Identity in Transition
- 1800 Film showing and Q&A – The Bell Rings – Katalin Halász

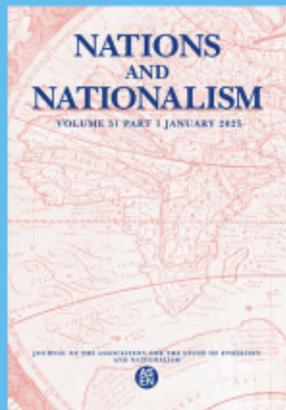
Friday 25th April

- 0930 [Panel session G](#)
G1 - Pragmatic Expectations: Nationalizing Multi-ethnic Cities, 1918-1939
G2 - The Borders of Greece
G3 - Heritage and Borders
G4 - Migration in the EU
G5 - The Legacy of Soviet Borders
G6 - Border controls
G7 - The Mexican-American Border
G8 - The Memory of Borders
- 1100 Coffee break
- 1130 [Panel session H](#)
H1 - The Discourse of Borders
H2 - Borders in Early Twentieth Century Europe
H3 - Cyprus
H4 - Printing Borders
H5 - Postcolonial Borders
H6 - Digital Borders
H7 - Majorities and Minorities in Hungary
H8 - Activism Across the Spectrum: Social Media, Influencers, and Balkan Reconciliation
- 1300 Lunch/Book launch - 'Doing Nation' in a Digital Age - Sanja Vico
This event is generously supported by Genealogy.
- 1430 [Plenary 3: Pieter Judson](#)
- 1550 Conference close

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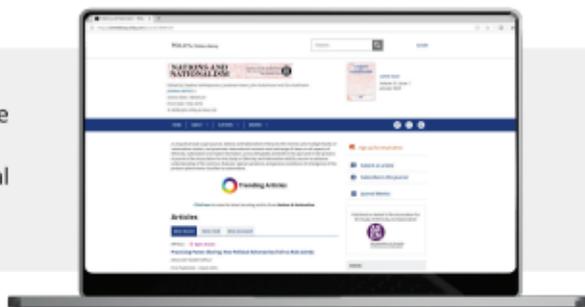
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The Gellner Lecture – Michael Mann

Explaining the Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution is universally seen as the most fundamental transformation of human societies – in Gellner’s terms from agraria to industria. I will argue here that the revolution was caused by the development and conjunctures of and between four sources of social power – ideological, economic, military and political. Each of these had a certain logic of development which we can theorize, but each also had conjunctural relations with the others and this makes an overall explanation of the revolution difficult – Gellner said it was impossible. The major causes of an industrial revolution are likely to be economic, yet economic changes were necessary but not sufficient causes of the revolution, for they did not offer an escape from the Malthusian trap of agraria. This escape required conjunctures of economic with other forms of power. Colonies won by naval power boosted mercantilist international trade, and wars decided where nationally the breakthrough might occur – first the Netherlands, then Britain. Political power relations provided variable boosts, but not in the forms suggested by Institutionalists. What mattered most in political terms was where states emerged representing the solidarity of the propertied nation. For ideological power I draw especially on Weber and Gellner, for the revolution rested on both Christian and scientific ideologies, and I produce new data on the religious affiliations of the inventors in Britain whose machines made the actual breakthrough to industrial production. I thus present a quadrilateral explanation of the Industrial Revolution.

About Michael Mann

Michael Mann is distinguished research professor in sociology at UCLA. He has a BA and D.Phil. from Oxford University, and has been awarded three honorary doctorates (Hon.D.Litts.) from McGill University, Montreal, University College, Dublin, and The University of the Aegean. After graduating from Oxford he worked at Cambridge University, The University of Essex, the London School of Economics, and (from 1987), the University of California at Los Angeles. He was Visiting Research Professor at The Queens University, Belfast, during 2003-2007, and in 2004-2005 he was the Visiting Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions at Cambridge University. In 2008 he was awarded an Honorary Professorship at Cambridge. In 2015 he was elected a Fellow of both the American and British Academies.

His major publication project is the four volume *The Sources of Social Power*. His other works include *Fascists* (2004) and *The Dark Side of Democracy* (2005).

Plenary 1 – Erin Jenne

The Rise of Sovereignism in an Age of Crisis

It is useful to think of nationalism and populism as orthogonal technologies used to mark out the height and breadth of competing sovereign imaginaries. Sovereign imaginaries are subjective collectivities that contain logics for organizing and performing a sovereign self. They are articulated by political agents who use symbols and speech from their rhetorical toolkit to “hail” ordinary participants as a means of establishing and maintaining popular support. Each imaginary consists of a particular set of political logics that determine the membership in (and leadership of) each sovereign collective. They also contain instructions for the prescribed modes of policy-making, the appropriate forms of foreign engagement, domestic policy priorities, the legitimate political authorities and legitimate sources of political knowledge. In brief, nationalist leaders invoke a world composed of mutually exclusive territorialized space, rhetoric that is most likely to emerge during periods of state transition or rising regional instability. Populists also traffic in agonistic discourses, invoking images of nefarious, rapacious elites preying on a good and virtuous people. Such contestation becomes particularly fierce during periods of crisis—when the dominant sovereign imaginary begins to lose its resonance with a sufficiently broad swath of the population. By drawing on and reinforcing these boundaries, political actors make identity claims to bond with their constituents. Sovereignist projects fall on deaf ears during normal times, when their proponents are more likely be branded as “crazy” and extreme. By contrast, sovereignism resonates with people more during periods of turbulence (debt defaults, currency crises, war, political crisis, or massive economic downturn). Their articulators seek to reframe the political “self” as one beset by nefarious internal and/or external forces, reinforcing collective perceptions of vulnerability and hence a demand for strong leaders to protect the “self.” The real power of nationalist or populist leaders everywhere thus transcends mere agenda-setting and executive decision-making powers conferred by their office. Instead, it lies in the ways that they “rewrite” the sovereign imaginary in the perceptions of their base, laying the ideological groundwork for a fundamental transformation of domestic and foreign policy.

About Erin Jenne

Erin Jenne is professor and chair of the International Relations Department at Central European University. Among her many accolades are a MacArthur fellowship at Stanford, a Belfer fellowship at Harvard, and a Braudel fellowship at EUI. Her first book, *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment* won the Mershon Center’s Edgar S. Furniss Book Award. She has published in multiple journals including, of course, *Nations and Nationalism*.

Plenary 2 - Gordana Uzelac

National Traitresses: Estrangement and Redefinition of National Moral Boundaries

The foundation for understanding nationalism lies in the distinction between "Us" and "Them." Since Gellner (1983), nationalism has been conceptualised as an interplay between political borders and cultural/ethnic boundaries. While the national "We/Us" is often defined through genealogy, culture, history, citizenship, or a combination of these factors, the "Other/Them"—the stranger, foreigner, coloniser, or ethnic minority—is often perceived as an enemy or, at best, a threat. National traitors are one of "Us" who are, through the process of estrangement, turned into "Them". Unlike the traditional stranger (Simmel, [1908] 1950) who has never belonged, the estranged figure is someone who was once integrated within cultural and ethnic boundaries but has since been ousted for breaching national trust and loyalty. The presence of the stranger questions the reliabilities of orthodox orientation points, whereas the process of estrangement dismantles old orientation points, shifts them, and ultimately (re)draws new moral boundaries. In this presentation, the mechanisms of redefinition of national moral boundaries will be examined in the case of nationalism's estrangement of feminist values and morality. It considers whether the success of nationalism as an ideology can be attributed not only to the flexibility of its discourse but also to its capacity to expel—sometimes brutally—competing ideological systems of value and impose its own moral boundaries as absolute.

About Gordana Uzelac

Gordana Uzelac is a Reader in Sociology at London Metropolitan University, where she is the course leader for the BSc in Psychology and Sociology.

Gordana obtained her undergraduate degree at the Department of Sociology, University of Zagreb and her MSc degree in Sociology from CEU. In 2002 she obtained her PhD in Ethnicity and Nationalism at the LSE. Her interests focus on theories of nation and nationalism, nationalism in Croatia and the Balkans, and qualitative and quantitative research methods. She is the author of *The Development of the Croatian Nation* (The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006) and, with Atsuko Ichijo, co-editor of *When is the Nation? Towards an Understanding of Theories of Nationalism* (Routledge, 2005). With Lea David and Siniša Malešević, she is currently working on *Historical Sociology and European Nationalisms* (Cambridge University Press, 2026). Gordana is an editor of the journal *Nations and Nationalism*. Besides her interest in nationalism, in cooperation with the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit (CWSU, London Metropolitan University) she is contributing to research on rape and violence against women in the UK.

Plenary 3– Pieter Judson

Territorializing the Nation in Habsburg Central Europe: the Birth of a Science of Borders from Below

In the last third of the 19th century, nationalist movements within the Habsburg Empire increasingly asserted their rights to political influence in specific territories. Combining a strange mix of statistical, cultural, historical, and legal arguments, nationalists struggled to normalize the idea that the national communities for which they claimed to speak occupied identifiable territories with clear borders. Nationalists then made it the task of the nation to maintain those borders against other nations. This in an era of increased mobility of peoples within the empire, and at the very moment when Austro-Marxists began to articulate theories of non-territorialized nations.

This nationalist science of border-making was highly situational in the reasoning it used and the alleged facts it cited. Nationalists of all kinds produced statistical claims regarding landscape, people, natural boundaries (rivers, mountains), and cultures, to argue for the recognition of informal borders within the empire. These imagined boundaries remained critical even after the collapse of the empire in 1918, helping to shape subsequent territorial claims made by the successor states against each other.

About Pieter Judson

Pieter M. Judson is professor at the European University Institute in Florence. From 2014 to 2024, he held the Chair in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century History at the European University Institute. Before that he taught for 21 years at Swarthmore College as Isaac Clothier Professor of History and International Relations.

He holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University (1987). He has authored many articles and several prize-winning books on several aspects of the history of Habsburg Central Europe, as well as *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Harvard-Belknap, 2016), which has been translated into twelve European and Asian languages. For ten years Judson served as editor of the *Austrian History Yearbook*, and he is currently President of the Central European History Society of North America. He has received fellowships from Guggenheim, Fulbright, the NEH, the American Academy in Berlin, Phi Beta Kappa, and in 2010 he received the Karl von Vogelsang state prize from the Austrian government for *Guardians of the Nation. Activists on the Language Frontiers of Imperial Austria* (Harvard 2006).

Special events

We've added a few special events into this year's programme – we hope you enjoy them!

Meet the editors

Unsure about how to get your article published? Looking for tips to get through review? Always wondered how a journal comes together?

On Thursday from 1330 in the main theatre, editors from *Nations and Nationalism* will be answering all your questions.

Film showing: The Bell Rings - Katalin Halász

On Thursday at 1800 in the main theatre, we will be showing the short film *The Bell Rings* by Katalin Halász, followed by a Q&A.

The Bell Rings is a sweeping, untold story of bodies and emotions surfacing and submerging in a crowd gathered at the 2023 Tusványos Festival in Romania, a week long politics and music event organized by the Hungarian government. Un/Consciously, the festival goes absorb the ethnonationalist politics and gender war of Viktor Orbán, the Prime Minister of Hungary, who (since he came to power in 2010) uses Tusványos Festival to canvass his ideas of nation. It has won prizes in Italy, Brazil, and the UK and was included in the official selection for the London Lift-Off Film Festival and the Eastern European Film Festival.

Book launch: 'Doing Nation' in a Digital Age – Sanja Vico

On Friday at 1300 in the main theatre, we are delighted to host the launch of Sanja Vico's new monograph, *'Doing Nation' in a Digital Age: Banal Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism in Polymedia Environments*.

This book introduces a new theory of national identity, arguing that the nation does not only represent an abstract "imagined community" but also represents embodied cultural and discursive practices.

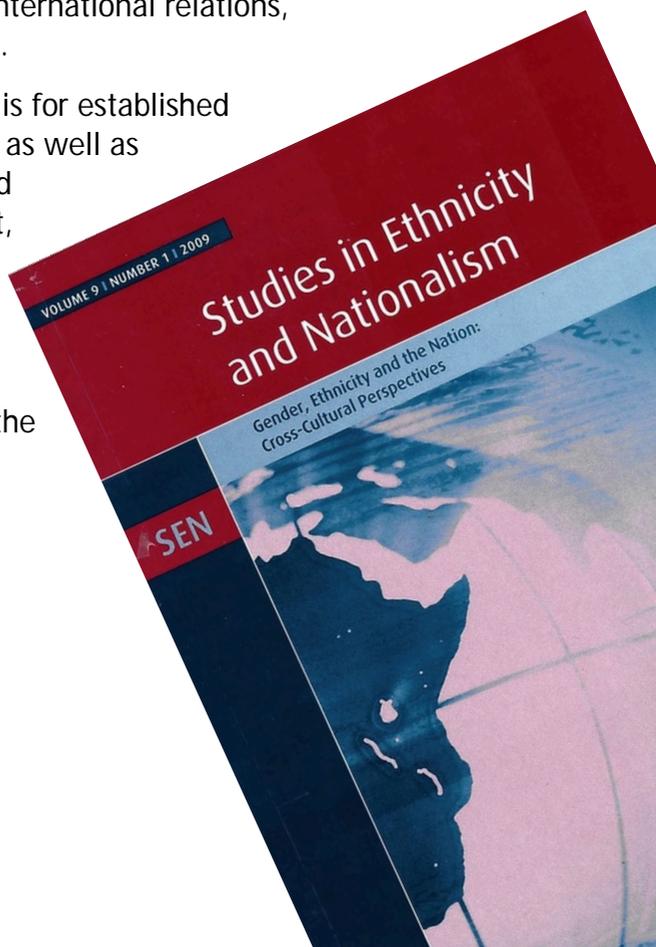
This event is generously supported by Genealogy.

Now in its twenty-fifth year, **Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism** provides a non-partisan, contemporary perspective on ethnicity, race, and nationalism.

The sources and nature of ethnic identity, minority rights, migration, and identity politics remain central and recurring themes of the modern world. This journal approaches the complexity of these questions from a contemporary perspective, publishing the latest contributions from the fields of political science, sociology, anthropology, economics, international relations, history, and cultural studies.

This interdisciplinary forum is for established and younger scholars alike, as well as concerned professionals and practitioners in government, law, NGOs, and media.

For more information or to submit your article, follow the QR code below!



Abstracts

A1 - The Borders of Britain

Maps-as-Logo: Logoisation of National Ambitions

Andi Haxhiu and Jon Haxhiu

Maps have long transcended their cartographic and geographic functions. In fact, they are potent symbols that, among other things, reflect notions of sovereignty, national identity, territoriality, and political aspirations in visual form. As Benedict Anderson (1991: 175) explained, in this process of logoisation of political space, the map became a "pure sign, no longer compass to the world." This meant that "the map entered an infinitely reproducible series, available for transfer to posters, official seals, letterheads, magazine and textbook covers, tablecloths, and hotel walls" (Anderson, 1991: 175). In the case of Scotland, the map-as-logo has become a powerful representation of Scottish iconography within the heritage industry. The country's outline is instantly recognisable because the map-as-logo is part of national imagery (Fleet et al., 2013). It can be found in children's t-shirts, adult hoodies, keychains, and tattoos – it is visible everywhere within the popular imagination (Anderson, 1991). On the other hand, following Kosovo's independence in 2008, this process of logoisation has gone a step further as the map has become part of Kosovo's new flag. Considering the complexity of these two case studies, this paper explores the phenomenon of "maps-as-logo" and examines how nations use cartographic imagery in flags, emblems, and public symbols to reinforce a sense

of national identity. By delving in-depth into Kosovo and Scotland case studies, this paper argues that nations mobilise maps as instruments to assert political aspirations and political legitimacy. In the case of Kosovo, where the map on the flag asserts the nation's borders, this paper explores the map's role as an ideological artefact that affirms its sovereignty within a contested international context. Whereas, in the case of Scotland, this research examines the role of "map-as-logo" in symbolising a sense of national distinctiveness.

Mind the gap – Everyday nationalism in the Life in the UK Test. A critical reflection on invisible borders within British citizenship tests

Claudia Lueders

The conference paper will critically discuss the role of everyday nationalism in the Life in the UK Tests as invisible borders within the British citizenship tests. Based on the theoretical debate of the nation at the heart of popular culture (Edensor 2002), national identity and everyday life (Fox-Miller-Idriss 2008), national belonging in the everyday life (Skey 2011) and everyday nationhood (Skey/Antonisch 2017), the paper will empirically explore the role of everyday nationalism in British citizenship tests. To what extent is everyday nationalism an important gatekeeper in the politics of inclusion and exclusion within citizenship tests? The paper analyses the importance of everyday life questions in the Life in the UK Tests. Trying to understand what kind of national identity is constructed through these questions and how these questions have changed over the years since the establishment of the British Citizenship test in 2005. The paper will discuss statistics on how

participants do on these everyday life questions in their tests. The paper argues that everyday nationalism plays an important role in citizenship test.

How does Social Class influence Ethnic Boundary Making in Everyday Life? A Case-study of Chinese migrants in Glasgow.

Zhaowei Yin

This project focuses on the intersection of ethnicity and class, and aims to examine how social class influences the ethnic boundaries of social actors in everyday life. Through life-history interviews with 27 Chinese migrants in Glasgow, UK, this study attempts to answer two questions: 1) How do social actors of different classes understand and delineate ethnic boundaries differently? What factors influence these differences? 2) When social actors experience changes in social status or hierarchy, what changes occur in their understanding and delineation of ethnic boundaries? This study consolidated and developed the concept jointly built by Frederick Barth, Rogers Brubaker and other scholars, that ethnicity is not an fixed attribute and should not be regarded as a self-evident unit of analysis, but should be treated as a changing and socially constructed process. Using Bourdieu's analytical toolkit, capital, habitus and field, I try to observe and capture the way social actors understand and divide ethnic boundaries in a dynamic context and analyze its social causes. In general, the conclusion of this study can be summarized as follows, 1) The ethnic boundary is not fixed, but fluid, situational and constantly constructed by a series of daily events. 2) The way in which social actors understand and

delineate ethnic boundaries depends, to a certain extent, on the social capital they possess in the current context and the resources they have access to in the power structure. 3) One's understanding and demarcation of ethnic boundaries always depends on her/his position in a social space.

A2 - Reconfigurations of the Central and North American Borderlands

Some Assembly Required: Maquiladora urbanism and the spatialization of NAFTA Alan Alaniz

This paper proposes a genealogical study of industrialization at the Mexico-United States border, and evaluates the maquiladora industry's influence on the spatial and social form of binational cities. From Mexico's Border Industrialization Program initiated in 1965 to the establishment of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1995, border industrialization was conceived as a means of reintegrating the far reaching extents of national territory into the function of Mexico's national economy. Originally devised as a mechanism to diversify border economies and offer employment to displaced labor following the sunset of the Bracero Program, the introduction of the maquiladora industry reconfigured the structure and form of national territory to best accommodate the flows of capital. Rather than solely focus on the economic impact of the maquiladora industry, this research evaluates the maquila and subsequent industrial parks as objects of design, whose influence on the social fabric of border cities was intentionally devised, produced, and

maintained by a set of capitalist spatial logics. This work relies on archival sources that include the work of Ciudad Juárez-based Bermudez family, who played a prominent role in establishing the now widespread industrial park model, the organizational efforts of Rodman C. Rockefeller's Mexico-United States Business Committee, and a cadre of managerial consultants who ushered in a new form of economic and spatial structuring then only possible at the Mexico-United States border.

Community Screenings for Abolition Pedagogy: Documentary Filmmaking, Advocacy Networks, and Impact Campaigning for BORDERLAND| The Line Within (2024)

Vaclav Masek

Immigrant justice networks are expanding across the Americas, leveraging spaces such as churches, campuses, legal clinics, and grassroots organizations to challenge the border industrial complex. As an impact producer for BORDERLAND| The Line Within (2024), a documentary by Pamela Yates, I coordinated over 50 community screenings across 10 countries in late 2024 and early 2025. The film follows an Indigenous Maya Ixil asylum seeker, a Dreamer advocating for migrant family justice, and digital humanists mapping border systems, illustrating the systemic roots of contemporary migration, from Guatemala's genocidal campaigns to present-day dispossession and displacement. Audience reactions across diverse demographics emphasized connections between migration, climate change, labor exploitation, and global capitalism. These screenings underscored a growing transnational movement for border

abolition and rethinking national sovereignty. Using critical pedagogy, the campaign demonstrated how cultural products can foster social justice awareness, blending reification and utopian impulses to inspire grassroots engagement and visions for a borderless future.

A Border Revolutionized: Plantation Sovereignty and the Making of the Mexico-Guatemala Border

Javier Porras

The division between Mexico and Guatemala—which cuts across a transnational plantation belt—was revolutionized in the 1930s. On the Mexican side, a social democratic revolution arrived at the national margins, bringing land reform, labor protections, and a project of racial regeneration to the region's peasant and Indigenous groups. On the Guatemalan side, the anti-communist dictatorship of Jorge Ubico extended a repressive apparatus, along with concessions to agricultural and industrial capital, to the border region, deepening racial and ethnic divisions. From both sides, states brought new, albeit radically different, nation-building impetuses to the until-then meaningless international boundary. In so doing, they transformed the logic and practice of the border and, striving to reconcile contradictions into friendly diplomatic relations, made it a line of containment. Using archival sources, this paper examines how proximity to a national Other conditioned the breadth of nation-building projects and tethered ideas of national territory to practices of plantation sovereignty. That is, against grassroots cross-border movements, state officials melded notions of private and national property

together and transformed the border into a powerful division. Such transformation reverberated deep into Mexican and Guatemalan territories and reconfigured notions of property, race, ethnicity, and nation. In other words, and against common understandings, the national margins played a central role in giving texture to twentieth-century Mexican and Guatemalan nationalism.

A3 – Cross-Border Relations between Carinthia and Slovenia during the Cold War

Slovenian-Carinthian Cross-Border Dynamics between Nationalism and Interregional Cooperation in the 1960s and 1970s

Mateja Režek

Slovenia and the Austrian state of Carinthia share a long, intertwined and often conflict-ridden past. While connected by the once significant Slovenian ethnic presence in Carinthia, they were divided by the German nationalist perception of the region as the “Grenzland” of Germanness and the Slovenian romantic fixation on Carinthia as the “cradle” of Slovenian identity. During the Cold War, the regions were not only separated by the Austrian-Yugoslav state border and opposing national discourses, but also by different political and socio-economic systems. This interplay offers a nuanced perspective on the role of borders and borderlands in shaping national(ist) narratives as well as on efforts to transcend them. Using archival material from both sides, the paper examines the Carinthian-Slovenian cross-border dynamics of the 1960s and 1970s. In the mid-1960s, the two regions established

promising cross-border cooperation in the economic and cultural fields, but overcoming ethno-nationalist tensions remained a challenge. In the early 1970s, interregional cooperation was interrupted for several years by German-nationalist riots, culminating in the “Ortstafelsturm”, violent protests against bilingual topographical signs in Carinthia’s ethnically mixed areas. The paper explores the motivations, goals and resilience of the cross-border initiatives, the impact of the political fall of the main initiators of interregional cooperation, Carinthian Governor Hans Sima and Slovenian Prime Minister Stane Kavčič, and the influence of these interactions on the ethnic divisions in Carinthia. Finally, it examines the significance of this transsystemic cooperation, predating Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik, within the broader context of Cold War Europe.

Jugo-Betriebe: Yugoslav Investments and Everyday Geopolitics in Carinthia during the 1970s and 1980s

Jure Ramšak

Left with numerous kin-minorities in the neighbouring capitalist countries of Italy and Austria after WWII, socialist Yugoslavia, particularly its constituent republic of Slovenia, not only pursued conventional policies to promote the cultural reproduction of these communities but also adopted economic measures aimed at countering assimilation and socially modernising the ethnically mixed border areas in these countries. With the dual goal of creating more jobs for members of the minority and serving as a vehicle for economic cooperation between market- and export-oriented self-management Yugoslavia and EFTA-member Austria,

authorities in Ljubljana launched a special programme in the mid-1970s that set up a network of mixed-ownership companies across the peripheral areas of Southern Carinthia. Based on extensive archival materials from bodies responsible for international relations at both state and federal levels in Slovenia/Yugoslavia and Carinthia/Austria, this paper will first examine the profound political repercussions of this programme, which led to the establishment of some 20 enterprises employing roughly 800 people by the end of the 1980s in Carinthia, where German nationalist circles continued to harbour fears of irredentist tendencies from neighbouring Yugoslavia. Secondly, it will discuss how the cross-border operations of these companies resulted in continuous negotiations that ultimately facilitated the daily flows of goods, labour, and technology between the two legal systems. Thirdly, it will show how these firms – serving as extraterritorial outposts for Slovenia and beyond Belgrade’s control – contributed to the emergence of new economic borders within 1980s and 1990s Yugoslavia.

Nationalism and Interregional Integration at the Border: The Case of Carinthia at the End of the Cold War

Karlo Ruzicic-Kessler

In the final stages of the Cold War, the Austrian federal state of Carinthia’s internal and external policies witnessed dramatic shifts. The grip of the Socialist Party on power slowly eroded due to multiple political and economic crises that facilitated populist attacks by Jörg Haider and his Freedom Party who came to power in the region in 1989. In the same period, the looming Yugoslav crisis

called for active and decisive interregional diplomatic efforts to bolster Slovenian (and Croatian) claims for independence. The paper will thus focus on the ambiguous role of Carinthian politics that saw new pressure rising on the Slovenian minority in connection with minority rights, the question of bilingual topographic signs, school autonomy and Slovenian enterprises on Carinthian soil. Thus, this marked a period of strong nationalist claims in the border region. At the same time, the initiative for stronger interregional links and the Carinthian effort to help its neighbour(s) achieve independence in national and interregional forums will demonstrate what paradoxical traits policy-making on a regional level could assume. Therefore, internal nationalism was counterbalanced by energetic efforts to overcome national borders to the benefit of local and regional populations and businesses. By analysing this era, it is possible to understand why leading Carinthian politicians on the one hand pushed for national(ist) policies while at the same time advocating for independence movements in Yugoslavia and taking a leading role in Austrian politics at the end of the Cold War.

A4 - Borders in Spain

Migration, Local Belonging, and Border Narratives in the Canary Islands

Andrea Gallinal Arias

The Canary Islands, an Atlantic archipelago at the crossroads of Europe and Africa, offer a unique vantage point for exploring the intersection of migration, identity, and border governance. Historically marked by

colonial legacies and cultural hybridity, the islands have become a focal point in European migration and border policies. This presentation examines how the Canary Islands' positioning as a borderland shapes local identity dynamics amidst increasing securitization. Drawing on 11 months of ethnographic fieldwork (2021-2023), the analysis examines the interplay between securitizing narratives imposed by state and European authorities and local responses that challenge or reinterpret these frameworks. Particular attention is given to how migration governance influences representations of belonging and identity among Canarian residents. The research highlights how local communities navigate tensions between their regional distinctiveness, national affiliations, and the broader European context. If the current context has spurred exclusionary movements adopting state nationalist discourses, these narratives coexist with counter-mobilizations rooted in local belonging. This contribution interrogates the redefinition of identities in response to border securitization practices which are locally resisted and reshaped through cultural and political practices that foster alternative visions of solidarity and (intra)regional identity. The presentation argues that understanding the Canary Islands' identity dynamics requires moving beyond state-centric views of the border to consider the ways in which local practices construct, contest, and transform the meaning of the border, contributing to the panel's exploration of border regions as spaces of both division and connection, shaped by the interplay of governance, local agency, and identity formation.

From Geographical to Ideological Borders: French Ultra-Royalists and the Basque Phase of Spain's First Carlist War (1833-40)

Talitha Ilacqua

When in 1895 Sabino Arana y Goiri, the founder of the Basque Nationalist Party, defined the Basque nation as being based on ethnicity, religion and tradition, he relied on tropes of identity that had been crafted transnationally in the previous 100 years. This paper will look at one of the inventors of these tropes: French ultra-royalists during Spain's First Carlist War between 1833 and 1840. The conflict, which was largely fought on Spanish Basque soil, was part of the European transition from an ancien-régime order to a liberal society, and French ultraroyalists, who had been ousted from power in France in 1830, supported Carlism and the Basque cause in order to challenge liberalism and recover the alleged pre-Revolutionary values of traditional, rural and pious France. As part of their propaganda campaign, which took the form of newspaper articles and memoirs, they turned the Basques into ultra-conservative heroes, idealising their traditional values and identifying them with a model of rural society that liberalism allegedly wished to destroy. The geographical boundaries dividing France from Spain and the Basque country from the rest of Spain, then, became ideological boundaries between two opposing views of state- and nation-building: conservatism and liberalism. The English-speaking historiography has paid little attention both to French ultra-royalists after 1830, and to Spain's Carlist Wars. This paper is part of a wider research project that aims to fill this gap, showing that French ultra-royalists'

literary contribution to the First Carlist War contributed to the codification of the conservative national identities of both France and the Basque country.

Peripheral National Identities: The Complexity of Identity at the Borders of Stateless Nations. The Basque Case
Iñaki Zaldua and Jon Azkune

The modern era has bequeathed us a rigid framework for understanding and expressing national identity. This discursive rigidity means we create social constructs that are sufficiently clear and categorical to distinguish those who belong to the imagined nation from those who do not. However, we ought to approach this issue with more nuance, as identity cannot be so normatively structured in contexts where the archetypal discourse falls short. Globalization—whether considered in economic terms or in terms of social dynamics—has already influenced how a nation’s identity cannot be explained in a monolithic way. This complexity is particularly evident in stateless nations, and especially in their peripheral regions, where the ways in which communities live and express their national identities must adapt to the specific realities they face. National identity should be understood as a habitus, a complex and dynamic structure that simultaneously shapes and is shaped by the population it encompasses. This dynamism implies that in the peripheral areas of the Basque nation, the formation of national identity relies on both objective and subjective elements that differ from those at the national center. While the imagined peripheral community consciously embraces and reproduces the same discursive elements as the center, it subconsciously reconstructs

and grounds its identity—its understanding of its place in the world—on elements that are relatively distinct.

A5 - Beyond Albania's Borders

Reimagining the Homeland: Identity and Boundaries in the Arbëresh Village
Silvana Nini

The Arbëresh community constitutes a significant component of the historical Albanian diaspora, which, while sharing similarities with the “ideal type” of diaspora defined by Safran, exhibits its own distinct characteristics. This early diaspora, established in the southern regions of Italy and Sicily, has endured in “isolated” settlements that redefined their cultural identities, positioning themselves as distinct from the local populations of their host countries. Each settlement reflects diverse Albanian regional influences, blending inherited traditions with those acquired in the new homeland, shaping a cultural identity that combines both. These settlements, described as “linguistic islands” by Çabej, not only developed their own regional dialects but also cultivated other cultural elements individually. This paper seeks to explore how the Arbëresh diaspora, after nearly five centuries of settlement in Italy and the loss of direct ties with their homeland, shaped its identity by establishing both spatial and symbolic boundaries within each settlement. Following the reopening of communication with Albania after the 1990s, there was a heightened awareness among the Arbëresh of the unique cultural traits they retained, with the boundaries of their villages serving as the limits of their cultural exchanges and interactions. This awareness is aptly

expressed by a resident of Piana degli Albanesi, who states: "'For us, Albania is in Sicily, this is our beautiful Hora.'" This phrase encapsulates the collective mindset and identity of the Arbëresh communities, reflecting how the awareness of their heritage continues to persist in most of these communities today.

Sea as a liquid border, bridge and boundary for the preservation of Arbëresh identity
Rudina Duraj Hoxha

The sea serves as a unifying link and a separating barrier in the history and preservation of the Arbëresh identity and their ancestral homeland. The Adriatic and Ionian Seas, which lie between Italy and Albania, served as a geographical boundary for those who had left their homeland, yet their connection to their ancestral country remained strong and unbroken. This fluid boundary holds a deep significance for them, representing a connection to their heritage and being an integral component of their shared history, as recounted through stories, legendary songs, and historical accounts, signifying a separation and yearning for their ancestral homeland. On the contrary, it is also viewed as a symbolic connection that safeguards historical remembrance and cultural heritage. The journey of recognition as a linguistic minority and the preservation of their identity has been a lengthy and arduous one. These challenges may persist, however, they have also facilitated the Arbëresh in acting as a conduit linking the cultures of their native land and the country in which they reside, while maintaining and interchanging aspects from both. Cultural elements such as language,

traditional attire, music, and ceremonial practices like dances and religious rites provide a vibrant representation of a community's ancestral heritage. The Arbëresh identity has been expanded beyond the borders of their ancestral settlements as a result of mobility driven by migration and diaspora processes. Younger generations are at risk of cultural assimilation and losing distinct Arbëresh identity traits due to the pressures of globalization, which could ultimately lead to the living heritage being reduced to a static, museum-like state.

Beyond Borders: The Framing of Albania in the Greek Press during the 1997 events
Ermioni Vlachidou

While Greece as a modern nation-state has never been entirely homogenous, it largely maintained an image of ethnic and cultural uniformity until the 1990s. The fall of the Iron Curtain brought a wave of migration, particularly from Albania, which disrupted this narrative and forced Greek society to confront questions of national identity, specifically whether being Greek is something one is born into or can become through integration. This paper examines Albanian migration to Greece in the 1990s and 2000s, focusing on the media framing of the 1997 Albanian crisis. In early 1997, the collapse of pyramid schemes in Albania led to widespread civil unrest and economic collapse, triggering a second wave of migration to Greece. Greek media extensively covered these events, but responses varied across the political spectrum. Newspapers of all political backgrounds expressed sympathy for Albanians remaining in Albania, yet center- and right-leaning outlets often portrayed

Albanian migrants through a narrow, migrant-criminal lens, framing them as a threat to Greek society. This dichotomy—of sympathy for Albanians in Albania versus hostility toward migrants in Greece—reflected growing tensions around Greek identity and national borders. Through analysis of these contrasting media portrayals, this paper explores how Greek identity was reshaped in response to the migration crisis. By examining evolving perceptions of nationality, borders, and ‘Greekness,’ this study offers insights into how the Greek socio-political landscape was influenced by rising xenophobia and the reconfiguration of national belonging during this transformative period.

A6 - Borders and Gender (1)

Femonationalism as a Modern Sexual Device: A Critical Examination of Body Discipline in the Neoliberal Order
Luna Rovolon

In the current globalized era, the rise of new forms of national fanaticism, marked by anti-globalization stances through calls for border security and resistance to immigration, raises concerns about a possible revival of older forms of totalitarianism. However, it is important to note that these new forms of nationalism preserve an ideological link to past traditions while adapting to the current neoliberal social and economic framework. For instance, femonationalism exemplifies the ideological and policy alignment between nationalist and neoliberal groups and certain feminist factions, all aiming to uphold the unquestioned supremacy of the Western capitalist system by instrumentalizing gender and sexuality.

In particular, women’s bodies are inscribed with moral values and social norms through political mechanisms and language, producing new meanings. Simultaneously, they function as symbols that construct and enforce dichotomies of who is included and who is excluded, who is considered primitive and who is civilized. In this context, this study aims to trace the historical roots that have led to the formation of the current national symbolic order through the intersection of gender, sexuality, class, and race, which collectively uphold the capital accumulation system. Subsequently, the analysis will explore how these narratives persist within today’s order, revealing how historical structures of oppression have adapted to maintain unchallenged Western dominance.

Femonationalism, gendered anti-Muslim racism and reproductive anxiety: perspectives from the UK and Germany,
Naaz Rashid

Focussing on two different western European nation states, the UK and Germany, we explore the apparent paradox of liberal feminist support for right-wing and authoritarian populist parties. Firstly, we explore the wider political context of anti-migrant and anti-Muslim neo-nationalist discourse within which this paradox occurs. Secondly, while critical scholarship has often focused on far-right ‘populism’, this obscures the role that centre-right and left-wing political discourses play in fostering and normalising anti-Muslim racism and gendered Islamophobia specifically (Rashid, 2016). Finally, through exploring media and political discourses, we examine how narratives of integration are explicitly linked to

reproductive anxieties. We argue that contemporary gendered nationalist discourses are interwoven with these narratives of reproductive anxiety and whiteness, and they span the political spectrum. Through exploring the nation as an ethnicised project where women play a central role in its biological, cultural, and symbolic reproduction (Yuval-Davis, 1993), the convergence of some strands of liberal feminism with far-right politics become less paradoxical than would initially appear.

'Mothers of the nation': gender mobilisation in far-right politics. The case of Italy.

Arianna Piacentini

Nationalist and nativist ideas about the nation are traditionally expressed through the family and motherhood metaphors which, however, go beyond the meta-linguistic dimension finding concreteness in specific policy agendas. Nationalists depict the nation as the unit of 'human solidarity and political legitimacy' (Malešević 2013: 75), an imagined community (Anderson 1983) able to foster loyalty and solidarity among its members. Nonetheless, while gender is not a defining feature of nationalist and far-right parties (Mudde 2017), its mobilisation plays a pivotal role: the nation is usually depicted as a 'family of political loyalty and shared identity' (Wimmer 2013: 4), its members are tied together by the same blood, and they are loyal to their motherland/fatherland. This nationalist conception of the nation is also imbued in a nativist idea of the same (Pappas 2018), according to which the native-born shall be protected and safeguarded also through specific policy agendas engaging into demographic policies promoting the autochthonous

population's growth (Dietzle 2016) - so that women become 'mothers of the nation'. "I am a woman, I am a mother, I am Italian, I am Christian - and you won't take it away from me!": Giorgia Meloni's words, pronounced during a speech in 2019, well summarise the above. The paper explores the link between gender and nationalism by looking at gender's unfolding both as a meta-language and as a policy-issue. It goes in depth into the case of Italy, currently led by Giorgia Meloni - first female Prime Minister, founder and leader of the far-right party Fratelli d'Italia, whose slogan is God, Fatherland and Family - and shows how gender mobilisation during political speeches, alongside with specific policies targeting women, serves the nativists and nationalist purposes of defining and delimiting the nation's imagined boundaries.

A7 - World War II and its Aftermath

Borders as tools of exclusion and reconstruction- Transnistria's Orphans' Journey from Misery to Building their National Identity and Nation.

Sylvia Hershcovitz

During World War II emigration through the Black Sea was one of the few options Romanian Jews (and not only) had to try and save their lives. Desperate families sold everything they had in order to pay what was most of the times an exorbitant price for a ticket on an usually old derelict and unfit boat, in the attempt to reach Palestine. For that, they had to cross the Romanian border at Constanta, the Turkish border at Istanbul and the Palestinian border at Rosh Hanikra when they travelled on land: or at Haifa when

they travelled by sea. Chaya Wainstein, Sabo Clara, and Nachum Morghenstern were 3 out of approximately 8000 orphans who survived the dire conditions in Transnistria. They were deported to Transnistria in the fall of 1941, were repatriated by the Romanian government in 1944, taken care of in the OSE facilities in Romania, finally boarded Bela Chita and arrived safely to Haifa (Atlit). The suggested presentation focusses on the challenges the orphans faced during the migration process (while crossing 3 borders), the absorption process in Palestine and their contribution to building their national identity and a NATION. By following their individual stories which reflect despair, hope, resilience, and reconciliation, this paper aspires to show how relevant these borders crossing decisions are, and how communities and individuals can recover and rebuild after turmoil.

“Wounded Soldiers”, the Former Russian Concession, and the Last Year of the Chinese Nationalists in Postcolonial Tianjin

Hanzhi Dai

Concluding of the Second World War in Asia had left a number of post-imperial shatterzones at war against themselves. Despite its emergence as one of the most important victorious powers in the war, China also saw an outpour of such conflicts in its former imperial outposts, as the Chinese Nationalist regime launched its massive reconstruction project after the Japanese surrender in 1945 while fighting a concomitant civil war against the Chinese Communist forces. In Tianjin, then economic centre of Northern China, conflict between displaced Nationalist soldiers and Russian migrants had evolved into one of

the major diplomatic crises for the Nationalists in the final months before the Communist takeover of the city. This paper focuses on Tianjin’s former tsarist Russian zone: the largest of nine colonial concessions being ceded to the imperial powers after the Boxer Uprising, it was returned by the Soviet authority after the October Revolution, while the Soviet diplomats succeeded the original tsarist consulate. Multiple conflicts had occurred since mid-1948 between hospitalised “wounded soldiers” and the Soviet consulate regarding issues such as “harassing” of the Russian immigrant community, offending of the consulate-owned vehicles, siege and attack of the consulate mansion. Based on exchanges between the local law enforcers, the Chinese foreign ministry and the Soviet consulate, this research showcases how the hiatus in a post-colonial urban space had revealed the nature of the 1945-49 conflict in China as a nominal “civil war” that capsuled concrete post-coloniality and acted as a unique sample for wartime grassroot nationalism.

Jewish Petitioners and Citizenship in the Slovak-Hungarian Border after the WWII

Patricia Fogelová

In this paper, I analyze the petitions submitted by Holocaust survivors to the city of Košice, which was ceded to Hungary in 1938. My focus is on petitions filed between 1945 and 1948, following the restoration of Czechoslovakia, in which survivors sought to obtain a certificate of national and political reliability—a prerequisite for acquiring Czechoslovak citizenship. This analysis centers on the reasons for which survivors requested the certificate, shedding light on their adaptive strategies for integrating into post-war

Czechoslovak society, a society fundamentally shaped by nationalism and socialism. Furthermore, I examine how social connections among Holocaust survivors, in addition to the official legal criteria, played a role in determining their success in securing the certificate. I also explore the attitude of the local political elite toward Holocaust survivors during this period. A key question I address is how the local post-war political elite, who held decision-making authority, responded to these petitions, particularly in a context where the city—along with many of its officials and politicians—was under suspicion of sympathizing with Hungarian nationalism. This investigation aims to contribute to our understanding of the complex dynamics of integration, memory, and political legitimacy in the immediate aftermath of World War II in Czechoslovakia.

A8 - Online Borders

Borders without territory: How nonstate actors are enforcing new definitions of nationalism

Menan Khater

This paper explores the dynamics of enforcing borders in cyberspace and argues that digital technologies are transforming the character of nationalism, while its essence remains rooted in collective identity. Unlike traditional borders, firewalls and cyber laws now shape a nation's political identity, making nationalism increasingly dependent on data sovereignty rather than territorial sovereignty. Furthermore, the actors enforcing these borders are not limited to states but include influential non-state entities

such as tech companies. This shift highlights that nationalism is increasingly detached from physical territory, fostering new forms of inclusion and exclusion based on shared identities. Traditional theories of nationalism, while still relevant, fail to grasp this new reality and needs to be further developed to offer a new definition of nationalism and a theoretical framework to help understand the emerging developments in the cyber space. The methodology would be gap-spotting and problematization of understanding nationalism in the literature given new developments, by drawing on examples from tech companies in the US and how they are allowing or censoring the flow of information through enforcing their own cyber laws that do not necessarily align with the state's laws, and to what extent is their influence changing the conventional knowledge of nationalism.

DigiBorders: Everyday borderwork in the digital world

Sabina Mihelj and César Jiménez-Martínez

Despite claims about the non-territorial character of digital media, nationalism is embedded in their very infrastructures. Evidence can be found in the domain name system, the contemporary organisation of digital platforms, as well as the ideals of digital sovereignty guiding media policy and platform regulation (e.g., Lobato 2019, Wass 2003). Although people can potentially use digital media to access a vast range of information and services from across the world, this access is restricted through a combination of technological, economic, legal and political means, motivated by the national logic.

Examples range from the geo-blocking of movies or series (Lobato, 2019), to censorship and banning of platforms, as in China or Russia (Wu & Mai, 2019; Golovchenko, 2022). Research on digital borders has however focused predominantly on how they are enforced by governments, and on the consequences they have for migrants, refugees or diasporas (e.g. Georgiou & Chouliaraki, 2022; Jhoti and Allen, 2024). This paper seeks to develop a more holistic understanding of the functioning of national borders in the digital world, drawing attention to the importance of everyday borderwork. We examine experiences of encountering digital borders across three different environments: UK, Brazil and Ukraine, using a combination of digital diaries and semi-structured interviews. Echoing Billig's arguments on banal nationalism (1995), we argue that we can understand the impact of digital borders on migrants and refugees only once we juxtapose it with the experiences of other, more privileged individuals, for whom digital borders often appear invisible, ephemeral or easy to cross.

B1 - Theoretical Perspectives (1)

The Body of the Nation: A Cognitive-Affective Theory of Nationalism, Territory and Conflict

Steven Mock

"The Homeland is indivisible". Such claims are false by definition. Borders, by their nature, can be changed in any number of ways. Yet the ubiquity of such sentiments in the rhetoric of ethnic and international conflict, and the extent to which they are widely acknowledged as

exacerbating factors hindering instrumental conflict resolutions, indicates their depth and universality. The loss or partition of territory that a group deems theirs by right is experienced not simply as unjust but unnatural; an inconceivable violation disruptive of any stable order, triggering a sense of desperation often difficult for outsiders to understand. Understanding this dynamic requires an approach that can model the interrelationship between individual cognition and emotion, networks of social communication, and the physical environment in which these reside. Employing the method of cognitive-affective mapping (CAM) our model shows how territorial boundaries serve as the quintessential "keystone symbol" resolving tensions and contradictions inherent in construct of the nation as it emerges from interactions between these levels of analysis. As perhaps the most concrete, tangible, practical and near-universal non-human element of the system of concepts that constitute the nation, the reality and inviolability of borders comes to symbolise the reality and indivisibility of the nation itself. It is thus experienced as depended upon by individual members not just for their sense of identity, meaning and justice, but for all of the benefits that accrue from collective existence, from economic role and livelihood; to security and comfort; even to the point of bodily survival.

The "Whence" of the Nation: Suspension of Time in Nationalist Thought

Vuk Vukotić

The paper argues that Anderson's notion of "homogenous, empty time" can presently only explain the nation as a contemporaneously imagined

community, severed with each passing moment from its past. Therefore, it cannot explain the power of nationalist thought to mobilize the past and present the nation as temporally connected to its ancient roots. Anderson's "national meanwhile" thus also requires a "national whence" (in a temporal meaning of the word) to make nations imaginable in a capitalist temporal regime of clock-and-calendar. I argue that nationalist thought resists this temporal regime through a discursive technique I call the "suspension of time". Its mechanics are shown in an exploration of the temporalities in debates on two controversial linguistic questions: the Balto-Slavic protolanguage and Croato-Serbian language. Here, nationalist scholars have employed various narrative techniques to suspend time between the past and present with the goal to claim an "ancient" character for their national languages and to determine the spatial and temporal borders of their ethnolinguistic nations. I discuss the implications of the notion of "suspended time" for the debate about the role of homogenous, empty time in nationalist thought (Bhabha 2004, Chatterjee 2005, Fjeld 2016, Goetz 2002, Kelly 1998, Weeda 2018), by arguing that homogenous time contains at least two distinctive temporalities that help the nation to be imagined as simultaneously contemporaneous and ancient. Lastly, through a re-reading of Benjamin, who inspired Anderson's notion of homogenous time, I argue that scholarship critical of nationalism needs to explore temporalities that resist this nationalist temporal regime.

Serbia beyond its borders: a nation in danger narrative

Dejan Guzina

The failure of the Greater Serbia program in the 1990s did not end ethnic nationalism in Serbia. The idea of enemies surrounding the Serbian nation, a 'nation in danger' narrative, continues to promote national homogenization and religious orthodoxy as crucial to Serbian identity. In this paper, I examine the socio-psychological mechanisms that hinder Serbia from altering its identity matrix. I contend that the 'nation-in-danger' narrative prevalent in post-Yugoslav Serbia serves as a cognitive framework that clearly outlines the geographical areas deemed inherently belonging to the Serbian nation. This narrative not only reflects historical grievances but also reinforces a sense of identity and entitlement to specific territories, shaping the collective consciousness of the Serbian people. Consequently, it promotes the concept of a Serbian Reconquista and challenges Serbia's asserted path toward European Union membership. My analysis utilizes Lacanian psychoanalytic theory of politics to explore how Serbian society confronts the statehood dilemma, where state borders and national boundaries do not coincide. This paper emphasizes the stories, monuments, and popular songs that embody the idea of a Serbian unified cultural space beyond its current territorial borders, thereby keeping the ideal of all Serbs living in one state alive. I argue that without effectively addressing Serbia's 'nation-in-danger' narrative, the notion of the Serbian World and its commemorative practices will continue to dominate, sidelining alternative narratives regarding Serbia's position in Europe.

B2 - Gellnerian Perspectives

The border as an area of contestation of cultural and national identities: case studies of lived experience in Slovenian Istria

Maja Zadel

Nationalism, often framed through primordial or modernist perspectives—or a combination of the two—is typically characterized by criteria such as language, ethnicity, religion, history, cultural traits, and territory. Yet, as Hobsbawm (2007 [1990]) argues, such definitions often fall short because they are made a posteriori, attempting to encompass diverse entities created in different contexts. This highlights the necessity of adopting a constructivist approach to address the complexity of nationalism. In this presentation, we adopt a modernist framework (Hobsbawm 2007 [1990]; Gellner 2008 [1983]; Anderson 2003 [1983]), viewing nations and national identities as modern constructs arising from state-building, especially cultural and linguistic standardization, and the creation of “imagined communities” within bounded territories. Borders play a pivotal role in these processes. As Barth (1996 [1969]) emphasises, borders are central to identity formation, distinguishing “us” from “them.” Similarly, Mencin Čeplak (2003, 31) argues that borders are “another name for identity” or “the very effect of establishing identity.” Within national borders, culturally homogeneous identities are often presumed. But are borders merely lines demarcating one nation and its culture from another? How are identities understood, experienced, and negotiated in everyday life? Drawing on

case studies conducted in Slovenian Istria among its inhabitants (2014–2015) and among Slovenian–Italian minority mixed families (2024), this research examines how people in border areas live and conceptualise identity. The findings reveal that border regions foster unique and dynamic understandings of identity, challenging simplistic notions of borders as fixed dividing lines. Instead, these regions emerge as transcultural spaces where identities are fluidly negotiated.

Ireland & The Black North: More than one border, or bordering on the absurd?

Andrew Ferguson

This paper will look at the creation and maintenance of boundaries, particularly the role borders play in the politics of exclusion and inclusion; how borders are negotiated and contested; and how they intersect with issues of religion and ethnicity. These questions will be examined using the theories of Gellner on the misalignment of political and ethnographic boundaries; Tilly and Barth on social and cultural boundaries; and Hutchinson on shatter zones. The border between Northern Ireland and the Republic will be used as a case-study, and the work of O’Leary, Evans and Heslinga will also be considered. The Partition of Ireland was justified on the basis that Ulster was different. Northern Ireland, however, excluded the Ulster counties of Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan which were predominantly Catholic and nationalist. This meant excluding Protestant communities in these counties and including communities which were Catholic and nationalist in the 6 remaining counties. This border was never meant to be permanent, as the boundaries of the 6 counties chosen were purely

administrative divisions, and a boundary commission was tasked with redrawing the border to more accurately reflect ethno-religious divisions. The commission's proposals were never implemented and arguments over the border continue to this day. Most recently with the changes introduced after Brexit to avoid a hard border. This paper argues that the Irish case reveals the existence of multiple potential borders, the difficulty of creating borders in shatter zones and the dangers of imposing boundaries without adequate consultation or respecting ethno-religious boundaries.

Impressions of Authority: the Printing Press and the State in Early Modern Egypt, 1800-1840

Marcus Hibbeln

Amongst theorists of Middle Eastern nationalism, Ernest Gellner claimed notably that the Arab-Islamic world was both culturally distinctive and driven by a unique philosophy of history. Derived from the 14th century sociology of ibn Khaldun, this philosophy outlines an alternative Muslim path to modernity through the consolidation and expansion of script-based literacy. For Gellner, literate rationalism and its visual intensification of experience defined a unitary religious legalism of urban Islam. The Islamic path to modernity centred on the extension of literacy's sober regimentation beyond the city to the nation at large, in response to modern demands for consistency and accountability. Though Gellner's theory has been criticised for its subsumption of geographic difference in the name of 'Islam,' critics have yet to detail how urban literacy's ability to legitimise rulers developed through modern writing

technologies. In response, this paper situates the discussion of Islamic modernity around the printing press's historical introduction to Egypt. Through comparative analysis of handwritten histories and printed state texts between 1800-1840, this paper studies the production and spatial organisation of scribal and print-based literacy. It argues that while print in early modern Egypt succeeded in centralising the state, it unintentionally departed from scribal justifications of state legitimacy that existed alongside it. By the late 1840's, neither print nor scribal literacy alone possessed the capacity to regulate Egyptian society as Gellner claims. Instead, the distinct contrast in modern literary mediums draws attention to Gellner's distinction between political and cultural claims to authority—and to their frequent divergence.

B3 - Militarized Borders

Borders of Ruin and Sovereignty: Gaza's Construction as a Total Enemy

Magdalena Pycinska

This paper examines Israel's militarized borders and the construction of Gaza as a contested borderland, where national identity and sovereignty are violently inscribed and renegotiated. Gaza exemplifies the role of borders as tools of both destruction and sovereignty development, reflecting broader settler-colonial dynamics rooted in the logic of elimination, as articulated by Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini. Israel's military strategies blur civilian-combatant distinctions, embedding conflict into the built environment and constructing Gazans and their material life as a total enemy. This transforms

Gaza Strip's spaces into sites of violent contestation, reshaping the spatial and symbolic boundaries of Palestinian nationhood. Israel's warfare in Gaza Strip transforms it into theater of conflict, where destruction and spatial restructuring reinforce asymmetric power dynamics and expand Israel/Jewish sovereignty and borders. Dirk Moses' critique of "permanent security" underscores how those practices maintain power asymmetries, using people and space as a tactical extension of war. The paper situates Gaza within theories of nationalism and borders, particularly Rogers Brubaker's insights into boundary-making and identity formation. Gaza's built environment reflects ongoing struggles over sovereignty and exclusion, illustrating how modern nation-states use borders to assert control and reshape political landscapes. Warfare in Gaza highlights the interplay between physical and symbolic borders, where violence perpetuates narratives of national identity and sovereignty through the totalizing destruction of contested spaces.

Borders within Borders: Postwar Ethnonational Debates in Prijedor, Bosnia-Herzegovina
Petra Hamer

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H) officially ended in 1995, yet its scars remain visible across post-war society. Over the past almost 30 years, the war has inspired numerous studies exploring various aspects of its impact. Mass media has broadcasted powerful images: the siege of Sarajevo, concentration camps, mass graves in Prijedor, the destruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar, the Srebrenica genocide, and the

convictions of war criminals at the ICTY in The Hague. One might expect wounds to have healed, but the opposite has occurred. Inhabitants of B-H often reflect deeply on the war, with three main ethno-national narratives shaping their perspectives, and only limited points of commonality. These "borders within borders" extend beyond the political division of Federacija and Republika Srpska, fragmenting down to municipalities and communities. During ethnographic fieldwork in the northwestern city of Prijedor, I observed how two primary ethnonational discourses foster division, creating figurative borders, destroying bridges, and separating neighbours. This paper examines these enduring divides, addressing taboo topics like genocide denial, mass graves, and the role of the dead in Prijedor's collective memory. Through the lens of monuments, public opinion, politics, music, and folklore, it explores how the legacy of the war continues to shape the region's social fabric today. Funded by the European Union (ERC project DEAGENCY, № 101095729)

Partition and Violence: The Case of Indonesia World War II Indigenous Military Mobilization and Post-Independence Civil Wars
Joowon Yi

This paper explores how administrative partition, as a form of internal border-making, shapes the dynamics of separatist violence, focusing on Indonesia's creation of West Papua in 2003. It argues that partition enhances state capacity through increased policing and military presence, raising the costs of rebellion and reducing violence even in relatively peaceful

periods. Analyzing district-level data with a differences-in-differences approach, the study finds a significant reduction in violence in the newly formed province. This contributes to the ongoing debate on partition as a solution to ethnic and territorial conflicts. Proponents argue that partition reduces conflict by decreasing joint decision-making and enhancing self-governance, while critics suggest it could spur similar demands from other minority groups or create new points of contention, such as struggles over new government offices. The empirical findings also speak to a broader theoretical question about the strategic logic behind partition, extending the focus beyond conflict zones to include decisions made in times of peace.

B4 - The Borders of China

Cuddly Nationalism: The Making of Formosan Black Bear as a National Symbol in Settler-Colonial and Geopolitically Intense Taiwan

John Chung-En Liu

Recent scholarship on nationalism has highlighted how geopolitical conditions shape national identity in postcolonial societies, suggesting that unstable environments foster restrictive nationalism while stable, democratic conditions support liberal expressions. However, this framework leaves underexplored the interplay between inclusive and exclusionary national expressions within a society, particularly in cases with both turbulent geopolitical conditions and robust democratic institutions like Taiwan. Through interviews and content analysis, this study examines Taiwan's "cuddly

nationalism" centered on the Formosan black bear—an endemic endangered species—as it negotiates its identity against Chinese nationalist narratives from both settler Republic of China (ROC) regime and People's Republic of China (PRC) which claims sovereignty over Taiwan. The study reveals a three-fold animal-human relationship: "us" (black bear-Taiwan), "other" (pandas-China), and "marginalized us" (other endangered species-Indigenous peoples). The us-other boundary-making encompasses three stages through which the black bear acquires different social and political meanings: to compete with pandas through "cuteness" and endangered status against China's panda diplomacy in early 2000s; to consume through widespread merchandising; and to contrast its gentle image against China's "wolf warrior" diplomacy in past decade. However, this us-other boundary-drawing rests upon another dimension of animal-human relationship—the "marginalized us"—where Indigenous peoples, suffering from Han settlement, are instrumentalized for boosting Taiwanese ethnic distinctiveness from Chinese, while other endangered wildlife face marginalization due to lacking the black bear's celebrity status. This research contributes to nationalism studies by examining inclusive-exclusionary dynamics, internal boundaries, nonhuman actors in nationalism, and settler-indigenous relations in nation-building processes.

From temporal to spatial: Chinese regimes' territorial claims and legitimacy claims

Oscar Fu

Correct lineage theory (zheng tong lun) has been dictating imperial China's legitimation projects for over a millennium. It is still haunting contemporary Chinese republics. As a theory stemmed from Confucian historiography, its primary concern is what can be classified as a rightful dynastic succession and subsequently, a rightful dynasty. This paper traces the genealogy of the correct lineage theory and how their core premises and tenets shifted from temporal, dynastic lineage, such as the rejection of power acquisition through regicide or usurpation, to spatial, such as territorial succession and unification as the justification of power acquisition. Then I deploy correct lineage theory as a conceptual tool to explain People's Republic of China (PRC)'s territorial claim over Taiwan (ROC), a conceptual lenses seldomly used. I argue, that although it seems that PRC's claim over Taiwan is nationalistic—'borders of the political unit and the national unit should be congruent', the correct lineage theory that concerns legitimacy of dynastic succession is hidden beneath the buzzwords of nationalism. Through a study of the discourses of Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) mouthpiece People's Daily, I demonstrate that CCP's unification interest over Taiwan can be better understood through correct lineage theories. In a broader perspective, I hope to illustrate the ambiguous relation between empire and nation states and how imperial modes of legitimation can be still binding nation states' policies. While nationalism has

become the dominate mode of legitimation for modern nation states, traditional, dynastic form of legitimation can be lurking behind the rhetoric of nations.

The border of informal imperialism in Shanghai: The concession and foreign settlement as a country within a country

Xinbei Wang

In 1839, the First Opium War initiated Western informal imperialism in China, leading to the establishment of Treaty Ports along the southeastern coast. Beginning with Shanghai, the British and later other Western powers set up concessions and foreign settlements in these ports cities. Initially, concessions and settlements were located outside city boundaries, aligning with the Qing government's policy of "separation of Chinese and foreigners (华洋分居)." Under this policy, Chinese residents were confined to designated areas, while foreigners resided only within concessions. Although nominally under Chinese sovereignty, these concessions operated independently, with foreign residents enjoying distinct administrative and judicial autonomy. Unlike ceded territories, concessions did not formally grant extraterritoriality; however, unequal treaties enabled foreign nations to exert consular jurisdiction over their citizens within these areas. The concessions maintained legislative powers and limited the sovereignty of the host country, creating distinct enclaves where foreign influences dominated. From the first British concession in Shanghai in 1845 to the Austro-Hungarian concession in Tianjin in 1902, a total of 27 concessions existed in China, transforming Treaty Ports into quasi-

foreign enclaves. These concessions fostered a “country within a country” phenomenon, where architecture, culture, and lifestyle starkly contrasted with those outside, contributing to modern China’s urbanisation patterns and spatial development. This created a quasi-loss of national sovereignty within China, granting foreigners in China preferential treatment and diplomatic immunities, and became one of the triggers for China’s growing nationalism from the nineteenth and twentieth century.

B5 - Borders in the Nineteenth Century

The map- and fear-makers: The officers and the constructing of a Norwegian national identity, 1814-1850
Roald Berg

The triumph of “Norwegianness” in 1905 is traditionally narrated as the blossoming of “the seed of a sovereign nation-state” that laid in the “marked democratic” constitution of 1814 (Nordby 1995:181). The paper challenges this teleological narration by focusing on the geopolitical and emotional construction of Norway as an imagined community, led by the engineer officers in the 1820s by mapping Norway. The map, together with the census and the museum, is the key behind the creation of nation states (Anderson: 163-165) and the prime ideological apparatus for the creation of national identity (Short 2001:11). This was unveiled when the officer corpses of Norway and Sweden were ordered to map the two union states, ca. 1820, and couldn’t agree on where to place the map meridian. Thus the “union map” became useless for its political purpose of

constructing an imagined Scandinavian union state, but its Norwegian part became the prime anchor pile for the construction of “Norway” as a topographic “natural” unit (Berg 2019). That strengthened the border and consolidated Norway as a state, separate from Sweden (Berg 2009). After the “emotional turn” in societal research (Lang 2018; Plamper 2015), this geopolitical interpretation of the map must be supplemented by the study of the military function of the map, namely its function as a vehicle for imagining Norway as a “natural” defence subject and the union as artificial. The map makers produced threat perceptions and shaped the “Norwegianness” first and foremost as a community of fear for foreign invaders to Norway as an independent defence subject, not to the Scandinavian union (Berg 2019).

Uniting the body of the nation. Polish radical nationalists and their spatial and social imagination at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries
Claudia Snochowska-Gonzalez

Throughout the 19th century, Poland did not exist as an independent state, and Polish lands were divided between the Russian Empire, the Austrian Empire (after 1867 Austria-Hungary) and the Kingdom of Prussia. In my presentation, I want to focus on the activities of the national democratic movement – the Polish version of integral, radical, volkist nationalism, which at the end of the 19th century tried to find an answer to the reality of partitioned Poland. In the political imagination of National Democracy, the concept of the nation as a living being appeared, whose national soul manifested itself in the body of the nation (Volkskörper), in its material

embodiment. This applied to both the "body" of the partitioned state (to which attempts were made to unite and regenerate it) and to the bodies of the Poles (who were distinguished from the masses inhabiting the area of the former Polish First Republic by ethnic categories). Basing on the analysis of the publications of National Democracy, I want to describe the parallels in the way it described the postulated, united body of Poland as a place on the map, and the united nation as a community of people subordinated to the national cause. The abolition of the borders between the partitions was to be a spatial reflection and result of the authoritarian abolition of antagonisms between individual social groups and the effect of their subordination to the national democratic elite.

Whose Sovereignty? - Deconstructing Territorial Sovereignty, Administrative Authorities, and Borders within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918)
Bálint Hilbert

Defining territorial sovereignty within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy may appear straightforward at first sight, given the duality suggested by its name and the existence of separate Austrian and Hungarian citizenships at that time. Historiographical accounts also often imply distinct sovereign statuses for Austria and Hungary, as they typically do not explore the depth of their interconnection. However, an examination of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 reveals that the core elements of sovereignty, border, and administrative authority deviate from standard definitions for these regions, and the constitutional structure proves to be far more intricate on both

supranational and subnational levels than expected. The primary aim of this paper is to clarify the definition of the three mentioned concepts in the case of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by analyzing the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the Customs Union treaties, the acts regulating the administrative systems of Austria and Hungary, and those granting autonomy to certain territorial entities (e.g., Croatia-Slavonia). A detailed legal analysis reveals that the jurisdiction of supranational entities not only affected but also limited Austria's and Hungary's sovereignty. The treaties establishing the customs union practically eliminated internal borders for citizens, capital, and corporations, creating significant migrational ties between Austria and Hungary, as shown by a statistical analysis. Furthermore, certain subnational entities held special jurisdictions, enabling them to resist state or supranational powers. Taking a purely legal approach, this paper seeks to clarify the many paradoxes concerning the constitutional nature of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by deconstructing the concepts of sovereignty, borders, and administrative authority.

B6 - Languages and Borders

Evolving Borders in South Tyrol: Intersections of Politics, Nationalism, and Identity in a Multilingual Region
Andrea Carlà

Situated at the intersection of ethnic politics, border studies, and nationalism research, this paper aims to trace the evolution of borders in South Tyrol, an Italian province bordering Austria and Switzerland with a German- and Ladin-

speaking population and a complex power-sharing system to protect their language and culture, which has contributed to appeasing past ethnic tensions. Specifically, the analysis is centred on the developments of three types of borders concerning South Tyrol: the Italy-Austrian political border, the administrative border between South Tyrol and other Italian regions/provinces, and the cultural-linguistic borders between South Tyrolean linguistic groups. These borders are analysed in their historical evolution and in the context of more recent dynamics related to increasing global mobility, populist nationalizing agenda, and transnational initiatives such as the creation of the Euregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino, which have revitalized debates about the significance of South Tyrolean borders. The findings reveal that while political and cultural borders have become more permeable over time, administrative borders have gained prominence and are more rigorously defended. This underscores the critical role of institutional frameworks in shaping border dynamics. By exploring the continuity and change in the meaning, relevance, and perception of South Tyrolean borders, the paper highlights their overlapping, intersecting, and evolving nature. Ultimately, the South Tyrolean case serves as a lens to investigate broader questions surrounding borders, nationalism, state-building, and the construction of national and ethnic identities.

Invented Separatism. Silesians in the Eyes of Polish Authorities

Anna Muś

In recent years we have observed an expansion of literature on territorial

preference (including self-determination) and ethno-regionalist movements (Cunningham 2023; Balcells&Kuo 2024). Also, there is a growing scholarly interest in the Upper Silesian ethno-regionalist movement (Dembinska 2013; Marondel&Pietrzykowski 2021). It is an interesting case not only because it pertains to the biggest (still not recognised) minority in Poland – a state considered almost ethnically homogenous since 1945. It is also peculiar because there is no separatist movement in the region and only minority of Silesians classify their group as a nation (Muś 2021). Still, state authorities seem to be fully convinced that the “separatist threat” is real (President 2024). During research on ethnic policy and diversity management in Poland, I started to consider how state authorities invent the threat of Silesian separatism and motives behind this phenomenon. It would be somehow comforting to say, that it is a product of the populist policy of Law and Justice but it is not so. In this paper, I analyse debates in the Parliament and grounds for decisions regarding two legislative initiatives: 2014 citizen initiative to recognise Silesians as an ethnic minority and 2023 initiative to recognise the Silesian language as a regional language. Additionally, I analyse the case of the Association of People of Silesian Nationality before Polish courts and the ECtHR. In all cases, I trace how demands for minority rights or observance of basic human rights are transformed by state authorities into a threat to the territorial integrity of the state.

Ethnonyms and demonyms as categories of practice: three case studies from Europe

Jani Korhonen

The distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism is widely used in academic literature on nationalism, despite facing considerable critique, especially due to the observation that often both elements are present in all nationalisms. I argue, that due to the lack of isomorphism of state and ethnicity, both civic and ethnic ideas are often reflected as categories of practice in language. Additionally, new categories are observed to emerge in order to signal this distinction. I introduce to this discussion the terms used in onomastics: "ethnonym", referring to a name of a people by descent and "demonym", referring to a group of people residing on a certain geographical area. I will illustrate my argument with analyzing the usage of the following categories: the opposition between the Hungarian ethnonym *magyar* and the demonym *magyarországi*, used especially to distinguish between Hungarians in Hungary and Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries; the demonym *Bosanac* referring to all people living in Bosnia-Herzegovina regardless of their ethnicity; and as an example of a new ethnonym born as a consequence of immigration to Finland, the controversial neologism *kantasuomalainen*. The previous case studies refer to a unique way of signaling particularist identifications and categorizations in their context. The paper contributes to the theoretical literature on categorization by pointing out categories of practice and their implications to our understanding of the phenomenon.

B7 - Refugees and Borders

When not within Europe, then overseas, but in any case away from Germany'. Self presentation, identification and belonging in requests for asylum
Afke Berger

The Reichspogromnacht on 9 November 1938 represents a watershed moment for the history of Jews in the German Reich. To many of them it became clear that if they were to have a future, they had to cross borders. Every opportunity was seized, and ministries and organisations from all over the world received letters with requests for asylum. One of these organizations was the Dutch Committee for Jewish Refugees. From the national government, they had been given the task of making a preselection out of some 11,000 letters, dealing with about 40 to 50,000 people. In my paper, I examine these letters. They can be read as petitions, or as testimonies that we see in asylum procedures today. What did people write to a committee in a country they may not even have known? How did they present themselves in terms of belonging and identification? What arguments did they use, and what forms of writing upwards (Martin Lyons) do we see? To what extent did knowledge about the Netherlands play a role, and rumours, (internalised) anti-Semitism and past experiences with migration and authorities? To what extent did it matter whether the facts presented were accurate? This paper follows the growing attention within migration and refugee studies to look beyond policies. It focuses on the long processes of flight, regardless of whether attempts were successful or not, and on all borders and boundaries

that people had to overcome in order to be able to cross any national border at all.

Vojvodina at the crossroads: ethno-demographic and multicultural changes in the post-Yugoslav era

Ksenija Perković

Situated at the crossroads of Central Europe and the Balkans, Vojvodina has always been an example of a dynamic region characterised by cultural contact and diversity. In the past, unstable borders facilitated significant migration flows, making the region a unique crossroads of Central European and Balkan influences. While Vojvodina shares historical and cultural affinities with neighbouring regions such as Slavonia, southern Hungary and the Romanian Banat, it also attracted (post-war) migrations from the southern Balkan regions, resulting in a particular environment of cultural mixing and coexistence. This contribution examines the ethno-demographic development of Vojvodina, focussing on the profound changes following the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia. The simultaneous mass influx of Serbian refugees and the emigration of local minorities in the 1990s triggered major demographic and cultural changes. This study examines the changes in the region through the lens of ethno-demographic analysis, highlighting the interplay of migration dynamics, cultural exchange and changing relations between the majority and minorities. While the Serbian majority grew, the departure of significant minorities changed the multicultural dynamics within the region and the overall identity of Vojvodina.

State Monocultures

Theodossios Issaias

This paper examines the operations of the League of Nations' Refugee Settlement Commission (1923–1930), a humanitarian-through-development agency tasked with resettling refugees in Greece following the forced population exchange between Turkey and Greece. Focusing on the Commission's rural settlement programs in the geopolitically sensitive borderlands of southern Macedonia, it explores how the displacement crisis catalysed an ambitious agrarian programme led by the League. This initiative combined land redistribution with self-help shelter provision for over 300,000 subjects, absorbing the majority of the Commission's and the Greek government's resources and attention. As land subdivisions began unfolding over the drained swamplands of the Vardar valley north of Thessaloniki, refugee camps morphed into 1,388 villages, and the displaced population into a class of smallholders and cultivators. In the summer of 1924, refugees awaiting in camps for their rural rehabilitation owned nothing. By the fall, they owned close to nothing but owed money to an international agency. To be precise, they owned a few sacks of seeds –most probably Virginia tobacco or Canberra wheat seeds– and were in debt for a smallholding, a plough and an ox and an empty timber frame. This indebtedness reveals the dual imperatives underpinning the rural programme: securing Greece's northern borders through an agricultural settlement while enmeshing displaced populations within international financial and nationalist frameworks. I argue that this spatial programme, which wove the

imperatives of the international peace system with Greek nationalist agendas, entrenched enduring representations, languages, and practices. Fraught with its own contradictions and violence, assimilationist imperatives and manufactured scarcities, the 1920s state monocultures have left a lasting imprint on the region --a place where refugee crises persist, and drought-stricken wheat monocultures continuously fail.

B8 - The Borders of India

Religion, Borders and Meitei Sub-Nationalism: Making of Hindutva during Manipur Violence

Amom Malemnganba Singh Amom

The article critically examines the relationship between religion, borders, and Meitei sub-nationalism during Manipur violence. It looks at how Meitei sub-nationalism emerged historically in Manipur, a border state in Northeast India. The article highlights how religion has been incorporated into Meitei sub-nationalism during the violence, contributing as a mobilising factor for Meitei sub-nationalist groups that operate beyond India's borders. The article examines the rise of Arambai Tenggol, an armed Meitei Sanamahi revivalist group, their activities during the violence, and the reasons why the group acted as a sub-nationalist group but was not designated as an insurgent group and enjoyed state support. By taking into account the politics of Hindu nationalist organisations, the article makes a case about India's creation of national borders and reconstruction of the Meiteis ethnic identity. It is based on a study of Hindutva ideology from the political standpoint of the border state of

Manipur. It highlights how Hindutva was established during the violence while confronting the Meitei sub-nationalist groups within the ideological agendas and the classification of Hindutva.

Indigeneity, migration, and assertions of belongingness in Northeast India

Roshni Brahma

In the year 2012, violence broke out in western Assam between the Boros, an indigenous community of Northeast India, and the Muslims. It led to what has been declared one of the largest internal displacements in the history of independent India. Issues around migration, resources, and indigeneity have remained critical issues in the state of Assam. This has often led to the labeling of Bengali Muslims as 'illegal immigrants' from the neighboring country, Bangladesh. In the last few decades, conflicts around resources and notions of exclusive homelands have led to several instances of violence between the Boros and other communities of western Assam. The region has been prone to conflicts amidst the Boro demand for a separate homeland. However, the conflicts of 2012 were given communal meanings by the Hindu nationalists. This paper is an attempt to place the local issues between the Boros and the Muslims in the historical process of othering Muslims as the ultimate threat to the imagined Hindu nation. It argues that while the local issues have centered around resources and protection of the rights of the Boros who claim to be the 'sons of soil', Hindu nationalism builds on these pre-existing conflicts and guides it towards a Hindu nationalist cause. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in western Assam. This region was the

worst affected in the violence of 2012 resulting in numerous villages being torched down, many deaths and thousands of people displaced. Amidst the rise of religious nationalism in India, through ethnographic fieldwork the paper seeks to elucidate the dynamics of human relationships, emotions and ethno-religious divisions at play between the Boros and the Muslims of western Assam.

Conflicts, (Post)Colonial borders and
borderland communities in the Indo-
Myanmar border
Kapesa Pfokrelo

Borders remain the primary institution around which state power and sovereignty are organised. Northeast India located at the crossroads of South, Southeast and East Asia with over 98 per cent of its territory as an international borderland is a region caught in an endless cycle of conflict. The borderland communities inhabiting both sides of the Indo-Myanmar border have become collateral victims in the geopolitical churning time and again. This calls for a more comprehensive understanding of the conflicts and conflict dynamics that will consider the root cause of conflict in the region and, not limited to knowledge of the symptoms. This paper will position the conflicts in North East India as the effect of larger geopolitical reconfiguration and mindless cartographic exercise in the drawing and re-drawing of borders during the colonial and post-colonial state-making process. Given its geographic location as a borderland, the region is witness to and more often than not, victim to the geopolitical reconfiguration in its extended neighbourhood. Taking the example of the Kuki-Chin influx into

Manipur and Mizoram as a result of the changing political dynamics in Myanmar, the paper will argue that conflicts in North East India are a result of faulty border-making compounded by its location at the crossroads of South, East and Southeast Asia.

C1 - Online Border Tensions

Virtual Nationalism and Disinformation:
Transnational vulnerabilities of the
Russian-speaking communities in
Belgium
Sabina Imatova

The Russian-speaking population in Belgium includes diverse groups from former USSR countries. The Russian war in Ukraine has heightened debates over the use of the Russian language across borders, transforming it into a contentious symbol of identity and influence. While the Russian government does not have a monopoly on the Russian language, evidence of Kremlin-sponsored disinformation campaigns targeting both Russian-speaking communities and native Belgians has increased. Research by Pickles et al. (2019) shows that non-native speakers are more susceptible to disinformation due to linguistic and informational barriers, while studies by Roozenbeek et al. (2020) and Gundersen et al. (2023) suggest that individuals with stronger identification with the host country's population are less susceptible to disinformation. Drawing from transnationalism and virtual nationalism theories, this study examines how linguistic and group identities contribute to the transnational vulnerability of Russian-speaking communities in Belgium to disinformation. Key research

questions include: How does the media consumption of Russian-speaking communities in Belgium differ from that of native Belgians? To what extent are Russian-speaking communities more susceptible to disinformation, and how do language fluency and group belongingness explain this disparity? Finally, what impact does this vulnerability have on their political participation? Using a mixed-methods approach, this study integrates quantitative data from a large-scale survey with qualitative insights from five focus groups and ten semi-structured interviews. By addressing a critical gap in understanding transnational vulnerabilities to disinformation in times of rising information warfare, this research contributes to migration, political science, and cybersecurity studies.

The Border Within: Political Partisanship as User-Generated Nationalism in the United States

Saif Shahin

Political partisanship in the United States is motivated less by affinity towards the ingroup and more by resentment against the outgroup (Iyengar et al., 2019). This study theorizes such affective polarization between Republicans and Democrats as a form of "ethnic boundary maintenance" (Barth, 1969). I argue that political partisans are veritably modern-day "ethnies" (Smith, 1985) that actively negotiate cultural space and produce borders in the process. Drawing on Gellner's view of nationalism as a sentiment "which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (1983, p. 1), I also contend that these ethnies offer varied conceptions of American nationalism to harmonize

their political and national identities. A sample of 3,455 Twitter posts mentioning "flag/s" was drawn from a corpus of ~200,000 tweets using pro- and anti-MAGA hashtags during a Donald Trump rally from the 2020 election. The study employed unsupervised machine learning to distinguish latent categories in the posts, followed by multimodal discourse analysis of highly retweeted posts under each category. The analysis indicates Democratic and Republican partisans (a) construct their identities less by extending support to their respective party programs and more through hostility towards their opponents; and (b) conflate their partisan beliefs with "American" national ethos and history to legitimize their respective claims to power. Drawing attention to how digital platforms' social interactivity affordances necessitate ethnic boundary maintenance, this research extends the thesis of "user-generated nationalism" (Shahin, 2021), which posits that nationalism can "banalize" discriminations based on race, religion and partisanship in everyday online interactions.

Fractured Nationalisms: Social Media, Digital Borders, and India-Bangladesh Relations in 2024

Shreyasi Biswas

This paper examines the role of digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube in constructing virtual nationalisms and reinforcing intangible yet potent digital borders between India and Bangladesh. Through a comparative study of anti-India and anti-Bangladesh content disseminated by high-traffic social media handles during 2024—a period marked by political upheaval in Bangladesh with the fall of Sheikh

Hasina's government—the analysis interrogates the intersection of nationalism, misinformation, and digital monetization. These platforms are increasingly supplanting earlier forms of digital rumour-mongering, such as "WhatsApp University," as primary vectors for disseminating stereotypes, misinformation, and hate speech, thereby exacerbating inter-state and inter-community tensions. The paper places particular emphasis on the socio-political implications of these digital narratives in West Bengal, India, a region intricately linked to Bangladesh by shared linguistic and cultural heritage. By analysing the thematic content, discursive strategies, engagement metrics, and algorithmic amplifications of these digital artifacts, the study illustrates how such media spaces commodify nationalist antagonisms while fuelling symbolic and ideological divisions. Drawing on Ernest Gellner's modernist framework of nationalism, Rogers Brubaker's constructivist approach to identity, and Fredrik Barth's insights into boundary formation, this paper situates the phenomenon of digital borders within broader theoretical debates on the intersections of technology, nationalism, and identity politics. It contends that the commodification of nationalist discourses on digital platforms reinforces pre-existing nationalist divides and intensifies them through algorithmic amplification and engagement-driven monetization. By examining these digital dynamics, the study underscores their profound implications for regional stability, cultural interconnectedness, and bilateral relationship

C2 - Borders as Symbols

Redefining Borders and Nationalism: The Baltic States in a European Landscape
Signe Grube

This paper examines how the Baltic states—Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia—redefine national identity and perceptions of borders, challenging traditional notions of nationalism and the nation-state. The objective is to offer new perspectives on how borders function as dynamic, symbolic constructs shaped by historical legacies, cultural resilience, and geopolitical realities. The war in Ukraine has catalyzed a transformation of the European Union's eastern border, recasting it as a frontline of democratic values. The Baltic states, positioned at this critical juncture, exemplify the interplay between history and modern geopolitics in reshaping nationalism and borders. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this research combines constructivist, cultural, and geopolitical theories to explore the evolving perception of borders. It highlights how the Baltic states' national identities, historically persisted through resistance to Soviet domination, now align with broader European narratives of solidarity and defense. The war in Ukraine has elevated their strategic and symbolic importance, redefining their borders as key elements in safeguarding European unity and democracy. This paper challenges traditional views of borders as fixed, physical lines defining the nation-state. Instead, it argues that the Baltic experience illustrates how borders can function as fluid, contested spaces embodying both historical and contemporary significance. By analyzing

the Baltic states' shifting roles within Europe, this study provides new insights into the complex, interconnected nature of borders, nationalism, and the nation-state in the 21st century.

The Polishness and the symbolic boundaries of the nation. Clothes as tools for constructing and crossing borders

Jowita Baran

In the presentation, I will discuss processes of practising national identity and symbolic borders in contemporary Poland. Focusing on everyday objects, I will show how clothes become a tool for building a nation and for reproducing the symbolic boundaries of national identity. Clothes, that can be described as "engaged", whose content (colours, prints) refers to important current social problems. Intended to express opinions on socially significant topics. Several symbolic borders of Polishness will be discussed: heteronormativity, women's rights, European identity, Catholicism, and the question of the Polishness' essence: the law of blood vs. the law of the soil. Using these examples, I will consider the questions: can we set rigid boundaries for Polishness? Are there any "impassable" issues in this matter? Do boundaries always mean the same for everyone? Answers to questions will be provided based on the triangulation of data collected during the doctoral research. The analysis includes 50 interviews (IDI) with people who wear engaged clothes, content and semiotic analysis of 2600 products and material collected during 20 participant observations (513 photos). In the presentation, I put forward the thesis that although, in theory official symbolic frames of the nation do not allow any

redefinition, the analysed material indicates that the clothes and their content discuss what shouldn't be discussed. On the clothes, one can observe how impassable barriers are crossed, the nation is re-constructed, and the boundaries of what it means to be Polish and the concept of "Polish national identity" are redefined.

The Green March in perspective: the reinforcement of Moroccan identity through its territorial claims

Fulvio Bontempo

Since its independence from colonial rule, Morocco has strived to construct its national identity. We can place Morocco's territorial claims among one of the many aspects of national identity construction. These claims have been the cause of a series of conflicts, such as the unsuccessful Sand War (1963-1964) against the then newly-independent Algeria or the Ifni War (1958) against Spain, which achieved the liberation of Ifni. However, Morocco's most notorious territorial claim has been that of the territory internationally known as Western Sahara, which is known in Morocco as Moroccan Sahara. The claim, which was supported by Allal Al-Fassi's Greater Morocco theory, as well as the military occupation of most of the territory, has undoubtedly had a major impact on Morocco's national identity. One of the most symbolic actions was the Green March (November 6th 1975), wherein the king, Hassan II, called for the Moroccan people to take part in reclaiming what it perceived as its rightful lands by peacefully marching into what was then known as Spanish Sahara. 350 thousand Moroccan civilians participated to the Green March, and the anniversary of this event has become a

national holiday, during which the king gives a speech commemorating it. Therefore, the proposal intends to fill a gap in the literature, which has mainly focused on other aspects relating to the issue, by analysing some of the royal speeches in an attempt to frame the role of the Green March and the Moroccan territorial claims in relation to Morocco's national identity.

C3 - Nations Across Borders

Queer Mobility and the Experience of Mobility Choice as Bordering Infrastructure

Tilen Kolar

Conventional narratives about international and regional mobility often assume that dismantling physical border technologies, such as checkpoints, eliminates borders and enables frictionless spaces of flow. This paper challenges this assumption by exploring how limited mobility options reconstitute mental borders, reinforcing a sense of "distance" and producing diverse national and international belongings. Focusing on queer experiences in Slovenia, it asks: (i) how do limited transport options create mental borders between the countryside and Ljubljana (the capital city), shaping queer individuals' sense of Slovenian identity and (ii) how does mobility choice—or the lack thereof—among queer individuals recreate borders between Slovenia and neighboring nation-states. Drawing on ethnographic research conducted over a year in Slovenia, this paper examines how queer spaces emerge through diverse mobilities, such as train travel, walking, cycling, driving, and online interactions. Ethnographic vignettes

reveal that access to hegemonic automobility fosters a sense of borderlessness for queer individuals, while reliance on limited public transport accentuates a "queer border" within Slovenia and between it and neighboring countries, all within the Schengen Area. This paper conceptualizes mobility choice as a bordering infrastructure, demonstrating how transport systems produce uneven access to freedom of movement. The analysis foregrounds how physical and mental borders intersect with mobility technologies, contributing to critical border studies, queer geographies, and mobility justice. By unpacking the interplay of transport systems, identity, and spatial belonging, this work offers insights into how mobility practices shape everyday experiences of queer inclusion and exclusion in both national and transnational contexts.

Cross-Border Cooperation beyond the Cold War Divide Regional Diplomacy in the Alps-Adriatic Borderscape (1960s-1990s)

Alessandro Ambrosino

Due to nationalisation processes in the 19th and 20th centuries, the communities living across the borders of today's Italy, Austria and (ex)Yugoslavia – the so-called Alps-Adriatic region – suffered from violence and disintegration. During the Cold War central authorities militarised the territory and controlled national borders. A climate of suspicion persisted, transforming these borderlands into a symbolic periphery of confrontation between East and West blocs. Using oral history and sources from regional archives, this paper analyses how border communities challenged this latter

imaginary. Regional officers and policymakers, through cross-border cooperation initiatives dating back to the 1960s, conceived the idea of “Alpe-Adria” to describe a transnational region where to cultivate peace and reconciliation. By showing how these interactions influenced national and European politics, the paper contributes to rethinking of the history of Cold War Europe from the margins. Moreover, by making use of the concept of “borderscape” – that is, interpreting borderlands as a landscape where political innovations germinate through individual actions and daily choices – it argues for the autonomy of “borderlanders” in making their interests independently of national schemes, in shaping counter-hegemonic narratives beyond nationalistic interpretations of the space and in challenging Cold War imaginaries of an ideologically-sealed Europe. Ultimately, the paper connects European integration and Cold War studies with recent debates in critical border studies, explaining how the marginality of border populations affects the centrality of the state and discussing how the interplay between bottom-up initiatives and state-to-state politics shapes relations across national borders and social boundaries.

Revisiting the state-nation nexus:
alternative visions and configurations
Gëzim Krasniqi

While nation-state based on the ideal of congruence of cultural and political boundaries has been for a long time the ideal of nationalism and nationalist movements, it remains only an ‘ideal type’ in the Weberian sense. In practice, multi-ethnic, multi-national and pluri-national states, as well as stateless nations,

divided nations and state-nations, are dominant political forms, thus departing from the ideal of nation-state. This paper revisits the state-nation nexus by focusing on alternative visions and configurations. More specifically, it proposes the concept of ‘multi state nation’ as a toolkit for conceptualising old and new state-nation constellations. The term refers to ethnically/culturally defined nations that dominate two or more polities (sovereign or not) whose leaders and people adhere to a discourse of a wider national/cultural identity. Combining documentary, content and discourse analysis, the paper will examine three cases of multi-state nations: Kosovo- Albania, Greece-Cyprus and Romania-Moldova.

C4 - Local Identities

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877- 1878 and
Its Impact on Eastern Europe and the
Baltic Region
Aytac Yurukcu and Marcus Nicolson

Wars are not solely fought with military means. Media and journalists play a significant role in monitoring and evoking strong emotional and intellectual responses to war coverage. My dissertation examines the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878) and its ramifications for Russian minorities across the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Baltic region. This research analyzes Estonian and Finnish identity from local, national, and imperial perspectives. The combination of the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire’s Eastern Orthodox-Pan-Slavic alliance, comprising Bulgarians, Bosnians, Serbians, and Montenegrins, influenced Balkan national identities, nationalism, and ethnic

delineations. The conflict also impacted ethnic minorities within the Russian imperial army, including Finns, Estonians, Prussians, and Latvians. Many scholars have overlooked the connection between local identities and media with national patriotism and imperial mobilizations during wartime; however, the research is poised to uncover substantial general and specific insights, enhancing our comprehension of the local, military, and media histories of the Russo-Turkish War in Estonia, Finland, and the Baltic region. For this conference paper, I gathered Estonian and Finnish soldiers' letters, correspondence, news articles, and battle reports. This research explores the following questions in alignment with its objectives: What information did war news, soldiers' diaries, and combat reports from many countries provide to the public regarding the conflict? What justifies these countries' use of rhetorical, demonstrative, propagandistic, and persuasive arguments? In what manner do contextual representations influence readers and public opinion?

The evolving contour of the Taiwanese nation: A peculiar case of various imperialisms and nationalism
Atsuko Ichijo

Is there a Taiwanese nation? In 2024, a poll by the Election Study Centre of the National Chengchi University (2024) has found that more than 96 per cent of the respondents identify themselves as Taiwanese ('Taiwanese only' and 'both Taiwanese and Chinese') and it is fair to say that the question is now answered in the affirmative. At the same time, the Republic of China (ROC) has been losing recognition and its status as a sovereign

state has been very precarious. But describing the Taiwanese nation as one of stateless nations is not quite accurate as the ROC functions as a fully functional and democratic de-facto state. Consequently, the evolution of an idea of the Taiwanese nation is not straightforward and it does not conform to any major theories of nations and nationalism. The paper traces how the contour of the Taiwanese nation has evolved and focuses on the role of various imperialisms in defining the borders of the Taiwanese nation.

Between a Once Already Lost Territory and an Ergänzungsraum? National and Imperial Images of the Banat and World War II
Csongor Molnár

Before the First World War the Banat was mostly known for its ethnic diversity and economic success mainly associated with Timișoara/Temesvár/Temeswar/Temišvár. After the war and Paris Peace Conference the region was split between Hungary, Romania and Serbia. The Banat like all other territories lost after the Treaty of Trianon was part of the Hungarian revisionist policies. During the interwar several texts published in Hungary analyzed the history, geography and place of the Banat within the Hungarian (nation-)state to make a point for a territorial revision. Parallel to this the representatives of Hungarian cultural elite in interwar Yugoslavia provided new images of the Banat. In the Weimar Republic among the works published on the German minorities in Europe some also examined the case of the Germans living in the Banat. In these articles, booklets the Banat slowly appeared as a strictly German territory. Although the

image of the Banat as a German region appeared only on the eve of the Second World War these works stressed more than ever the exclusive German nature, and envisioned the region as some part of the Reich. The aim of the paper is to shed light on the different Hungarian and German actors behind the images of the Banat, their sources and narratives, as well as the several understanding of the regions place in the Hungarian national and German imperial concepts.

C5 - Border Securitization

Securitizing the Alien? Russians' Influx to Georgia Since the Russian-Ukrainian War and the Domestic Security Discourses (2022-2024)

David Matsaberidze

The mass migration of citizens of the Russian Federation to Georgia after the Russia's war against Ukraine (2022) could bring some short- and long-term negative consequences to the domestic stability and foreign policy of the country. Georgia has received a large number of Russians that has already changed the local setting not much in demographic, but in socio-economic terms. The paper explores the emerging competing discourses of the ruling Georgian Dream and the opposition parties that securitize the Russian migrants in terms of influence(s) on Georgia's economy and politics in competitive and contradictory ways. The study applies a theoretical innovation in policy scholarship – the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) – that enables to examine characteristics of narratives, their influence, and other policy-relevant attributes. Narrative has been observed to be central to the policy process –

constituting public policy instruments, persuading decision makers and the public, and shaping all stages of the policy process – as policy actors wield narratives to help achieve their goals and communicate problems in line of preferences of political elites, creating alternative discourses. The paper uncovers contradictory public political narratives of the ruling Georgian Dream and opposition parties that securitize the influx of Russians and employs the critical discourse analysis/discourse historical approach to uncover its competitive reflections in the political public sphere of Georgia. Theoretically, the study refers to securitization, securitizing discourse, as securitization approach helps to deconstruct the reflections of political elites of Georgia on the influx of Russians in general and on the absence of resilience in particular.

'Third space' or 'territorial trap': examining citizenship and conscription through (trans)national service in Singapore

Caleb Tan

Transnational immigrants who neither completely identify with their 'routes' – where they come from – and their 'roots' – where they live in, are sometimes referred to as being in the diasporic 'third space'. Their culturally pluralistic identities are marked by hybridity, ambiguity, in-between and in/exclusion. However, this geographical identity of the individual often conflicts with the nation-states' geopolitical narrative of sovereignty which necessitates methodological nationalism. This seemingly suggests that immigrants are caught in Agnew's 'territorial trap' whereby state territories are static sovereign spaces, binary in terms of the

domestic and foreign, and a container of society. This tension is especially prevalent in national defence which often pits 'us' against 'them'. This research explores the inherently conflicting identities of transnational immigrants serving National Service (NS) in Singapore through 16 semi-structured interviews with new citizens, PRs and Singaporeans who lived abroad prior to NS and have served NS. Under the Enlistment Act, all 18-year-old male Singapore Citizens and PRs, unless exempted, are required to serve NS. While the *raison d'être* of NS is to secure the defence of the small island nation, NS has also been justified to create a committed citizenry. Recently, about one-in-five full-time national servicemen enlisted yearly is a new citizen or PR. Caught in-between their sending country and Singapore, and adolescence and adulthood, NS binds immigrants in temporal and spatial liminality and forces them to decide on their (trans)national identities in their formative years. This research potentially contributes to NS policymaking and literature on transnationalism at the culture-security nexus.

Thoroughfare to the Rhine: Road-Building in France's Northeastern Borderlands, 1629-1661
Mike Fangxing Zhou

Among numerous treaties signed between France and Lorraine before the latter's formal annexation in 1766, the Treaty of Vincennes (1661) was an unusual type of land-grabbing. French administrators proposed to create a broad path through the Duchy of Lorraine, which would connect France mainland to the newly acquired province of Alsace. The sovereignties of any

towns and settlements falling in this 2-miles-wide path were ceded to the King of France. By examining the Treaty of Vincennes and previous treaties, as well as the archival manuscript of memoirs documented by Lorrain and French commissioners during the implementation of the Treaty of Vincennes, my research attempts to analyze France's effort of building a deep borderland behind its eastern frontier after the Thirty Years War. As borderland historians such as Lucien Febvre and Peter Sahlins assert, the conceptualisation of borderland was transitioning from linear to zonal during the seventeenth century. Treaty of Vincennes' emphasis on zonal and jurisdictional control, its design of connecting two borderland provinces, verified the process of building dimension at the frontier. Moreover, this path also connected together various French exclaves in Lorraine. In an era when "sovereignties faded imperceptibly into one another" at nation states' borders, as Benedict Anderson puts it, Treaty of Vincennes reflects French decision makers' consideration of assembling together territorial pieces at the nation's periphery.

C6 - Theoretical Perspectives (2)

Primordial Borders: Considering Occultism and Nationalism
Pavel Horak

Various beliefs, from religious to occult and esoteric, shape how people think and act. Similarly, nationalism relies on a set of beliefs about a nation's origins or values. Scholarship has extensively examined the overlaps between religion

and nationalism (e.g., Alvis 2005; Juergensmeyer 2007; Soper and Fetzer 2018). However, far less attention has been paid to the connections between occult and esoteric beliefs and nationalism and ethnicity. Occultism emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a distinct reaction to modern society, intellectual discoveries in the Orient, and the rise of the new sciences. Occult beliefs and practices—from telepathy and magical rituals to seeking ancient knowledge in Europe or the Orient—intersected with national or ethnic imaginations. Case studies from twentieth-century Germany, Italy, and Ireland (Nally 2010; Strube 2013; Giudice 2022) have addressed this overlap between occultism and nationalism. Yet, there is still a need for a broader theoretical reassessment of these relations and how they operate. This paper addresses this gap by examining various occult groups in Central and Eastern Europe, 1880–1945. It proposes that occultism and nationalism intersect through a shared emphasis on a primordial, timeless essence, which builds boundaries around imagined entities. These entities—including stories, places, or people—co-create a “primordial border” that blends national and occult beliefs. This paper offers new theoretical perspectives on nationalism by integrating the study of esotericism with nationalism studies, particularly relevant in a period when occult beliefs are becoming mainstream (Partridge 2004).

“To Cure the Ills of Nations”: Nationalism, Psychoanalysis, and Intelligence in Interwar Central Europe

Sunaina Danziger

My paper traces how political thinker-activists employed notions of the unstable psyche to diagnose the violence erupting in the Habsburg successor states post-WWI. I focus on British psychoanalyst and novelist Phyllis Bottome, her husband, Alban Ernan Forbes Dennis, the MI6 chief for Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, and their jointly run Tennerhof school in Kitzbühel, Austria. Bottome and Dennis founded the Tennerhof school in 1924 as an educational experiment using psychology to “cure the ills of nations.” Bottome’s novels also reflected her distaste for nationalism, her anti-fascist and anticolonial political activism, and her training as a psychoanalyst. Most notable includes her 1937 novel *The Mortal Storm*, which blended love story with political intrigue and evoked an internationalist consciousness resisting the rise of Nazi Germany. Bottome’s understanding of “diseased” nationalism extended to Britain and the liberal empires. After the war, she published a post-modernist novel titled *Under the Skin* critiquing British colonialism and racial politics in Jamaica. Her critical public writing and profile brought her in interesting tension with her husband’s covert position at the helm of British security operations in Central Europe. Dennis’s job, based in Vienna, charged him with managing intelligence on the instability involved in the dissolution of the Habsburg Empire. Among his overt responsibilities as “Passport Officer” included processing requests for Jewish refugees to emigrate to Palestine. Dennis’ tasks attested to liberal

intelligence's participation in the policing of the "legitimate" ethnonationalist state against transnational revolutionary threats.

The Constraining, but Flexible, Shape of Borders: An Evolutionary Approach

William Kerr

Borders are, mentally and physically, an inherent part of nations and national identity. They delimit the extent of any imagined community, and the identity contained within it (Anderson, 2006). Sociobiological and evolutionary accounts of nationalism place an importance borders (van den Berghe, 1987; Gat, 2012). They delimit the space in which people are willing to be altruistic with one another, and how far that identity claim will extend, in terms of in-groups and out-groups. This paper seeks to argue with these accounts. I argue, following Bowles and Gintis (2011) and Choi and Bowles (2007) that humans do have behavioural tendencies toward what they call parochial altruism, arising out of border contests in war. Borders, their demarcation and maintenance, therefore contain violence within them (Mbembe, 2019). However, my argument is not a counsel of despair. I first argue that the tendency is more general than sociobiological accounts usually allow, being based less on ethnic markers than behavioural ones (Queller, 1985). Drawing on Darwinian social evolutionary arguments, alongside Hayward's (2000) work on power and Hutchinson's (2005) work on culture wars, I argue that borders are limits that can be pushed against, and that within them are created variant understandings of identity that can be selected to push against those bounds. By understanding the interlinking of how these tendencies,

power and selective processes work, we can create more inclusive boundaries for national identities, and possibly even supersede them.

C7 - Borderland Towns and Cities: Nationalism, Identity, and Division

Between Two Nations: Nationalism, National Identity, and Football in the Border Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed

Robert Bevan

This paper examines Berwick-upon-Tweed as a focal point for understanding nationalism and identity in border regions, emphasising how its unique position on the England-Scotland border shapes a complex local identity. Historically marked by shifting national affiliations, Berwick offers a rich context for exploring the dynamics of national identity within border communities, where residents often blend cultural elements from both neighbouring nations. This study employs qualitative data to focus on Berwick Rangers Football Club—an English team competing in the Scottish league—as a lens through which the interplay between sport and national allegiance is analysed. By investigating how the club's activities influence local sentiments and community ties, the findings reveal that Berwick's residents navigate a fluid identity that is neither entirely English nor Scottish. This complexity illustrates how historical narratives, cultural exchanges, and contemporary socio-political factors shape experiences of nationalism. The research contributes to broader discussions on how borders impact identity formation, demonstrating that sport can both

bridge and reinforce national distinctions in contested spaces. Ultimately, the paper highlights the significance of local sporting institutions in negotiating identity and belonging, particularly in regions where national boundaries are not merely lines on a map but dynamic entities that influence everyday life and social relations.

Ethno-Nationalism in the City: Navigating Religious Boundaries and Identity in Kolkata's Mixed Neighborhoods

Mayurakshi Das

This paper channelizes the scholarship on ethno-nationalism and border-making towards the interiority of constructing psychological frontiers between people of different religious beliefs in South Asia. It focuses on specific neighborhoods in Kolkata where Hindus and Muslims have long history of cohabitation. Utilizing ethnographic data since the 1990s, it examines how the middle-class Hindu and Muslim residents navigate the diverse ways of accessing, inhabiting, and assigning meanings to their homes and envision the city. Similar to national borders, the boundaries within Hindu-Muslim neighborhoods are fraught with anxieties regarding social interactions and collective belonging, reflecting broader tensions in identity politics. The Muslim muhallas are stigmatized, viewed as the beginning of dirty, congested, and undesirable areas, incompatible with the Bengali "city-nation", particularly as imagined by the casteist, urban Hindu Bhadraklok. These localities also serve as a lens to understand the creation of mini ethno-national symbols amid everyday struggles for establishing power and hierarchies within communal identities. Like nations, neighborhoods are not only

places of residence and experience; they are also imagined and narrated.

Ethnographic stories link these neighborhoods to both the past and the future, adding inimitable textures and flavors to their identity. The 2014 general elections, in which the Hindu Right Wing fortified a landslide victory, led to the rise of a virulent Hindutva alongside a tension-ridden relationship with Pakistan. The paper identifies the shifts which are echoed in Kolkata's mixed neighborhoods, and argues how it has deepened the communal divisions by enhancing existing conflicts, and increasing existential anxiety and ontological insecurity.

A City Divided by the Blurred Boundaries via İber River: Mitrovica

Bülent Sarper Ağır and Barış Gürsoy

Black thin lines on political map has a deep meaning for demonstrating the sovereign realm of a state, and they also represent the geographical and ideational boundaries between "us" and "other". Depending on the quality of mutual relations, borders may symbolize either peaceful coexistence or dividing lines of conflictual conditions. Nearly three decades after the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, one of the hardest border disputes of the Balkans region is the unresolved status of Serbia-Kosovo border. Particularly, divided Mitrovica city via İber River in North Kosovo has garnered a lot of attention in regional politics. The bridges on the river represent not only a physical border but also a perceptual identity boundary between Albanians and Serbs in the city. Divided Mitrovica provides a strong motivation for banal nationalisms for both sides. The paper aims to problematize the nature and dynamics of

division in Mitrovica by using the methods of survey, observation, and literature review. It will examine not only the ethnic/national and cultural division, practices and discourses, but also regional and geopolitical conditions and their impact on the city with a multidimensional perspective from the local level to global context. Because, geopolitical rivalry among great powers could require the continuation of tension and separated lives among different ethnicities in Mitrovica by promoting the othering process and exclusionary perspectives. As a crucial geopolitical site, Mitrovica has a dynamic political environment not only for internally, but also externally due to its “buffer zone” between Serbia and Kosovo.

C8 - Usages and Meanings of the Past across the Post-Yugoslav Space

(Not) Exactly like in the 1990s: How Croatia and Serbia define war and genocide 30 years after
Sven Milekić

The break-up of socialist Yugoslavia that turned into war in Croatia in 1991 gave birth to new narratives on aggression and genocide between local actors. Croatia, aspiring for international recognition in 1991, argued that it was a victim of the Yugoslav aggression that culminated with the genocide in the city of Vukovar. Yugoslav leadership argued that a civil war was at hand, and Croatia attempted a violent succession from the federal state. Serbian leaders claimed that Croatia attempted to subdue local Serb, finally expelling them during the 1995 military Operation Storm. Ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine came

in the situation where Croatia is an EU and NATO state, while Serbia tries to balance its EU ambitions along with its anti-NATO stance and ties to Russia. Croatia immediately labelled the Ukrainian war as “Russian aggression” and argued for international sanctions. Although officially supporting UN resolutions against Russia, Serbia avoided uttering the word “aggression” or opting for sanctions. When Israel started attacks on Gaza in 2023, Croatia supported Israel’s right to defend its sovereignty and respond to the Hamas October 7 attack. Rejecting the notion of the word “genocide”, Croatian officials expressed regret for massive civilian deaths. Serbia took a similar position on this issue, as it pursues a good relationship with Israel, as Croatia. By looking into different secondary sources, resolutions and court documentation, the paper will analyse how two states navigated these narratives, for what foreign or domestic aims and with what success throughout 30 years.

Between East and West: The Appropriation of Non-Alignment in Today’s Serbia
Jelena Đureinović

The paper explores the memory and appropriation of Yugoslav non-alignment in Serbia today, examining what is left out or altered in its appropriation and placing it in the broader contexts of Serbia’s official memory politics and foreign policy. The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was founded in 1961, with Yugoslavia as one of its key initiators and co-founders and the only member outside of the Global South. The movement challenged the Cold War order and hegemonic visions of globalisation. Its significance has faded

since the end of the Cold War but, more than 60 years after its establishment, the NAM still exists with 120 member states. The NAM is generally forgotten or considered irrelevant in the post-Yugoslav space, except when it is appropriated. This is the case in Serbia, where the government led by the Serbian Progressive Party uses discourses and networks of the NAM, while distancing itself from the politics associated with socialist Yugoslavia or non-alignment. The paper employs discourse analysis to explore the reasons why the Non-Aligned Movement has become a relevant historical reference for Serbia's government and what meaning the political actors ascribe to it.

Border that cuts across history and memory: Jasenovac Memorial Site in Croatia and Donja Gradina Memorial Site in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Ana Kršinić Lozica

What happens when the border divides the memorial site in two? The case study of the site where the Jasenovac camp once stood will consider how its location, belonging to different states, impacts the construction of the historical narrative and memorial practices on WW2. Jasenovac was a camp (1941-45) known for its brutality on the territory of the Nazi-aligned Independent State of Croatia, where the Ustasha regime incarcerated and killed Serbs, Roma, Jews, and perceived political opponents. Jasenovac Memorial Site was officially established in 1968 in Yugoslavia as a unique memorial site spanning two Yugoslav republics: Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the 1990s war, the Jasenovac area was a battlefield, which resulted in damage to the site and partial loss of the museum's archive.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the memorial site has been divided in two by the border following Sava river. Jasenovac Memorial Site in Croatia and Donja Gradina Memorial Site in the Republic of Srpska (a newly formed entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina) offer different and often conflicting narratives on the camp's history and the number of victims. By analysing official discourses offered by the two sites, the paper will compare history-writing and remembering genocide and the Holocaust from today's perspective through the prism of national and ethnic identity-building processes. The border here has an additional symbolic function, dividing not only states and ethnic communities but also the EU from the non-EU territory, adding even more complexities to contemporary remembrance strategies in the post-Yugoslav context.

Transitional justice and threat perceptions: under what interactional contexts is transitional justice viewed as zero-sum?

Ivor Sokolic

Intractable conflicts and post-conflict processes, including transitional justice, are seen as zero-sum situations. People view war crimes trials, reconciliation processes, reparations and many of the other central processes of transitional justice as zero-sum, where one party's gains is offset by other parties' losses. This can cause an aversion to the process, since individuals tend to avoid situations they believe to be zero-sum. Regardless of whether or not it is, viewing transitional justice as such can aggravate interactions between people involved in the process. This stunts the conflict transformation process by

building a shallow peace. Studies show that zero-sum beliefs are asymmetric, context-specific and defined by identity politics, but this has yet to be applied to transitional justice. We do not understand under what conditions zero-sum beliefs become salient and no studies have examined zero-sum constructs of transitional justice interactionally. This paper asks, under what interactional contexts is transitional justice viewed as zero-sum? The paper draws on data from twelve inter-ethnic focus groups conducted with youths on topics of transitional justice in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo and Serbia. The paper uses Conversation Analysis, a micro-analytic approach to the analysis of turns in conversations, to analyse zero-sum beliefs in transitional justice interactions. The findings show that in some situations, transitional justice is viewed as zero-sum, but in others it is not. This depends on the regional and national political context surrounding the discussions; the perception of who individuals believe is gaining; and, whether the discussion is focused on macro issues (tribunals, recognition of statehood and lands swaps) or micro, everyday issues. By understanding when zero-sum beliefs are salient in interactions, we better understand under what conditions individuals are prepared to engage in transitional justice. This can help better promote the development of a deeper, more sustainable peace.

D1 - Marrying Across Borders

Intermarriages and Finland-Swedish Minority Nationalism, 1950s-1990s: From the Threat of Mixed Families to the Promise of Bilingualism

Hanna Lindberg

This paper explores responses to intermarriages between Finnish and Swedish speakers in Finland from the post-war period to the 1990s. Finland, historically a borderland between Western and Eastern Europe, recognizes Finnish and Swedish as its official languages, with Swedish spoken by approximately 5% of the population, known as Finland-Swedes. Though intermarriages between the two groups are common, their relations have been complex. Finnish ethnonationalism of the 19th century gave rise to a minority-nationalist movement among Finland-Swedes who worked to protect their "nation." After World War II, language tensions subsided, leading to a rise in intermarriages, but concerns grew among Finland-Swedish minority nationalists over the declining number of Swedish speakers and their language's status. This paper analyzes public debates in newspapers as well as academic texts to understand the evolving perceptions of intermarriages and their implications for the Finland-Swedish minority. Initially, mixed families were seen as threats to the "minority nation", as the children were more often registered as Finnish speakers. However, by the 1980s, attitudes shifted, with bilingualism increasingly viewed as a means to strengthen the minority. Drawing on Nira Yuval-Davis's (2006) perspective, this paper examines the complex interplay between citizenship

and belonging, using belonging as a lens to explore the social and emotional dimensions of identity and community within this context.

Borderland Dynamics in Danish–German Intermarriage: Does Intermarriage Still Matter?

Martin Klatt and Erik Kühl

The Danish–German border region of Schleswig is widely recognized as a success story of minority-majority accommodation and increasingly also for exploiting the minority-majority societal model's added value in a story of Danish–German reconciliation, de-bordering and cross-border integration and development. In consequence, the reciprocal Danish minority in German South Schleswig and the German minority in Danish North Schleswig have allochtonized: intermarriage is a common phenomenon, as is in- and out-migration from minority to kin-state and from minority to majority and vice versa. Our presentation will focus on the research question "does intermarriage still matter?" Based on existing written sources, a recent survey and interviews with intermarried couples, we will reflect on how intermarriage influences decisions on schooling, education and cultural practices, and how this impacts minority identity and self-perception in the 21st century.

On the Intersections of Interethnic Marriage, Ethnic Diversity, and Nationalizing Policies: Insights from Vojvodina, Serbia

Patrik Tátrai and Karolína Lendák-Kabók

The concept of interethnic marriage is universal: it serves as an institution that

bridges ethnic boundaries, cultural differences and "otherness," going beyond the individuals involved to reveal broader socio-cultural characteristics, dynamics, and divisions. The incidence of intermarriages is influenced by both cultural and structural factors, of which we focus on those related to ethnic diversity (including the number of ethnic groups in an area, the size and concentration of an ethnic group) and to nationalizing policies. Using the example of Vojvodina, Serbia, a historically diverse border region, this paper quantitatively examines the intersection of ethnic diversity and intermarriage. We treat ethnic diversity not only as an independent variable, a pure structural factor, but also try to show how the incidence of mixed marriages affects ethnic diversity. By analyzing intermarriage patterns over time and across geopolitical shifts (but within a fixed national border), we also address the effects of nationalizing policies on the incidence of intermarriage. Findings reveal that while greater ethnic diversity generally correlates with higher rates of intermarriage, shifts in nationalistic policies and the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s markedly disrupted these patterns, reshaping marriage markets toward greater homogeneity. However, ethnic minorities have been experiencing growing rates of intermarriages coupled with their decreasing numbers, challenging minority elites' efforts to maintain ethnic boundaries. This study thus highlights both the complex interplay between intermarriage, ethnic diversity and nationalizing policies, and the nuanced social distances and persistent asymmetries within Vojvodina's diverse population.

Intermarriages in the Western Balkans: Navigating Nationalism, Borders, and Societal Transformation

Karolina Lendák-Kabók

This paper investigates intermarriages in the Western Balkans, illuminating their complex relationship with the region's volatile history, ethnic diversity, and socio-political landscape. By examining the existing literature on interethnic unions across various contexts, the study reveals how these marriages have historically embodied ideals of coexistence and integration, especially in the mid-20th century. However, the resurgence of ethno-nationalism and the Yugoslav Wars profoundly altered these marital patterns, highlighting the deep-seated impact of nationalism in reinforcing ideological and cultural borders. While intermarriages challenge rigid ethnic boundaries, they alone cannot dissolve the underlying regional tensions, underscoring the need for comprehensive, integrative policies. The study underscores the post-war decline of mixed marriages, persistent ethnic divisions, and diverse dynamics across locales, indicating that sustainable peace in the Western Balkans requires a nuanced approach. Through this perspective, intermarriages emerge as more than personal relationships; they represent symbolic and potentially transformative forces for societal change, albeit within a landscape marked by enduring challenges. The paper ultimately argues that intermarriages—while limited in their capacity to dissolve borders—serve as significant sites of negotiation and reflection on the broader struggle for interethnic unity within a divided region.

D2 - Kin-states

The Role of Local Elites in Moldova's Separatist Conflicts

Keith Harrington

This paper addresses why separatist conflicts emerged in Transnistria and Gagauzia, but not in other predominantly Russian speaking portions of Moldova in the late 1980s. Scholars have often cited the following reasons for the emergence of these separatist movements; high-levels of pro-Soviet sentiment amongst the inhabitants of these regions, fears over the uncertainty of Moldova's future, and the rise of pan-Romanian nationalism. Yet these concerns were not limited to Transnistria nor Gagauzia. Newspapers and archival documents from other predominantly Russian-speaking regions in Moldova show that minorities elsewhere were just as concerned about the rise in pan-Romanian nationalism and felt equally attached to the Soviet Union. However, while Transnistria and Gagauzia became sites of unrest and conflict from 1989 onwards, other predominantly pro-Soviet, Russian speaking regions of Moldova remained relatively peaceful. This paper argues that the primary reason that unrest and conflict emerged in Transnistria and Gagauzia, while other predominantly Russian-speaking regions remained stable was not due to how citizens responded to issues such as the rise of pan-Romanian nationalism, but rather how local elites reacted to them. This paper compares developments in four Russian-speaking cities in Moldova between 1989 and 1991: Tiraspol, Comrat, Bălți, and Taraclia. It demonstrates how the inhabitants of these four cities held similar concerns, but local elites

responded differently. In Tiraspol and Comrat, which became the epicentre of the Transnistrian and Gagauz separatist movements, local elites fuelled distrust towards the Moldovan government, while in Bălți and Taraclia, they sought to placate the masses.

Homeland, kin-state, diaspora and the (im)materiality of borders

Krisztina Rác

My presentation and the subsequent paper deal with a group of people that have mainly been ignored in literature on the subjects of the Yugoslav wars, ethnic minorities, and diaspora. Namely, a considerable number of the emigres from Serbia in the 1990s did not leave for Western Europe, North America or Australia, but to Hungary – not only, but largely members of the Hungarian minority from Vojvodina. This meant their atypical diasporic integration into the kin-state with the same language and a similar culture but with yet different experiences and socialization. Through an analysis of the narratives of the interviews conducted with ethnic Hungarians who moved from Serbia to Hungary explicitly or implicitly because of the Yugoslav wars, my research aims to unpack the construction of borders in its materiality at the time of fleeing from Yugoslavia/Serbia to Hungary and today, as well as in its immaterial sense between the homeland and the kin-state, which has also been a destination for migration. My main questions concern the relationship of the members of the community to their “old” and “new” home and the people there, the transnational links they have had, and their lives confined by these borders as well as the freedoms they achieve. By way of interpreting the answers to these

themes and through the prism of memory, I explore the dynamic relationship of home and belonging at the crossroads of countries, societies, languages, and cultures.

Cross-border living in Ukrainian-Hungarian border region enhanced by kin-state politics

Katalin Kovály-Kolozsvári

Economic and income disparities between border regions usually induce vibrant cross-border activities. This is the case in Transcarpathia, the westernmost county of Ukraine, where the ethnic Hungarian minority living en masse along the Hungarian border, developed various forms of cross-border living strategies, including seasonal work, smuggling, retail trade and permanent resettlement in Hungary since the 1990s. However, the geopolitical cataclysms since 2014 have fundamentally shifted these strategies, many families purchased real estate in the northeastern periphery of Hungary to secure a second home as a back-up plan. The Russian invasion and its socio-economic consequences instigated dramatic population movements. Tens of thousands of Hungarians have left Transcarpathia, most of whom resettled in Hungary or moved to western EU countries as Hungarian citizens, with the accessibility of preferential renaturalization offered by Hungary. Based on mixed methods, this paper aims to explore the role of Hungary’s kin-state politics (primarily the non-residential preferential renaturalization) in the livelihood strategies of ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine and how these measures have influenced migration processes in the region. Findings reveal that second homes in Hungary

functioned as a springboard to West (either in Hungary or in Europe) until 2022 have become prime residences for many families; cross-border living strategies, used to base in Transcarpathia, has now shifted to Hungary. The everyday life of Transcarpathian Hungarians is not confined to nation-states' territories: their activities and coping strategies transgress the national boundaries; implemented in a transnational space, where economic rationality and opportunities allow for rapid adaptation to new situations.

D3 - The Far Right's Use of Borders

Crusader of the Orthodox Nation – Copying the Hungarian Populist Instrumentalization of Religion in Romania

Robert Sata and Alexandra Niculae

Romania's Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) was founded only in the fall of 2019, ahead of the 2020 local and legislative elections, where it gathered more than 9% of the vote. Despite being labelled a neofascist, anti-Semitic, pro-Russian and ethno-chauvinist, the party reached almost 15% by the 2024 EP elections. The party manifesto states four main pillars define AUR, "family, nation, Christian faith, and liberty", yet we argue the party instrumentalizes religion only to reinforce its radical ethno-populist appeal. This echoes Hungary's Fidesz and its leader Orbán's religious-nationalist rhetoric, where faith is instrumentalized to unite the people behind the party. This way, AUR presents a paradox – it both looks down and up to Hungarians, its traditional ethnic

"archenemy". We analyze AUR's political discourse and media campaigns to demonstrate how AUR makes Orthodoxy become a marker between "true Romanians" adopting an identitarian understanding of religion to strengthen its ethno-populist appeal – exactly as Orbán does with Christian faith in Hungary. At the same time, parading as defender of Orthodox faith, AUR uses what we call 'reverse civilizationalism' (Brubaker 2017) to present Romanian Orthodox identity competing, if not superior, to West European Christian civilization – something that resonates well with the substantial Romanian emigrant community in Western Europe that votes for AUR. Drawing the parallel between the discursive strategies of AUR and Orbán's Fidesz, we show how AUR blends religion and nationalism in instrumental ways to legitimize its radical populist stance and act as true defenders of traditional values and Christian religion to become crusader of the Orthodox nation.

Noodles or Knödel? Choosing Nationality in South Tyrol's 1939 Option

Eden McLean

In spring of 1939, Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler agreed to finally solve the "South Tyrol problem" by collectively transferring all non-Italians from Italy's northern border region. Under this plan, German-speaking residents had the opportunity to renounce their Italian citizenship in favor of German citizenship and to move to the Reich. If they chose to retain Italian citizenship, however, they had to relinquish any lingering allegiance to a "German" identity and give "one hundred percent loyalty" to their Italian nationality. At first glance, it appeared to be a straightforward choice;

as with all things presumed to be “common sense,” however, the vague definitions of “German-ness” and “Italian-ness” – let alone “one hundred percent loyalty” – caused both misunderstanding and opportunity. Likewise, the often-cited statistic that over 80% of identified German speakers chose German citizenship in the 1939 Option glossed over the contentious debates about nationality and the sheer amount of confusion that characterized the process. This paper uses theoretical understandings of collective identifications and common sense developed by scholars such as Rogers Brubaker and Ann Stoler to explore the power behind the malleable ascriptions of nationality in interwar South Tyrol. Specifically, it uses an array of sources from state and Church archives in Vienna, Rome, Bozen/Bolzano, and Trent to think about how the very idea of “choosing” one’s nationality in the 1939 Option clarified what defined those nationalities – for “Germans” and “Italians,” for Fascists and Nazis, for Tyroleans and the faraway politicians who saw fit to dictate the terms of their collective identification.

The “Normalization” of the Right-Wing Populist Border Discourse: The Case Study of Austria and the Freedom Party
Werner Suppanz

One of the main issues of right-wing populist parties is the strengthening of borders – both in a symbolical order and a territorial sense. Since its takeover by Jörg Haider and his followers in 1986 the Freedom Party has been trying to implement cultural hegemony by a continuing and permanently updated border discourse – with respect both to symbolical borders between the “normal”

and “authentic” Austrians and seemingly deviant parts of the population on the one hand and territorial borders against “foreigners”, “refugees”, “migrants” and an imagined outside world as a whole on the other side. The wording of the “Fortress Austria” as currently propagated by the Freedom Party represents this world-view in a nutshell. The paper will focus on two main questions: 1) It will centre on the effects of the 2015 refugee movement as beginning of a new and still persistent phase of the Freedom Party’s discourse of “border protection” on a European and by far stronger a national level. 2) A second focus will be put on the dissemination of right-wing populist concepts with respect to migration and border protection in the Austrian society and in the Austrian political “landscape”. What we can observe and have to analyze is therefore a process of “normalization” of the exclusionary discourse on migration and belonging also in parties of the political centre-right and centre-left.

D4 - Cyprus

Borders, Migration and the Digital States of Exception in Cyprus

Michaelangelo Anastasiou and Nicos Trimiklinotis

The present article develops a discourse-theoretical framework, elucidating how national(ist) affects, mediated through the semiotic operations of metonymy and metaphor, effectuate processes of symbolic and affective bordering. Expanding on recent affect theory and the sociology of emotions, this study argues that nationalism is not merely underpinned by particular or discrete emotions, such as fear and anxiety, but

by diverse, interacting and multilayered emotional complexes that find variable expression in social and political life. It positions nationalism as a dynamic affective-symbolic construct that emerges through the metonymical displacement of emotions across disparate symbolic complexes and social domains, which ultimately coalesce with common symbolic reference to “the nation”. Metonymy is implicated in the constitution of contiguous (similitude by proximity) spaces of representation through which meaningful, affective and emotional disparities enter into common relational architectures with reference to “the nation” and its symbolic-affective family resemblances. The broad metonymic circulation of “the nation” in socio-political structures incubates metaphoric possibilities, whereby “the nation”, as the prime-most symbolic-affective “adhesive”, comes to operate as a symbolic replacement for its “internal” components. The metaphoric operation thus positions “the nation” as an essential constituent of social and political life, thus intensifying national(ist) affective charges. By delineating the operational coordinates of metonymy and metaphor in the symbolic-affective consolidation of “the nation”, the present article ultimately deciphers how diverse and disparate forms of bordering come to interact with one another, as elements of national(ist) identity, life and outlooks.

Bridging and Dividing: The Socio-Political Dynamics of Green Line in Cyprus
Gülay Umaner Duba and Julie Alev Dilmac

This study explores the socio-political dynamics of Green Line in Cyprus, a demilitarized boundary established in 1964 and reinforced in 1974 to separate

Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities after intercommunal conflict. As both a physical demarcation and a symbolic frontier, the Green Line embodies tensions between separation and connection, functioning paradoxically as a security measure, a site of interaction, and a contested space of sovereignty. Utilizing sociological and political science frameworks, this paper analyses whether the Green Line act as an object in itself, as a point of passage, a “non-place” (M. Augé), a bridge, or a door (G. Simmel) and whether its purpose is to include or to exclude. The theoretical framework draws on Charles Tilly’s theories of state formation and Brendan O’Leary’s power-sharing concepts to analyse the Green Line as a product of power dynamics, identity formation, and ethnic divisions, while also highlighting its capacity to facilitate negotiation. The Green Line encapsulates the dual nature of borders as instruments of division and potential sites for integration. While it crystallizes nationalist sentiments and territorial separation, international efforts, such as the EU’s regulatory framework and UN initiatives, highlight its capacity to facilitate interaction and collaboration by advancing pluralistic border governance (dynamic bizonality) that respects communal identities and inclusive governance. The study demonstrates how reimagining borders as dynamic spaces can foster coexistence in ethnonational conflicts. Insights drawn from Green Line inform theories of state formation, conflict resolution, and the interplay between nationalism and borders in ethnonationalist conflicts worldwide.

Collective Trauma and Border-Making:
Cyprus since the 1960s
Nikos Christofis

The island of Cyprus has been the setting of one of the longest-standing and intractable, or, as several scholars argue, “frozen” conflicts of the modern era. The island’s history involves ethnic and bicomunal conflicts, forced occupations, and invasions, all of which have contributed to the collective traumas inflicted upon both communities on the island, the Greek and Turkish Cypriots. For Turkish Cypriots, while there is no single “mega-event” in their discourse like the 1974 Turkish invasion, their collective trauma was shaped by a decades-long process that occurred prior to 1974 involving the suppression of their constitutional rights, their forced resettlement in enclaves, and the deprivation of basic commodities such as water and electricity, issues that have often been neglected and/or ignored in the Greek Cypriot master narrative since 1974. For the latter, on the other hand, a watershed event marked the beginning of the master narrative through the collective trauma of Greek Cypriots with an emphasis on the “Turkish Invasion” and “forced occupation”. Both groups have their own historical, fixed, and salient collective traumas. Those memories crop up again and again as old, unhealed wounds, constituting an obstacle to any attempts to achieve a solution that can resolve the division of the island. Against this background, the present paper aims to demonstrate the roles and effects of these opposing collective traumas, which have blocked efforts to come up with a solution for the Cyprus Problem, by taking into account the nationalist discourses of the two communities

(ethnocentrism, enemy imaging, a clash of identities, etc.), and, whether implicitly or explicitly, the attempts that have been made to normalize the line of division drawn up with the 1974 invasion.

D5 - Global Perspectives

Challenging Empire: Beheiren and the
Vietnam War’s Transnational Activism
Shunsuke Tanaka

This study explores the reciprocal dynamics between transnational anti-war movements and state power during the late 1960s and early 1970s, with a specific focus on the Beheiren (Citizens’ League for Peace in Vietnam). Drawing on archival records from the U.S. National Archives—particularly public safety documents and policy correspondence—this research examines how Beheiren’s grassroots activism was perceived and countered by the U.S. government. By situating Beheiren within the broader Cold War security framework between Japan and the United States, the study reveals how these reciprocal influences shaped the moral and political contestations surrounding the Vietnam War. The concept of reciprocal dynamics serves as the central analytical framework, capturing the bidirectional interactions between grassroots movements and state actors across national and ideological boundaries. Beheiren mobilized extensive domestic support while fostering transnational solidarity involving intellectuals, students, and civil society groups. This decentralized yet interconnected activism not only amplified anti-war efforts within Japan but also influenced international platforms, thereby complicating U.S.

geopolitical strategies. The analysis is further enriched by life history interviews with participants in folk guerrilla protests and insights into Beheiren's collaborations with prominent figures, including political scientist Michitoshi Takabatake and author Makoto Oda. By situating Beheiren's activism within the broader temporal and spatial reciprocal dynamics of East Asia, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the interplay between nationalism, transnationalism, and civil society during the Vietnam War era. The research ultimately redefines East Asia's conceptual boundaries by advancing the discourse on the interconnectedness of local and global forces.

Interiorising the borders of the nation: German civic education and the (un-)making of the Muslim citizen

Jacob Lypp

If the proliferation of borders means that membership criteria in European citizenship regimes are no longer static, we need explanations for how boundaries expand or shrink in relation to different populations. In this paper, I account for what I see as a key mechanism for this boundary-work: the pedagogisation of citizenship, which renders belonging not as a fixed legal status but rather as a moveable quality that must be earned time and again through learning. Empirically, I develop this argument through an ethnography of the German citizenship education. I am interested in the normative ideal of citizenship this state-funded pedagogy communicates, and in the resultant boundaries of in- and exclusion. Although civic education targets primarily Muslim Germans, its implementation is spearheaded by

Protestant actors. Rather than teaching a fixed curriculum, these educators seek to guide students on a path of personal self-transformation. Becoming a German citizen assumes the shape of a quasi-religious awakening—sometimes a figurative conversion to Germanness, sometimes literally a conversion to Christianity. Theoretically, I argue that this instantiates the national-Protestant re-education advocated by Fichte in his *Addresses*. I build on work by Ann Stoler and Étienne Balibar to tease out how this spiritual-pedagogical imaginary constructs 'interior frontiers' entrapping Germany's Muslim citizens. Taking seriously these frontiers' spiritual quality holds potential for analysts of nationalism. It yields a revisionist account of the nature and texture of patterns of exclusion in Europe, where boundary-making is not driven by reactionary-organicist tropes but by a progressive-universalist pedagogical vision redolent of colonial imaginaries.

Parenthood and Belonging among Nepali Migrants in Japan

Binit Gurung

Belonging refers to a condition in which one feels understood, recognized, at home and safe. The question of belonging acquires heightened significance among migrants, as they are generally treated as outsiders in the host country and are usually perceived stereotypically based on their national origins. This paper focuses on belonging among Nepali migrants in Japan, which is a country well-known for being hostile towards immigration. While the context of Japan may give one the impression that Nepali migrants do not have sense of belonging in Japan, the paper nuances belonging by anchoring it in the context

of parenthood among Japan-based Nepali migrants of diverse background. Belonging is conceptualized as variable and temporal in sociological scholarship, which means that belonging is dynamic and its texture changes over time as one moves through the life course. Drawing on in-depth interviews with Nepali mothers and fathers in the Greater Tokyo Area, conducted over a period of one year between March 2023 and April 2024, I discuss how parenthood differentially influences their self-perception of belonging based on their backgrounds and situations in Japan. By examining their narratives of belonging, I illuminate the ways in which they imagine and negotiate boundaries of belonging vis-à-vis native Japanese and other Nepali migrants from Nepal. I show that boundary-making and boundary-maintenance enable them to justify their own experiences and practices as parents. I conclude by contextualizing the significance of my findings in the broader scholarship on migrant parenthood, belonging and the life course.

D6 - World War II Europe

World War II monuments and political geography in Croatia: A spatial analysis
Marko Grdesic

This article is interested in the link between collective memory and political identity, seen through the lens of geography. More concretely, it is interested in the character of the connection between World War II monuments and the electoral geography of Croatia, approached in a quantitative manner. I am interested in the role and impact of historical monuments. Seen

from a spatial perspective, monuments are physical interventions which "transmit" a certain political message within a given physical radius. The monuments built during the Yugoslav socialist regime commemorated the partisan struggle, victims of fascism, the solidarity of the Croatian and Serbian people, and socialism. This cultural heritage was politicized in a new way in the 1990s. Many monuments were destroyed during the Homeland War (1991-1995) or immediately after. Therefore, monuments are sites of political contention and can even be swept up in instances of political violence. What can we show empirically? Is it possible to demonstrate an effect of monuments in a quantitative test of the connection with electoral geography? And furthermore, is it possible say why some monuments were destroyed and others were not? This paper will present current findings and possible future directions of research. It is part of an ongoing research effort devoted to constructing a comprehensive geographic data-set of World War II monuments in Croatia.

Crossing the Strymonas river: Refugees, Sovereignty, and Displacement in WWII Occupied Greece
Alexios Ntotorakis Exarchou

During WWII, Greece was divided into three occupation zones by Germany, Italy, and Bulgaria. Bulgaria de facto annexed its territories, establishing a new border along the Strymonas River that became a site of contested sovereignty and displacement. Its repressive Bulgarization policies caused an exodus of Greek refugees, who crossed this border into the German-occupied Central Macedonia,

predominantly seeking refuge in Thessaloniki. In my research, I examine how Greek refugees from Eastern Macedonia and Thrace dealt with this border, seeking survival during the occupation. While border crossings provided a means of escape, they also heightened Greek officials' anxieties over territorial integrity, because refugee movements were perceived as evidence of Bulgarian expansionism and a threat to national sovereignty. German authorities, meanwhile, focused primarily on security concerns. Despite official barriers, the border remained more porous than acknowledged, with people moving between the occupation zones in both directions. Using archival sources and refugee testimonies, this study examines how the border was both a tool of exclusion and control, as well as a space crossed by displaced populations. The study argues that the border reflected Greek anxieties about territorial integrity and national identity. At the same time, it was a space where civilians prioritized survival, dealing with the political and physical boundaries imposed by the occupation. Analyzing the connections of border security, official concerns, and refugee movement on the ground, we can understand better how the contested border shaped the experiences of displacement in occupied Greece.

Reinventing Finnish Karelian Identities after the Second World War: Regional Nationalism and Centenary Celebrations in the New Bordertowns of Joensuu and Lappeenranta, 1948–49

Ville Kivimäki

The region(s) of Karelia, both inside the Finnish borders and in Northwest Russia, had a special place in the emerging

Finnish nationalism of the late 19th and early 20th century. Most of the oral poetry for the national epic Kalevala was collected in Karelia, and as a borderland between Finland and Russia the area was culturally and politically contested. As a result of the Second World War, Finland lost most of those Karelian areas that had been part of the pre-war Finnish state. The Finnish Karelian population was evacuated and resettled in the remaining Finnish territory. The foreign political situation at the end of the war left no room for revanchism. The new borderline of 1944 left parts of Karelia inside Finland. These areas around the towns of Lappeenranta and Joensuu had not been the "heartland" of Finnish Karelia, but were rather the region's pre-war outskirts. Now it had to be decided, whether the Karelian remnants should be integrated into bordering Finnish regions or whether they could serve as new centres for distinctively Finnish Karelian identity. As both Joensuu and Lappeenranta celebrated their 100th and 300th anniversaries in 1948 and 1949, respectively, this provided a fitting occasion to reinvent "Northern Karelian" and "Southern Karelian" regional identities, which combined old nationalistic ideas of Karelianism with the new political and local realities of the post-war era. The centenary celebrations were major public events, where both local elites and ordinary people had an active role in constructing their new regional and national identities.

D7 - Borderlands

Ukraine as Postimperial Borderland

John Hutchinson

Most nation-states, like Ukraine, have emerged recently through the collapse of empires in world wars (including the cold war). While wars in Western Europe have often provided unifying myths and rituals for nation states, their legacy in the vast borderland area between conflicting Eurasian empires, has been more ambivalent. Nationalist elites have been catapulted to power to confront historic divisions over language, religion and region, exacerbated by conflicts with neighbours, while facing periodic attempts at re-imperialisation by the former hegemonic power. I will examine the status of the Ukrainian nationalising project within the context of the destabilising geo-politics of post-imperial borderlands.

Contested Spaces, Disputed Borders: Discourses and Identities in Upper Silesia

Geza Barta

The redrawn borders of nation-states have a complex relationship with national and regional identities. In Central Europe, old borders often persist as phantom borders, shaping ethnic, national, and regional discourses. Upper Silesia in southern Poland exemplifies this dynamic, where fluid ethnic-regional identifications are deeply tied to territorial, symbolic, and mental borders. The imagined spaces and boundaries of Poland's hegemonic narrative sharply contrast with those of self-identified Silesians, placing the region at the center of contentious identity politics. National borders, historical intra-state

divisions, and regional boundaries – often disputed as remnants of older demarcations – play central roles in divisive identity discourses. This territorial ambiguity is reflected in the self-definitions of Silesian identity itself. The boundaries of “real” or “authentic” Upper Silesia remain elusive, as interviews and questionnaires reveal a lack of consensus among Upper Silesians. This ambiguity stems not only from the various influences of dominant narratives but also from the absence of alternative “objective” methods for defining these boundaries. This paper explores how competing perspectives on borders – both national and regional – intersect with ethnopolitical and identity discourses, shaping national and regional self-definitions in profound ways. Drawing on the work of Calhoun and Brubaker, it examines how group recognition is articulated through discourse and the extent to which such discourse shapes cognitive understandings of the nation and regional ethnic groups. By analyzing the interplay between national hegemony, regional identity, and contested boundaries, this study seeks to illuminate the dynamic processes through which identities are negotiated in borderland contexts.

'Both sides now' -- borders and belonging in South Pannonian fiction

Petra Bakos

My paper sets out to map the current state of South Pannonian 'borderlands consciousness' (Anzaldúa, 1987) through the close reading of Bosnian, Croatian, Hungarian, and Vojvodina Hungarian and Serbian contemporary novels. In particular, I am curious in what forms such a culturally and historically

amalgamate modus operandi can be sustained under the ever-increasing political pressure towards nation-state sanctioned, homogenized, normative identity options in the region. For that, the paper engages with the various meanings present and past nation state borders acquire in borderlands narratives of Orsolya Bencsik, Sándor Jászberényi, Bojan Krvošapić, Katalin Ladik, Ottó Tolnai, Bekim Sejramović, and Neven Ušumović. As is well known, state borders are among the most powerful symbolic assets of populist governments aiming to conjure a sense of ethnicized, gendered, and raced 'us' as opposed to 'them' residing, or worse, arriving from beyond those very borders. Therefore, the paper will discuss how the notion of borders as well as their various material enhancements are constructed in borderlands novels, and what effect these have on the way borderlands people negotiate belonging and solidarity. In conclusion, my reading of these novels proposes that in South Pannonian borderlands narratives bodies, feelings, thoughts, and memories are, as Sarah Green put it, the 'elsewhere', where the source of distinction that borders mark is located (Green, 2018).

D8 - The Online Borders of Ukraine

""Glory to Ukraine!": Examining Cultural Symbols in Times of Crisis and Conflict""
Katarina Damčević

This proposal examines the salute ""Glory to Ukraine!"" within the broader context of nationalism, exploring its role in mobilizing unity while negotiating identity complexities amid conflict.

Historically significant symbols often emerge during tumultuous times as markers of solidarity against external threats. The resurgence of ""Glory to Ukraine!"" during key events like the 2013-2014 Euromaidan protests and the ongoing war since Russia's invasion on February 24, 2022, illustrates how nations utilize cultural memory to shape their collective identity. However, this salute also raises questions of inclusion and marginalization within the national narrative. By relying on cultural semiotics, my qualitative analysis of data gathered from selected public Telegram channels since March 2022 explores how ""Glory to Ukraine!"" serves as a site of new meaning generation, as well as meaning negotiation. Drawing on the work of Benjamin Abrams and Peter Gardner on symbolic objects in contentious politics (2023), I analyze the salute in various online communicative contexts and the ways it triggers cultural memory. The salute has transformed from a national rallying cry to a symbol of international solidarity, prompting a nuanced balance of support and allegiance. Accordingly, I aim to shed light on how symbols like ""Glory to Ukraine!"" reflect the fluidity of borders in an interconnected world where they are perpetually contested and redefined.

Branding Borders: Ukraine's Wartime Digital Narratives of Sovereignty and Unity

Nataliia Vdovychenko

Borders are not just physical and legal entities, but symbolic constructs that define and communicate national identity. Modern nation branding uses digital platforms as crucial tools for narrating and broadcasting these ideas globally. This work examines how the

official governmental website Ukraine.ua employs nation branding to communicate the country's borders, by strategically placing its focus on the unity of Ukraine's many regions. Taking into account the country's geopolitical position, historical legacies, and Russia's military invasion, the representation carries political meaning and is ideologically charged. Through critically assessing the website's content, visual narratives, and geographic delineations, this study uses discourse analysis to explore how Ukraine positions its borders within a framework of inclusion, sovereignty, and cultural richness. The deliberate framing of regions emphasizes territorial integrity, highlighting both internal diversity and national unity. At the same time, mentioning the occupation of Crimea and Eastern areas reflects Ukraine's political and military resistance. Drawing on theories of nationalism (Gellner, Brubaker), border studies (Barth, O'Leary), and nation branding (Kaneva, Bolin, Stahlberg) this paper argues that Ukraine.ua serves as a digital nation branding institute, where the boundaries of the nation are symbolically reaffirmed for international audiences. By situating this analysis within the broader discourse on nationalism and digitalization, the paper demonstrates how Ukraine leverages nation branding to contest ideological borders while promoting a cohesive national identity. The study offers new insights into how states use digital tools to navigate the evolving dynamics of borders in wartime in a globalized, contested world.

Memory, national identity and borders: reversed pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian perspectives online and their reception
Anastasiya Pshenychnykh

The period since the full-scale Russian invasion in Ukraine is marked by Russia-Ukraine conflict over interpreting historical periods/events/figures, which translated into monument wars in physical space and on media. Drawing on the analysis of 2708 posts reporting on monuments, the talk looks into digital representations of conflicts over monuments on the social networking platform Telegram, mechanisms of constructing reversed interpretations of history, identity and current events, as well as digital borders on pro-Ukrainian and pro-Russian Telegram channels from 24 February 2022 to 24 February 2023. To understand if these conflicting online narratives over history and identity create offline dividedness among the public, I further compare them with public reception of selected posts on historical periods/events/figures, most frequently becoming the object of memory wars on social media, by conducting interviews (November 2024–March 2025) with Ukrainians (located in Ukraine and relocated abroad) and Russian citizens (moved out of Russia since 2022 due to a variety of reasons).

E1 - Borders and Gender (2)

Masculinizing the Nation: Nationalism and the Construction of Wartime Masculinity in Manchukuo during the Second World War
Rui Li

Since the twentieth century, most East Asian cultures, people tend to feminize

the country, with terms such as “motherland” or “mother country.” However, traditional East Asian societies have a very different understanding of masculinity from the West. Traditional East Asian masculinity has never come from a muscular appearance or a dedication to a feminine homeland. There is not even an absolute standard for the definition of masculinity. Against this cultural background, as an emerging country during the Second World War, the Manchukuo was faced with the difficult task of constructing a national identity and mobilizing for war at the beginning of its establishment. This research attempts to restore the logic of wartime masculinity construction by analyzing the expectations of masculinity in the wartime propaganda of the Manchukuo and the Japanese Empire during the Second World War. This study points out that the propaganda agency of the Manchukuo and Japanese Empire attempted to achieve the goal of urging men to overcome their fear of death and participate in the war by appealing to men’s dedication to a feminized homeland. Furthermore, by strengthening the gender division of labor, it accelerates the shaping of national identity.

Women in Nation-Building Narratives in Gulf- A Multi-Dimensional Analysis Zarqa Parvez

This article critically examines the evolving role of women in Qatar’s nation-building project through a combination of intersectional and post-colonial perspectives. By analyzing women’s political, legal, and personal status, it unveils the complex interplay between conceptualizations of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in shaping Qatar’s national

identity. The research presents a compelling argument that Qatar’s national identity narrative, which strategically positions women, emerges from three key factors: a carefully curated tradition-modernity synthesis, a potent “us versus them” discourse, and political institutions with roots in the country’s imperial past. This narrative has dynamically evolved to align with Qatar’s changing vision, policies, and global aspirations, serving to reconstruct national identity domestically while bolstering international legitimacy. By employing a multi-layered analytical approach, this study deconstructs the concept of ‘Qatari woman’ within the context of national development. It explores nationalism as a performance with a gendered lens, constantly reinvented and renegotiated. The post-colonial lens illuminates power relations and the lasting impact of colonization on national institutions and women’s position in society. Key questions explored include: 1. Women’s agency in nation-building politics versus their role as passive recipients 2. The dialectic between the top-down national identity frameworks and lived realities 3. Women’s representation in narratives dominated by political elites and external perspectives 4. The recent surge in women’s education, employment, and political participation, and its implications

Nationalism, Borders, and the Kurdish Question: Post-Civil War Dynamics along the Turkish-Syrian Border Gabriele Leone

The proposed research seeks to examine the evolving dynamics of nationalism and borders and their impact on Kurdish communities along the Turkish-Syrian

border in the aftermath of the Syrian Civil War. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks of Achille Mbembe, Judith Revel, and Michael J. Shapiro, this study aims to elucidate how shifting geopolitical landscapes and necropolitical practices redefine borders and affect marginalized communities. The focus on Kurdish communities underscores the intricate interplay of nationalism, borders, and state violence while acknowledging the experiences of other minority groups in the region. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the necropolitical implications of the Syrian Civil War on Kurdish communities through Mbembe's concept of state power and sovereignty over life and death. Furthermore, it aims to explore the transformation of borders and their impact on identity and nationalism, employing Revel's and Shapiro's theoretical insights on border politics, exclusion, and the reconfiguration of state boundaries. This approach includes a critical, intersectional analysis of how gender and ethnicity influence the experiences of Kurdish and other minority liberation movements, emphasizing the intersectionality of oppression in border regions. Methodologically, the research adopts a multi-faceted approach, incorporating documentary analysis and case studies to dissect the nuanced challenges faced by Kurdish and minority communities. The study seeks to advance theoretical understandings of nationalism and borders while providing policy recommendations for more inclusive and gender-sensitive approaches. Ultimately, it aims to underscore how the reimagining of borders and national identities post-conflict continues to shape the socio-

political realities of marginalized communities in the region.

E2 - Kurdistan's Borders

The Silent 'Other': Kurdish Identity Under Turkish Nationalism in Central Anatolia
Haci Cevik and Berhudan Şamar

Konya, located in Central Anatolia, is home to significant Kurdish communities whose political and psychological experiences have been shaped by broader nationalist movements within Turkey. Since the 1980s, rapid urbanization, economic shifts, and the intensifying Kurdish conflict have led to migration from rural Kurdish enclaves to urban centers and European countries, disrupting traditional Kurdish lifestyles. Historically, Kurds in Konya have maintained a low-profile presence, often excluded from national narratives. However, as the Kurdish issue gained prominence at the national level, Kurdish identity in Konya became more politicized. This politicization occurred in a region deeply influenced by Islamist and far-right nationalist ideologies. These forces have shaped a distinct form of Kurdish identity in Konya—one that is both recognized and marginalized, existing as a silent "other" within the larger Turkish society. The intersection of Turkish nationalism with Kurdish identity in Konya has fostered a unique psychological tension. Kurdish communities in Konya navigate their identity in a region where nationalism is dominant, creating a constant push-and-pull between assimilation and resistance. As Kurdish migrants settle in European countries, their experiences with transnationalism further complicate this identity negotiation, contributing to what

can be described as an "alternative Kurdishness." This presentation will explore the political and psychological dimensions of Kurdish identity in Konya through in-depth interviews conducted both within Turkey and the diaspora. It will focus on how nationalism has shaped identity construction and the long-term consequences of being perceived as "the other" in a nationalist setting.

The formation of ethnic boundaries/groups in the process of capital accumulation: Kurds on the border of Türkiye and Iran
Melike Seker

The formation/transformation of border regions as one of the processes of integration/incorporation with the capitalist world economy, argues that the study of border regions will provide important data in understanding the functioning of this system by addressing the formation of borders in line with the process of integration with the world economy. This process has resulted in the emergence of nation states that aim to establish a national society through bureaucratization, concentration of power in one hand, and homogenization of the subject population by strengthening centrality through capital accumulation. Nationalism, which helps to ensure the legitimacy of this system, has been the ideology that determines the framework for the acceptance of members of the subordinate population as citizens with all the requirements of a collective solidarity. For relatively autonomous communities, the process of expansion of the Eurocentric capitalist economy has resulted in a transformation in which some small groups have been absorbed into the expanding central state system, some

have become 'ethnic groups/minorities', some have been colonized, or have gained relative autonomy. The study attempts to evaluate this transformation caused by the expansion of the expanding European economy into the states of Turkey and Iran in terms of its impact on the buffer zone/border in which the Kurds settled densely and how the Kurdish people turned to ethnic minorities within national states. Kurds, who constitute the majority of the population in the border regions of Türkiye and Iran living in the same border region in the 20th century, but as citizens of two different states, have turned into ethnic groups, ethnic groups and ethnic minorities of the countries they are affiliated to. The study aims to discuss the relational process between the formation of nation state(s) as a basic mechanism of the capital accumulation process and transformation of the Kurds residing in border area

Borders Have Crossed us: The Processes and Consequences of Imposed Border in Kurdistan

Loghman Hamehorad, Hossien Mohammadzadeh, and Jamal Khosravi

Imposed border is one of the known forms of border. This kind of border has been made with little attention to people's socio-cultural environment. The main objective of the current study is to explore the processes and consequences of imposed border and ethnic policy on Kurds in Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and Syria. Martin Marger's critical approach to imposed border and ethnic policy was employed as the theoretical framework to study the present paper. As this partitioning has happened in the past, this paper is following a historical approach in terms of methodology and

tries to study the processes of imposed bordering and subsequent ethnic policies in the four countries of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria where Kurds inhabit. The findings show that the imposed border in two main periods of 1514 and 1920 was not just a line on the ground but caused a fracture in the structure of Kurdish society, population, ethnicity, religion, family, environment and following that bordering, many other policies were imposed on Kurds. At the first step, imposed bordering split Kurdish society between Ottoman Turkey and Iran and the second partitioning happened when the Kurds in Ottoman Turkey were also split among Iraq and Syria. Following these processes of bordering, the ethnic policies were imposed on Kurds in all the countries first of which was the attempt to assimilate and/or discriminate them. Continuous waves of forced migration and genocide (e.g., Anfal) were imposed on them among. Imposed bordering has endangered Kurds to be fractured in terms of population, land, culture, etc. For the first time, some of the disastrous consequences of these policies are shown by GIS mapping. The people, their culture and their environment in societies exposed to imposed borders and coercive policies must be given more attention than ever.

Banditry or Ethnic Resistance Against the Nation-State Borders? The Relationship Between the Turkey and Kurdish Tribes on "the Turkish National Borders"

Savas Dede

The Treaty of Lausanne established the Republic of Turkey as a nation-state. According to the treaty, a significant ethnically Kurdish population was classified as "Turkish." However, large

Kurdish populations remained in neighboring border states, such as Iraq. Influenced by cross-border kinship ties, Kurds maintained trans-border trade. Those engaged in this "illegal" trade were referred to as smugglers (kaçaxçi) within Kurds and as bandits (eşkiya) by Turkey. Smuggling, initially an individual activity during the early years of the Turkish Republic, transformed over a century into an alternative economic enterprise led by tribal or familial groups. Following the Gulf Wars, as Iraq lost control over its borders, Turkey tolerated the use of its borders for informal trade. Consequently, this trade, initially perceived as a threat to nationalism during the early years of the Turkey, evolved into a state-monitored activity. Today, "illegal" trade along Turkey's border with Iraq is controlled by Kurdish tribes supported by the Turkish state. However, as the Kurdish population beyond Turkey's borders continues to pose a perceived threat to its national integrity, Turkey periodically imposes strict measures to maintain control over this trade. Two prominent examples of such measures include the Bilge Village Massacre, carried out by Village Guards, and the Roboski massacre, where 33 Kurds were killed in an airstrike by the Turkish Air Force. This study examines the consequences of the conflict between artificial nation-state borders and ethnic identities, with a particular focus on the relationship between the Turkish state and Kurdish tribes.

E3 - Mapping Borders

“From Irtysh to Volga, From Saryarka to Alatau”: symbolic construction of spatial imagination in Kazakhstan

Arlan Rakhymzhanov

Territorialization is an important aspect of the nation-building process. Apart from drawing the territory on the map, it is important to create a verbal confirmation about the land of the nation. This paper examines how the discourse around territoriality is drawn in Kazakhstan. Even though the official borders of the country are demarcated, there is a process of imagining the Kazakh land through media and literature. In the famous movie *Nomad*, the ending voiceover clearly states the territory of Kazakhs: “From Irtysh to Volga, from Saryarka to Alatau is a golden cradle of Kazakhs—the sacred land. Whoever enters our land will be drowned in their own blood.”¹ By analyzing state-sponsored projects and pieces of Kazakh literature, I will show how the process of symbolic territorialization has been made. The paper will argue that visual manifestation of the territory and verbal bounding serve different roles in terms of passion and emotions. By dramatizing the boundaries, verbal reaffirmation of the land seems to bound the nation deeper. Visual mapping is based on legal agreements, while verbal mapping is based on myths, and the territory varies in its dimensions. By referring to landscape and using geographical locations as focal points, the discursive construction of “the Kazakh land” has taken place. Justification for claiming the land is not official international agreements and demarcations but an

appeal to the idea of “ancestral land” and generational occupation of the land: “For centuries, our forefathers lived in this land.”

Borders, Phantom Borders and Maps as a Tool of Information Warfare in Hybrid Russo-Ukrainian War

Tatjana Samostyan

Borders, phantom borders and maps as an important symbol of national state and national identity have become a powerful tool of information warfare during the Russian aggression against Ukraine. One could observe their application in political and mass media discourse. Hereby the ideological narrative of the subdivision of Ukraine between different states was embodied in symbolical visualization on maps in order to promote and legitimate Russian actions. The references to historical memory, earlier political entities and demarcations on the territory of contemporary Ukraine were used as a “natural” proof by political actors in order to construct the political myths of Ukraine as a “failed state”, an “artificial state founded by Lenin” (Putin, 2022) and a part of “historical Russia”. The denial of the very existence of Ukrainian national identity, its statehood and territorial integrity maintains the Russian multimodal political metanarrative through the visualization of borders on maps and “mapaganda” (Golubej, 2023). This analysis focuses on selected case studies of the symbolical use of visibility – maps and borders – as well as the associated narratives in political, mass and social media public discourse during the hybrid Russo-Ukrainian war.

Cartography and Conflict : Nationalism, Borders & the Marginalization of Kashmiri identity

Agrima Shankar

This paper explores the nexus of nationalism, cartography, and border-making in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), a region emblematic of the tensions between nation-states and contested identities. As one of the world's most militarized zones, J&K serves as a focal point for the overlapping territorial claims of India, Pakistan, and China. This study examines the role of maps as instruments of power, shaping national narratives, geopolitical claims, and local identities while marginalizing the Kashmiri perspective. Focusing on the historical legacy of partition and contemporary developments—such as the abrogation of Article 370 and subsequent redrawing of territorial boundaries—this paper analyzes the symbolic and practical significance of borders. Maps, often perceived as neutral tools, emerge here as contested artifacts that perpetuate state-centric views of territoriality, erasing the lived experiences of Kashmiris. Drawing from interdisciplinary sources, the paper critiques the instrumentalization of maps in entrenching nationalist anxieties and fostering exclusionary identities. It highlights the disconnect between official cartographic representations and the fragmented reality of borders on the ground. Through this lens, the study challenges dominant narratives, emphasizing the need to center Kashmiri voices in discussions about identity, autonomy, and borders. This work contributes to the broader discourse on nationalism and borders by offering insights into how cartography can both reflect and construct contested spaces.

E4 - Immigration and Borders

Navigating Borders Within Borders: Chinese International Students' Perceptions of the UK's Territorial Diversity

Tianshu Liu

This research explores how Chinese international students in England navigate and interpret the internal borders of the UK, focusing specifically on their experiences and perceptions of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland as 'countries within a country'. These constituent countries of the UK have distinct cultural, historical, and political identities that complicate the monolithic narrative of "Britishness" often presented to international students. As from a geographically vast country with a centralised republican national identity, Chinese students encounter unique perspectives of the UK, a comparatively smaller country defined by its constituent political entities and distinct identities. By examining Chinese students' visits to these countries, this study investigates how these students engage with the UK's complex national dynamics and reflect on their own understandings of borders and statehood. The study employs qualitative methods, conducting 20-30 semi-structured interviews with Chinese students who have travelled to at least two of the constituent countries, with the data to be thematically analysed. Participants will be asked to reflect on their motivations for travel, interactions with local cultures and communities, and concrete experiences of encountering visible and invisible marks of border, such as flags or languages (like bilingual railway announcements in Welsh and

English). By highlighting how temporary migrants navigate intra-national borders, this study argues that international student mobility within a host country provides a unique lens for understanding territorial diversity, challenging static notions of statehood and national identity.

Lived experiences and identity dilemmas of the descendants of immigrants in the People's Republic of China
Chengzhi Zhang

Since the Reform Era began in the late 1970s, more foreigners have migrated to China and established their families there, resulting in the emergence of a new generation of mixed-heritage and intercultural children with unique lived experiences. Consequently, these descendants of immigrants grow in an environment dominated by the Chinese, particularly the Han Chinese. For instance, they receive education designed to foster a unitary Chinese identity concerning language and values. The mainstream academia primarily focuses on emigration from China to Western countries or on the entry of Western and African immigrants into China, so there are very few studies on either the descendants of immigrants or their experiences. This group is not homogeneous. They may have the status of Chinese citizens with their ID, passport, etc., or they may have foreign citizenship with close familiarity of Chinese history, culture, and traditions obtained through education and social experiences. Nevertheless, these descendants could be highly visible because of their physical appearance, and they may possess cultural inheritance that is very different from their Chinese counterparts, leading to

their experiences of exclusion and inequality. Therefore, their experiences in the Han-Chinese-dominated environment influence how they identify themselves and how they are identified by others. This generates a significant process of dialogue, negotiation, and perhaps conflicts between those descendants and local Chinese communities. This study thus explores the lived experiences and the identity formation of this special group and aims to contribute to a new perspective of national identity-making in China.

Creating Transnational Social Spaces:
The Descendants of Bosnian Immigrants
in Slovenia
Ana Ješe Perković

This article explores transnational social spaces by examining the activities of descendants of Bosnian and Herzegovinian migrants in Slovenia. Migration patterns began with internal movements within Yugoslavia, with a significant wave from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Slovenia in the 1960s and 1970s, especially to industrial centers (Malačič 2008). These internal migrants laid the foundation for later transnational connections. Following Slovenia's independence in 1991, these migrants, once classified as internal, became international, adapting to new notions of citizenship, borders, and kinship networks that became increasingly transnational, aided by modern communication technologies. In this qualitative study, we conducted interviews with descendants of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian immigrant community in Slovenia to analyze how they sustain transnational ties with their extended kinship networks and benefit from these connections. Drawing on

interview excerpts, we illustrate mechanisms of reciprocity, descendants' involvement in institutional, organizational, and business collaborations within a broader transnational network, and their methods of communication with the transnational kinship group. While first-generation migrants retain a strong, direct connection to Bosnia and Herzegovina, their descendants often experience a mediated relationship, shaped by ancestral narratives. Nevertheless, these descendants access social and economic capital through the "transnational kinship group" (Faist 2000). Through cross-border activities, they expand their social space and, by creating transnational social spaces, they blur the boundaries between nation-states.

E5 - Commemorations

Challenges to the grand national narrative in a post-Soviet country: the case of Lithuania

Rasa Cepaitienė

In 2019 Lithuania witnessed several public space conflicts related to the efforts to commemorate/reject the memory of historical figures such as Kazys Škirpa and Jonas Noreika. Their contribution to the first Lithuanian Republic is unquestionable, but activities during the Second World War are overshadowed by complicity with the Nazis. In 2019, the Vilnius City Council decided to rename Kazys Škirpa Avenue and remove the Jonas Noreika memorial plaque. However, despite these decision, the contribution of the major media in shaping public opinion against these individuals, the open pressure to

condemn them by Jewish organizations in Lithuania and abroad, etc., there was a rather fierce and massive resistance to attempts to discredit their memory. The question is whether or not these individuals were Nazi collaborators - has divided not only the public and politicians, but also professional historians. These protests also exposed the deeper roots of the value divide in Lithuanian society. Although the mainstream media has tried to divide the participants in this war of memory into the "right" group of Holocaust victims and their supporters, and the "wrong" group, identified with the so-called "far-right", the latter was in fact led by former participants in the anti-Soviet resistance and dissidents. The aim of this paper is to search for the deeper causes of this memory conflict, which is linked to the competition between cosmopolitan and national memory and and contemporary political tensions.

Dissolving Borders through Commemorative Practices: Commemorating Victims of the „Operation Storm“ in Serbia and Republika Srpska

Nikola Gajić

On August 4, 1995, the Croatian Army launched Operation Storm, a military offensive against the self-declared Republika Srpska Krajina. Over three days, the operation resulted in approximately 670 civilian deaths and the displacement of around 200,000 Serbs, many of whom traveled through war-torn Bosnia and Herzegovina before settling in Serbia. Decades later, in 2015, the Republic of Serbia (SRB) and Republika Srpska (RS) commemorate these events annually. However, these ceremonies often detach from the personal traumas

of victims, reducing them to symbols of Serbian national victimhood while denying them official legal recognition as victims. This paper examines the instrumentalization of these commemorations by political and religious actors to reinforce nationalist agendas. Through symbolic acts and discourse, these commemorations erode borders between Serbia and Republika Srpska, challenging the sovereignty of two entities. Example of constructing the "Bratoljub" bridge (meaning "Brotherly Love"), that connects Bratunac (RS) and Ljubovija (SRB), exemplifies the present matrix of how the Drina River is framed as a river of unification rather than a border. Political and religious leaders perpetuate irredentist narratives from the 1990s, using ethnosymbolism to dissolve both mental and physical boundaries. By analyzing the interplay of memory politics, border-making, and nationalist rhetoric, this study highlights the gap between victims' status in official memory politics and their legal recognition. It argues that these commemorations perpetuate exclusionary national identities while reinscribing unresolved tensions from the Yugoslav wars. Ultimately, the paper contributes to broader discussions on how nationalism and memory intersect to challenge and redefine borders in post-conflict contexts.

Borders and National Memory-Making: First World War Commemoration in Ukrainian Lands during the Interwar Period

Hanna Bazhenova

At the outset of the First World War, the Ukrainian nation was divided between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian

Empires. However, following the war, subsequent military conflicts, and the lost struggle for independence, central, eastern, and southern parts of what is now Ukraine were incorporated into Soviet Russia and Ukraine, while the western part into the First Czechoslovak Republic, the Kingdom of Romania, and the Second Polish Republic. Given that, for ideological reasons, memorialization of the Great War in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was impossible, this paper examines the formation of the First World War memoryscape in the short-lived Ukrainian People's Republic and Ukrainian State, as well as in western Ukrainian lands from the late 1910s through the 1930s. Particular emphasis is placed on the 'nationalisation' of war memory by local communities of Zakarpattia, northern Bukovina, Volhynia, and eastern Galicia. The paper also analyses the symbolic and physical changes that the architectural heritage of the war underwent as part of the memoryscapes of different states. An examination of the commemoration strategies shows that Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Poland – and their local communities – succeeded in institutionalizing the memory of the Great War. However, the situation in the Second Polish Republic was more complex, revealing how the postwar transformation of memoryscapes was instrumentalized by different ethnic groups. A notable example was the burial sites of the Ukrainian Sich Riflemen and soldiers of the Ukrainian Galician Army, which became loci of Ukrainian-Polish confrontation, or "conflict landscapes", as defined by Nicholas J. Saunders.

E6 - The Impact of Covid on Borders

From patriotic nationals to awakened citizens? The A4 revolution and the change in long-distance nationalism among overseas Chinese

Yao-Tai Li

From the banner over the Sitong Bridge in Beijing to large-scale protests against the zero-COVID policies in China, the “A4 Revolution” or the “Blank Paper Revolution,” was the largest protest in China since the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations. This study focuses on discourses about the zero-COVID policies and perceptions of the A4 Revolution among overseas Chinese. In particular, I examine whether, how and why the idea/practice of patriotism and Chinese nationalism among Chinese diasporic communities changed during the pandemic. Drawing on online posts with tags #A4Revolution and #BlankPaperRevolution in both Chinese and English on Twitter/X, as well as in-depth interviews with overseas Chinese immigrants who participated in the protests, this study highlights that the diasporic setting and A4 Revolution could change overseas Chinese citizens’ identity (whether pro- or anti-government), though such an “awakening” process still faces challenges in terms of how to generate significant political change and democratization back in China.

Citizenship and Nationalism in Times of Crisis: A Study of Ethnic vs. Civic Citizenship Attitudes During and after COVID-19 in Serbia

Tamara Trost and Denis Marinsek

Extensive literature has examined attitudes towards citizenship: the rights and obligations of citizenship, differences in ethnic vs. civic understandings of citizenship, and determinants of exclusivist attitudes towards migrants/foreigners, both across and within countries. Much of this research assumes that these exclusivist or inclusivist attitudes towards citizenship rights are generally fixed. However, what is less known is under which conditions these attitudes can change: do people’s civic or ethnic conceptions of national belonging and citizenship rights/obligations shift in times of crisis, and after crises? We examine the case of during- and post-COVID Serbia, drawing on a longitudinal study based on a representative sample carried out at two points (in the midst of the first wave of COVID, May 2020, and after COVID, in 2023), asking whether people who might, under normal circumstances, want to exclude ethnic groups (e.g. Roma, Hungarian, Slovak minority) from citizenship rights, and include their own ethnic group living in the diaspora; shift their attitudes during a time of crisis to a more civic understanding of citizenship (e.g. seeing themselves and minorities as sharing the same fate, while diaspora Serbs returning to take refuge in Serbia as not deserving of Serbian citizenship rights. The before-and-after survey includes data comparing attitudes citizenship rights (free healthcare, voting, legal protection) and obligations (military service, paying tax) towards ethnic Serbs

(with or without citizenship) living in diaspora and non-Serb ethnic minorities with/without Serbian citizenship living in Serbia, allowing us to observe whether these attitudes are generally fixed or whether they vary during time of crises.

Perceptions of EUrope and the border at the Slovak-Hungarian borderland

Peter Balogh

While cross-border integration is an ongoing process among many intra-Schengen borderlands, those with a presence of large transborder ethnic kin may be experiencing particularly high levels of interactions (Brunet-Jailly 2005, Balogh & Pete 2018, Svensson et al. 2019, Balogh & Kovály 2024). The case here and now dealt with is the Slovak-Hungarian borderland, which hosts transborder ethnic kin on both sides but where Slovakia's Hungarian(-language) community is far more numerous. Within the Horizon project B-Shapes, we are overwhelmingly relying on qualitative methods such as analyses of regional media, interviews with elites and younger citizens, a focus group discussion, and a zine workshop. While the research is ongoing, our preliminary results suggest that many locals very frequently cross the border for all kinds of reasons, something that even the Covid-related border controls only partly hampered. In terms of identity formation, participants had mixed views whether they identified with the transborder Hungarian nation or whether they were more at peace with their binational position, but their vast majority preferred binational relations to be as warm as possible. Their majority also viewed EUrope as a little distant and sometimes removed from everyday concerns. At the same time, many appreciated the benefits of EU

membership, such as the Erasmus program, the free movement of labour and more generally the openness of internal borders.

E7 - Colonial and Postcolonial Borders

Between "Us" and "Them": Empires, Borders, and Asymmetric Territorial Citizenship,

Jaime Llach

In this paper, I investigate how empires have traced the differentiation between "us" and "them," and thus where they demarcate the border between those included within the central body politic and those excluded or partially included, and whether that border has been porous, ambiguous, or hardened. I will show that empires had a more porous and liminal conception of inclusion and exclusion in the way they extended (in some cases) a form of asymmetric territorial citizenship to the inhabitants of some of their colonial possessions. I first present and analyze a novel category of differentiated citizenship: "asymmetric territorial citizenship," which has not received the attention it deserves in the scholarly literature. It is a type of differentiation that within the same state establishes territorial categories of citizenship, some of which are fragmentary, unique, ad hoc, or inferior, and thus essentially creating horizontal categories of territorialized state membership. The asymmetric territorial citizenship has been designated in a particular territory of the state, and every citizen in the territory at issue holds it. Perhaps the most interesting setting for examining asymmetric citizenship regimes has

been in the political treatment given by empires to their territories in the 19th and 20th centuries. I show how empires have served as institutional promoters of norm diffusion through their citizenship policies: a vast and important subject that has received little scholarly attention. I do so by bridging the Europe/Americas/Caribbean divide as well as the Europe/former imperial territories divide. The history of citizenship in the 19th and 20th centuries yields instances of asymmetric citizenship, particularly in the types of citizenship regimes established by empires in some of their territories or by former empires in the way they have treated their former territories in their citizenship policies. The history of differentiated citizenship in the im

Fixing ethnic boundaries within an international context. The Commonwealth of Nations and the challenge of ethnic divisions in South Africa and Rwanda

Paolo Perri and Paolo Gheda

When the United Kingdom joined the EEC, the Commonwealth lost much of its appeal and relevance, leading to reduced funding and interest from London. However, in recent decades, the Commonwealth has experienced a revitalization, positioning itself as an organization capable of promoting conflict resolution and democratizing political processes in member states. Despite Zimbabwe's expulsion, this resurgence was highlighted by South Africa's readmission in 1994 and Rwanda's controversial admission in 2009, according to its supporters. The reasons and modalities of this renewed British prominence in Africa have been interpreted in various ways, sparking

renewed interest in the Commonwealth's role (e.g., as an instrument of neo-colonialism, an alternative economic-trade network to the EU, or a means to promote democracy). This paper will focus on the cases of South Africa and Rwanda, where both inter-ethnic relations—notably the racial politics of the apartheid regime and the Hutu regime—as well as human rights issues, emerged as key factors in South Africa's exit and re-entry into the organization, and Rwanda's controversial entry, despite having no previous ties to the UK. The paper aims to analyze the relationship between these two countries and the Commonwealth by focusing on ethnic politics and the redefinition of internal ethnic boundaries, as well as national identities. It adopts a comparative historical perspective, highlighting the intersection of ethnic, religious, political, economic, and cultural elements in two deeply divided societies.

Province Borders, Electoral Colleges, Ethnicity and Nationalisms in New Caledonia: A Fragile Legacy of Decolonisation Dismantled in 2024

Pierre Barillé

The following proposal is a case study, focused on New Caledonia, a former French colony but still French territory. Its political situation in 2024 was marked by outbreaks of ethnic violence, never known in the territory for 40 years. They occurred because of the vote of a constitutional amendment unfreezing the provincial electoral college. It reformed a system based on ethnically designed province's borders and electoral colleges, a system meant to guarantee some institutional representation to the formerly colonised

nation, the Kanak. The reform would have immediately put the Kanak back in a minority/colonised situation, the European descendants becoming an even stronger majority that is normally nuanced by this system of province borders and electoral colleges. This constitutional amendment was withdrawn, but the consequences remain. The peace in the archipelago has been severely broken. This province's borders and electoral college system remains an issue. It was necessary to decolonise the territory. But it crystallised the tensions and the ethnicity issue on the territory, postponing the discussions and slowing down the "community of destiny" – without borders – project that both parties agreed on. Both nationalisms in New Caledonia – the Kanak one, drawn towards independence, and the loyalist one, drawn towards remaining in France and spousing the French Republican values – have been strongly reactivated by the reform attempt, which is problematic for a territory that must engage in a dialogue with France to design its new status. These discussions will probably address the province borders and electoral college issues.

Reconsidering Ethnic Identity: The Colonial Construction of Chin-Kuki Sub-nationalism across Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar

David Jangminlien

The concept of sub-nations within the larger nation has problematised the politics of most developing countries of the world today. Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar are such nation states that faced the challenges of sub-nationalities. The Kuki-Chin sub-nation in these states has been overlooked and

inadequately addressed in the existing literature of nationalism and border study. This proposed study critically examines the colonial origins and subsequent evolution of Kuki-Chin sub-nationalism across the tri-border region of Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar. By analysing the historical processes of colonial classification, administrative policies, and their impact on ethnic identities, the research entrepreneur highlights how colonial power contributed to the construction of the Kuki-Chin identity as a distinct socio-political entity. The study explores the intersections of colonial ethnography, missionisation, and resource extraction policies that fragmented indigenous communities, shaping their political aspirations and resistance movements. It also investigates how post-colonial nation-states have grappled with colonial legacy, particularly in the contexts of insurgency, regional autonomy movements, and cross-border solidarities. Through a multidisciplinary approach combining archival research, mining existing literatures, and policy analysis, the paper offers the ways in which colonial constructs have persisted and transformed within the frameworks of modern nation-states, contributing to the emergence of Kuki-Chin sub-nationalism. The findings underscore the need for inclusive and colonial narratives of dissected and divided ethnic group of the same people into different nation-states to address the complex realities of ethnic identities and cross-border dynamics in this conflict-prone region

E8 - Writing the Nation

""Two States, One Nation"" Discourse as a Tool for National Consolidation in Mainstream Turkish Media: The Case of the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War
Burak Akbalık

Though Turkey and Azerbaijan emerged from distinct nation-building processes, both states frequently promote the slogan 'We are two states, but one nation' in domestic and international arenas as part of their political messaging (AA, 2021). During the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia, this discourse intensified across mainstream Turkish media. This study argues that this rhetoric reinforces symbolic dimensions of nationhood, fortifying the nation-state's imagined and territorial boundaries while consolidating a cohesive national identity. Moreover, as some scholars contend (Keneş, 2015; Ünlü, 2019), the Turkish state and media have historically positioned Armenians as an 'other' against which Turkish identity is constructed—a stance that resurfaced with renewed intensity during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Employing Critical Discourse Analysis, this study examines at least 50 digital articles on the Nagorno-Karabakh War from leading Turkish newspapers—*Hürriyet*, *Sözcü*, and *Sabah*—which gained heightened accessibility during the period. Unlike classical discourse analysis, CDA focuses on uncovering social issues and highlighting inequalities within discourse (Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 1993). Moreover, as CDA is concerned with the critical inquiry of discourse with its ideological, historical foundation and power relations, this study outlines them

through rigorous analysis (Wodak, 2001; Meyer, 2001). While existing literature has explored the ""Two States, One Nation"" narrative, few studies critically interrogate its function in shaping national identity construction and interstate solidarity. This research offers a critical perspective on the instrumentalization of nationalistic discourse in Turkish media, contributing to a broader understanding of the media's role in state-led identity formation and cross-border solidarity.

The Nation as Gossip Community: The Structural Transformation of Gossip from Club Sociability to Bounded National Solidarity
Danny Kaplan

How have changes in the communication of gossip from the mid to late modern period shaped the emergence of national solidarity and the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion? In this exploratory paper, I investigate the cultural-historic shift toward mass gossip, drawing on studies that link the news genre, celebrity gossip, and the rise of national consciousness. First, I outline key features of traditional interpersonal gossip that influence solidarity—social control, (mis)trust, and the concept of co-presence at a distance. Next, I examine the role of gossip within the setting of political clubs, identifying two forms of triadic interactions in club sociability: interpersonal gossip and 'public intimacy.' In interpersonal gossip, two parties discuss a third party in their absence, while public intimacy involves interactions between two parties staged in the presence of a third party or an audience. These seemingly opposing performative mechanisms intersect and converge during public and media

events, where a celebrity's personal life becomes both a scandal shared among the audience and a spectacle performed for an audience. By examining key illustrative moments in the evolution of mass-mediated gossip—from society journals and reality TV to digital social media—I explore the conceptual relationship between gossip and the national community. I argue that mass gossip, by combining the sense of bounded solidarity fostered through both club sociability and public events, has significantly shaped national consciousness and delineated the political boundaries of social inclusion and exclusion.

A Divided Yangtze Delta, the transformation of Jiangbei from "Region" to "Nation" 1860-1912

Yitong Qiu

This paper examines the emergence of sub-ethnic nationalism in Jiangbei, the northern region of Jiangsu province separated by the Yangtze River, during the late Qing dynasty. The lower Yangtze delta was considered a rich and fertile area. However, Jiangbei, the northern part of the Yangtze River, contrasted sharply to the southern part. Its people, although of Han ethnicity, spoke different dialects and engaged in traditional farming of beans, wheat, sweet potatoes, chestnuts, rather than the rice cultivation and silk weaving. Over the last sixty years of Qing rule, they suffered disproportionately from man-made ecological disasters, famine, and drought. In 1911, the Jiangbei gentry and military generals declared independence as the Jiangbei Republic, inspired by European ideals of nationhood, democracy, and self-determination. They refused to recognize Jiangsu's

administrative authority, citing political bias and a failure to adhere to democratic principles. This challenges the conventional narrative that Confucian loyalty among Han Chinese fostered a unified state. Drawing on previously unexamined sources—including over 100 newspaper articles from the CNBKSY database, personal letters, Qing memorials, and legal documents. I argue that the 1906 government policies were pivotal in sparking Jiangbei's nationalist movement. These policies physically isolated Jiangbei, transforming its residents from refugees into criminals, a perception amplified by modern communications like telegrams and newspapers. I introduce a fifth type of nationalism in early 20th-century China—sub-ethnic regional nationalism arising as resistance to central and regional government policies.

F1 - Israel and Palestine

Diaspora in the Homeland: Revisiting the Role of the Diaspora in Shaping National Identity in Israel

Ofir Abu

In today's transnational world, the interactions between homelands and diasporas have become increasingly complex, necessitating new approaches to understanding collective identities. Collective identity does not have a predetermined or uniform essence; elite groups do not dictate it, nor is it solely the result of an isolated or self-contained discourse within a community. Thus, national identities are shaped by the exchange of views and perceptions both among and within communities. This paper examines the ongoing

discussion about Israel's national identity by analyzing how different political actors in Israel perceive the Jewish diaspora. It focuses on the debates within the Israeli parliament, known as the Knesset, regarding pluralistic and non-Orthodox Jewish prayer at the Kotel, or Western Wall. This issue has become a point of contention between Israel and diaspora Jews, particularly non-Orthodox Jewish communities in North America. The analysis draws on Knesset protocols from 2013 to 2017 regarding a governmental decision about prayer arrangements at the Kotel. It offers valuable insights into the internal debates surrounding Israel's national identity, focusing on external boundaries—specifically, the relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diaspora—and internal boundaries concerning the interactions among different groups within Israeli society. Additionally, it highlights the prevailing polarization in Israeli politics, where some actors reinterpret Israel's Jewish identity through an Orthodox-religious lens while others embrace a liberal-pluralistic perspective. These findings indicate that exploring how political actors in the homeland perceive the attitudes and actions of the Diaspora may shed light on the social and political divisions within the homeland.

Landscaping in Israel/Palestine: insights into the making of a/moral geography
Daphne Winland

The narratives crafted around practices of Jewish settlement in Palestine in the early twentieth century, followed by those built or endorsed by successive Israeli governments since 1948, reflect not only biblical/origin stories of ancient Israel and memory politics grounded in a

suffering past, but by European bourgeois sensibilities. Much contemporary scholarly attention has been focused on the geopolitical and humanitarian impacts of Israeli settlement and the heavily militarized border regime – check points, corridors, separation walls, the 'Judaization' of expropriated territory, the ravages of generations of occupation and the ongoing war in Gaza, the West Bank and beyond. In this paper, I focus on the fraught and violent process of 'landscaping' inspired and justified by the politics of desire for a Jewish state founded on (northern) European imaginaries. I discuss the personal and diplomatic archives of a close relative deeply involved in this process for decades, who was first an activist in the revisionist Zionist movement in Switzerland, then settled in Palestine in the 1920s, followed in 1948 by a career as a high level diplomat in the Israeli government. Photos, official correspondence and personal letters to and from Jewish Israeli diplomats committed to transforming the mythical desert into "lush fields", configuring borders and boundaries, reveal continuous as well as contested efforts to establish a rooted presence. This project contributes original documentation and insights to scholarship (cf. Zerubavel 1997, Braverman 2009 and many others) chronicling the personal and political constitution of the a/moral geography of the Israeli state.

Cultural Heritage as resistance: the role of Hebron's Old City border in Palestinian national narratives

Claudia Vlad

This paper explores how the borders of Hebron's Old City, established by the 1997 Hebron Protocol, shape nationalist narratives within Palestinian cultural heritage discourses. The protocol divided Hebron into two zones: H1, under Palestinian control, and H2, under Israeli control. This partition not only physically fragmented the city but also enhanced a distinct sense of Palestinian resistance and identity concentrated within the Old City. The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee (HRC), a semi-governmental organisation, rehabilitates the architectural heritage of the Old City as a form of cultural resistance against Israeli settler encroachment, which violently threatens Palestinian movement and daily life. This paper argues that the H1/H2 border catalysed the construction of an "interpretative community" of resisters – including HRC staff, residents, and shop owners – united by a shared narrative of cultural heritage as a form of defiance. This narrative envisions the Old City as a microcosm of both Palestinian resistance and semi-state power. By navigating UNESCO standards on "local community" and "authenticity", donor policies, and the constraints imposed by the Hebron Protocol, the HRC develops a heritage narrative that both challenges Israeli settler colonialism and selectively represents Palestinian Hebronites. In response, scholarly debates often overlook other internal dynamics in Hebron, such as gender and class disparities, and the interactions and flows between H1 and H2. Based on six months of ethnographic fieldwork in

2023, this paper investigates how borders impact national narratives and academic debates concerning Palestine, relying on spatial boundaries and processes of inclusion and exclusion to create a homogenized discourse.

F2 - Borders and Arts

Caricaturing Identity: The Representation of Kurdishness in Turkish Stand-up Comedy

Haci Cevik and Berhudan Şamar

Kurdish identity in Turkey has long been depicted through symbolic and caricatured representations, which serve as tools of Turkish nationalism by reinforcing the boundaries of national identity. These representations, once prevalent in literature and art, have now found a new platform in Turkish and Kurdish-language stand-up comedy. This research explores how Kurdish identity is constructed and depicted in these performances, with comedians often reproducing longstanding caricatures that reinforce stereotypes, discrimination, and even racism. What makes this phenomenon particularly striking is that many Kurdish comedians themselves use these caricatures, drawing on personal stories to create a homogenized and generalized image of Kurdishness. These portrayals serve the broader narrative of Turkish nationalism, where Kurdish identity is utilized as a comedic device to reinforce the nation's symbolic borders. As these performances gain popularity, the comedic depiction of Kurdish identity not only entertains but also perpetuates the "othering" of Kurds, solidifying their position as an internal outsider within the Turkish national framework. This study is

based on interviews with 16 professional stand-up comedians and an analysis of live performances on platforms like YouTube. It examines how humor is used to navigate and maintain ethnic boundaries, how these portrayals reflect nationalist narratives, and how they contribute to the broader discourse of exclusion. By investigating the intersection of comedy and nationalism, this research highlights the role of humor in the construction and reproduction of both ethnic identity and national borders in contemporary Turkey.

The Sound of Us in Arab Cartoons: From Childhood Tunes to Imagining 'We'

Abeer Khatoun

Over the years, the theme songs of popular Arab cartoons have evolved from simple childhood memories into powerful agents of cultural unity, resonating deeply across the Arab world. Today, these songs are experiencing a resurgence through live concerts and cultural events, showing their continued relevance in a rapidly changing political landscape. Once seen as mere tunes, they have grown into active agents that foster a shared Arab identity, transcending national borders. This paper explores how the use of first- and second-person plural pronouns—"we," "our," and "us"—in select Arab cartoon theme songs actively shapes national identity. Drawing on Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and employing corpus linguistic methods, I argue that these lyrics do more than reflect an imagined Arab unity; they linguistically construct a collective sense of belonging to a unified Arab world from an early age. By using plural pronouns, these lyrics create a sense of "we-ness" that connects listeners to a broader Arab

community, one that extends beyond territorial divisions. Through this linguistic analysis, I demonstrate how these cartoons serve as active agents of cultural memory, preserving Arab identity while challenging the politics of borders. By emphasizing the collective "we," these songs envision an Arab world united, one that moves beyond political divisions and imagines a shared future. In doing so, they offer an alternative to nationalism constrained by physical borders and promote a Pan-Arab sensibility that is both aspirational and ideological. Arab cartoons thus emerge as a cultural product that has shaped generations and continues to live on in the collective memory today.

Expulsion, Trauma, Violence and Dis(b)ordering: Reconfigurations and Relocations of Political Borders in Border Artworks

Natasha Sardzoska

In contemporary societies notions of borders are continuously blurred within the "spatial turn". Namely, the paper explores borders as unstable spaces generating informal logic of boundaries as layered borderscapes denoted with symbolic actions. The ongoing redefinition of homelands and homelessness has revealed the seminal role of political borders and the revalorization of geographical boundaries in the nation-states by introducing forbidden access and prohibited belonging. This societal turmoil has brought into centrality the peripheral issues of personal space (Simmel) and making non-space (Auge). In the context of the border's agency, I examine human behaviour when dealing with forced exile, migration, denied circulation, expatriation, and trauma and

when translocating these experiences in border artworks and literary representations. Sassen, examining the notion of expulsion intrinsically related to land, argues that it is no longer self-evident that the borders are the edges of the system, because the question is what happens at the edge: does the system bring people or expel people? I draw on liminotrophe border shatterzones as ontologically uncertain places deprived of meanings where space undergoes continuous reconsideration becoming politically disputable. These are not places where something ends and where something else begins its existence, but spaces where something starts its presencing (Bhabha). Therefore, the paper has the purpose to reinvestigate and to rethink the radical shift of the overheated borders (Eriksen) as nucleus of human anxiety proliferating unpredictable spatial trajectories and fertile literary productions, and lastly to elaborate why delimiting boundaries and mapping when the world has turned liminal and creolizing?

F3 - Bessarabia

Between Empires? Bessarabia as a Contested Borderland during the 'Long Nineteenth Century'

Andrei Cușco

Using the case of Bessarabia as a 'pretext', I critically engage with three fundamental models of analyzing the borderland experience in Eastern Europe in the 'long nineteenth century': 1) Alfred Rieber's 'geopolitical model' (the 'complex frontier regions' and the 'struggle over the borderlands'); 2) Omer Bartov and Eric D. Weitz's model of the 'shatterzone of empires,' emphasizing the multi-

layered and dynamic character of borderland phenomena in Eastern Europe, and 3) Alexei Miller's Russian-centered model focusing on the 'situational approach' and on the 'scope' and possible alternative scales (jeu d'échelle) of Russian imperial history. In this theoretical context, I argue that Bessarabia's history is broadly relevant from three perspectives. First, Bessarabia represented both a revealing example of a 'borderland' situated between rival empires and a 'transitional' space between the Russian Empire's Western peripheries and the intensely colonized expanses of New Russia. Second, the nineteenth century witnessed fundamental changes in the languages of description and perception of this region, stemming from the interplay of two alternative concepts of imperial space: one emphasizing the 'direct gaze' of imperial agents, epitomized through travel, and another focusing on the rational, abstract, and impersonal 'gaze' of modern bureaucracy. Third, after 1860 Bessarabia became a directly contested borderland, an object of rivalry and 'symbolic competition' between Russia and Romania. In fact, Bessarabia was the only Russian territory claimed both by the empire and by a fully crystallized nation-state. Finally, I enquire whether (and to what extent) this case fits into the three above-mentioned models.

Bessarabia is Romania. National Restoration and the Unionist Rhetoric of the Romanian Populist Far-Right
Ana Țăranu

The reliance of far-right populist party Alianța pentru Unirea Românilor (AUR) [Alliance for the Union of Romanians] on ethnonationalist, anti-globalist and pro-

Russian tropes has been widely documented (Grapă and Mogoș 2023). Its central bid – a restored and once again dignified Romanianness – is not exclusively elaborated around the exclusionary imagination of ethnic homogeneity and hermetic border control which characterise contemporary right-wing populism. One of its central – and particular – tenets is the aspiration to the ‘pan-Romanian’ (King 1994) integration of the Republic of Moldova into the restored body of Greater Romania. From its name and logo to the history of party leader George Simion in unionist activism, the party has espoused the reunification of Romanians across the two banks of the Prut as a ‘primordial condition’ of regional stability and its sole *raison d’être*. My presentation approaches AUR’s unionist rhetoric on three levels. I begin with a brief analysis of how it is resourcefully instrumented within official party communication between 2019 and 2024, with a particular focus on visual renditions. I then trace the – often misconstrued – historical premises which underwrite this improbable yet electorally persuasive project. Of central importance is the controversial claim that unification is the most efficient path to Moldova’s EU accession and definitive turn to the West. Finally, I look into the electoral failure of AUR’s Moldavian sister party and explain why AUR’s unionist rhetoric is little more than a symbolic device in its toolkit of self-aggrandizing Romanian nationalism.

Challenges and Encounters in Interwar Romania. The Impact of Sporting Competitions and Sports Clubs on the Nation-Building Process

Cosmin-Ștefan Dogaru

The Old Kingdom of Romania united with Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania, and parts of Banat in 1918, expanding its territory and population. During the interwar years, this event triggered a profound societal, administrative and political process between the country’s capital, Bucharest, and the newly incorporated regions. In that period, conflicts emerged between the centre and the new regions on several levels (i.e., the replacement of the political elites and the civil servants). This paper will delve into an aspect less explored in the national and international literature: the pivotal and often overlooked role of sports competitions in the nation-building process. The Federation of Sports Societies from Romania [Federațiunea Societăților de Sport din România], F.S.S.R., established in 1912 and later reorganised into the Union of Sports Federations from Romania [Uniunea Federațiilor Sportive din România], U.S.F.R., in 1930, undertook the challenging mission to regulate sports activities in the country. This was particularly challenging given the diverse building courses and traditions of sports clubs in Transylvania and Bucharest. Therefore, this paper will analyse the differences and encounters between Bucharest and, notably, the Transylvania region concerning sports clubs and national competitions, shedding light on how sports contributed to the nation-building process after 1918.

F4 - Borderlands

Borderline Identities: The Interaction between Northern Ireland's Changing National Identity and Geopolitical Landscapes 2011-2021

Jake Rainbow and Charley Webb

National identity is an inherently spatial concept, and as such lends itself to spatial analytical approaches. The adoption of a specific question related to national identity in the 2011 UK census provides opportunity for insight into the geography of said identities. In Northern Ireland, where national identity is one of the most significant talking points in modern politics, this also grants opportunity to examine the interaction with the political landscape. Utilising data from the 2011 and 2021 censuses, along with the 2011, 2014 and 2019 local elections, we combine spatial analytic techniques and traditional statistics to facilitate discussions at both the local and national level.

The nationalist toolbox of the appropriation of borders: Russian Claims in the Far East and Ukraine in Comparative Perspective

Alexander Titov

The paper examines the mechanisms of transition between imperial and national lands in Russia by focusing on the appropriation of territories at its two extremities - in its western borderlands (specifically in Ukraine) and in the Far East. The underlying concept in this study is that of the geo-body (Wichikul, 1994), which attaches emotional value to a territory. The core argument of the paper is that formal annexation does not automatically create borders that define

a nation's geo-body. To test this hypothesis, the paper compares the Russian case with the appropriation into the modern national borders of Japan and China of Hokkaido and China's Northeast (Manchuria), respectively. It argues that this process of appropriation can be broken down into several common strategies that can be seen as a 'toolkit' of national appropriation: ancestral possession claims, natural boundary claims, terra nullius claims for previously uninhabited territories, ethnic colonisation, and strategic boundary claims. While the Russian case of creating national borders is similar to other such cases in Northeast Asia, its policy of appropriation at its western extremity has been more influenced by ancestral and ethnic types of claims, making it less precise and susceptible to political manipulation, as the current Russian justification of its war in Ukraine shows. However, it can be deconstructed and examined within the broader typology of nationalist claims used to justify a nation's borders.

Tracking Citizenship: Mobility, Ecology and Nationalism on Indian Borderlands

Panchali Ray

The paper is based on my ongoing ethnographic research with agrarian communities living on chars (sandbanks) in Bengal on the India-Bangladesh border. With India's hardening stance of closing borders (historically porous) with Bangladesh, these agrarian communities have primarily been marked as 'suspect' communities, with its members labelled as smugglers, infiltrators and terrorists, particularly the Muslim settlements. As the Border Security Forces (BSF) have set up outposts, most of char dwellers have had their agricultural land fall within

the camps. To access their fields, farmers must submit identity documents and copies of land records, seek permission from the security forces, and gain entry for a few hours. As the BSF operate with impunity, permission is granted and withheld whimsically and/or in place of coercive labour extracted from the farmers to maintain the camps and their personnel. As the "Muslim infiltrator" increasingly becomes the dog whistle of the incumbent government to continue winning elections, I ask how the hydrosocial lifeworlds of char dwellers are now being reconstituted by rising nationalism. The life of a char dweller is rarely sedentary, moving as the river migrates, staking land as it emerges and submerges, but the hardening of the borders between India and Bangladesh has led to a flourishing of an evidentiary documentary regime that needs proof of sedentariness as a precondition of belonging. My paper will examine how populism and nationalism are affecting bordering practices that, in turn, affect the hydrosocial life worlds of the char dwellers on Indian borderlands.

F5 - Natural Resources and Borders

Climate change and national borders: A study of Sino-Indian Borders

Vijaya Chamundeswari

This paper is a study of impact of climate change on national borders and how it challenges the normative concepts of territory, people and borders. The people on the borders are the worst sufferers when compared to the people from mainland. This paper tries to understand the border dynamics in the contemporary world order. The purpose

of the study is to understand how two nations confronting each other due to border disputes can negotiate regarding impact of climate change, a global deluge. As China and India's borders are highly sensitized, it requires special focus. The study includes dimensions like political, economic, cultural and ecological conservation. This forms the theoretical framework to the study as it helps in understanding the existing narratives. This study includes both qualitative and quantitative methodology. This methodology will be able to have a clear understanding of the influence of borders in shaping national identities, nationalism and policy making. The countries in question are the leading global powers and their policies on their borders influences the electoral process too. This paper tries to question the contemporary narratives that is anthropocentric view. One of the major objectives of this paper is to identify the significant role played by the people from borders in tackling climate change, transition into ecological balance and prevalence of Climate justice. Finally, this paper follows objectivity over subjectivity. When the whole world is considered as a global village- then why borders come in the way of governance is the biggest question to be answered.

From "Will Give Blood, Not Oil" to "Lasting Peace & Development": Shifting Nationalist Aspirations in India's Northeastern Frontier

Arunabh Konwar

Within modernist traditions, nationalism has emerged as agro-literati societies transitioned to modern societies (Gellner 2008). Alternatively, economic nationalism underpinned diverse nationalist movements worldwide in the

20th century. (Hobsbawm 1992, 1995, 2012). Linking ethnicity and nationhood, especially in non-Western nationalisms, nations can be defined as self-identified communities sharing myths, memories, and a historic homeland (Smith 2005). While India became a modern nation in 1947, ethnic distinctions and economic exploitations contested its nationality across various regions. Particularly, its Northeastern frontier saw the rise of several nationalist movements for self-determination, which this paper explores. This region has been envisioned as a resource frontier in colonial and postcolonial Indian imaginations (Kikon 2019), with its people racialised as belonging to the “Mongolian Fringe” rather than “India proper” (Baruah 2013) due to its proximity to China and Southeast Asia. Conversely, self-determination movements offered imaginations emphasising resource autonomy and ethnic identities uniquely centred in this region rather than merely constituting a peripheral element of Indian ethnicity. This paper explores such contested nationalistic imaginations through a comparative analysis of the United Liberation Front of Assam’s (ULFA) manifestoes, charters and accords from 1979 to 2023. This paper argues that India’s nation-making project, through settlements such as ULFA’s accords, defers to pre-existing provisions for cultural and symbolic safeguards within India’s constitutional mechanisms while simultaneously relegating questions of resource appropriation and redistributive justice as envisioned in ULFA’s manifestoes. The paper concludes that negating the economic questions dilutes the nationalist underpinning of these movements which consolidates the Indian imagination of this region.

When Borders Become Natural: Border-Induced Environmental Differentiation Benoit Vaillot

At first sight, the environment would appear to be the historical actor least affected by nationalism, since the limits of Nation-states arbitrarily divide up the living world. Historical studies of climate, natural disasters and the mobility of plants, animals and micro-organisms around the world have long played down the importance of borders. On the contrary, this paper argues that the study of borders makes it possible to highlight the impact of human societies on their ecosystems and the differences in the way they are managed. Borders reveal the environmental divergences that developed during the formation of Nation-states. The limits of sovereignty that divide peoples also separate the living world: better still, they are sometimes transformed into genuine environmental frontiers. The historical study of borders reveals the imprint of human beings on their ecosystems, as well as differences in the management of nature. Such an analysis of ecological power relations is particularly well suited to forest areas. Forests, being highly anthropised, allow us to consider the conditions under which social relations were produced in areas characterised by specific environmental features. These unique spaces were often at the heart of delimitation issues in Europe, as in the case of the Iraty forest, which has been at the heart of Franco-Spanish border issues since the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659). What’s more, forests are ideal for observing the emergence of environmental borders, which produce an ecological differentiation that can be seen even in the landscape. The border separating Haiti from the Dominican

Republic is visible from space, and today distinguishes two very distinct ecosystems.

F6 - Borders in Interwar Europe

Realist Nationalism and the Politics of Border and State Formation in Europe Before 1945: Power, Security, and the Threshold Principle

Rasmus Glenthøj

This paper explores realist nationalism as a framework for understanding border and state formation in Europe prior to 1945, drawing on Hobsbawm's threshold principle and realist theory from international relations. Through cases such as Denmark's alignment with Scandinavian states against German ambitions, the Balkan states established at the 1878 Congress of Berlin, and the creation of Czechoslovakia after World War I, the study argues that power and security, rather than ethnic congruence, frequently guided nationalist border-making. This approach highlights the interplay between nationalism and imperialism, providing a nuanced understanding of how geopolitical needs shaped national borders and state structures. The framework also sheds light on how these historical patterns resonate in present-day conflicts, where borders remain central to questions of sovereignty and identity.

Understanding Anti-Jewish Violence of 1918-1919 and Nationalism in the Newly Defined Borders of Poland from an International Perspective

Gresa Hasa and Abijah Ahern

This paper argues that India's nation-making project, through settlements such as ULFA's accords, defers to pre-existing provisions for cultural and symbolic safeguards within India's constitutional mechanisms while simultaneously relegating questions of resource appropriation and redistributive justice as envisioned in ULFA's manifestoes. The paper concludes that negating the economic questions dilutes the nationalist underpinning of these movements which consolidates the Indian imagination of this region.

The building of Austrian nationality in the Austrian state as a defence against Nazism

Ondřej Kukan

The question of Austrian nationality and self-identity was crucial for the entire period of the First Austrian Republic. The state, which was created in 1918 as the successor of the multinational Habsburg Monarchy, leaned towards the German character and desired a union with Germany, which was not allowed by the Paris Peace Treaties. This issue gained a completely new dimension after Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 and the advent of the anti-Nazi Dollfuß regime in Austria. The strained relations between Germany and Austria, as a result of which the Austrian chancellor became the victim of an assassination by the Nazis, led the Austrian government to the need of building a new national identity for the Austrians. The contribution will focus on the building of

national identity during the period of the authoritarian Austrian state (1934-1938) as one of the first attempts to define a distinctive Austrian nationality and to distinguish itself against the German character of the Austrian state. The Austrian nation in the ideas of the leaders of the conservative regime turned to the past of the Habsburg monarchy, placed a strong emphasis on political Catholicism and aimed to present Austria as the better of the two German states. The contribution will focus in detail on the building of a new national identity as a legitimizing element of an authoritarian regime, which at the same time had a defensive character against the Nazi neighbor.

F7 - Ethnicity and Borders

Redefining boundaries. Churches and ethnic-racial identities in South Africa's journey towards democracy
Paolo Gheda

The end of Apartheid in 1994 marked a key moment in South Africa's democratization and return to the global community. Following Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 and negotiations with President F.W. de Klerk, South Africa abolished its segregation laws. The first non-racial elections brought the African National Congress (ANC) to power, initiating a process of reconciliation through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. A crucial, often overlooked, aspect of this process was the redefinition of ethnic-racial boundaries. With Apartheid's racial hierarchy dismantled, South Africa struggled to build an inclusive national identity. While officially promoting unity,

the country faced ongoing challenges in social integration, land redistribution, and minority rights. Ethnic and racial boundaries, once legally enforced, transformed into fluid but contentious lines, shaping the democratization process. Religious institutions, particularly Christian churches, played a significant role in promoting reconciliation, supporting the TRC, and addressing post-Apartheid racial tensions. Beyond religious spaces, their influence extended into political discourse, advocating for justice amid corruption scandals and economic challenges during the presidencies of Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, and Cyril Ramaphosa. As South Africa faces shifting political dynamics, especially after the ANC's loss of its absolute majority in the 2024 elections, the evolving redefinition of racial boundaries remains central to understanding the nation's path towards democracy, as it continues to navigate its post-Apartheid legacy.

Reframing internal boundaries. Ethnic relations and identity construction in contemporary Rwanda
Paolo Perri

1994 marked an important turning point in Rwanda's history, as it saw the near extermination of the Tutsi minority at the hands of Rwanda's Hutu majority. Since then, the new Rwandan government, led by the former rebel RPF, has sought to reshape national identity by promoting de-ethnicization and reconciliation. The aim was to move away from divisive ethnic labels – Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa – and instead emphasize a new shared Rwandan identity. The RPF, predominantly composed of Tutsis, was acutely aware of how the construction

and politicization of ethnic boundaries had shaped Rwanda's history. From European colonization through independence and the rise of a Hutu-dominated one-party regime, ethnicity had long played a central role in Rwandan politics. After the genocide, the RPF faced the challenge of governing a country with a significant Hutu majority. While the regime has made efforts to prevent further violence, it has also used the narrative of national unity and reconciliation to maintain domestic control and justify military interference in the DRC. This paper examines the long-term evolution of ethnic boundaries in Rwanda, from Belgian colonization to the emergence of the RPF and its leader, Paul Kagame. It explores how ethnicity has been intertwined with the definition of power in Rwanda's deeply divided society, considering whether the current efforts at reconciliation represent a true deconstruction of ethnic divisions or a new form of political control.

Ethnic Nationalism and its ramifications in contemporary Ethiopian statehood

Girma Mekonnen Seghu

This paper analyzes the contemporary ethnic-based nationalism movement of Ethiopia and its implications for the nation-building process. A qualitative appraisal of major incidents, narratives, scholarly works, everyday conversations, media discourses, historical documents, and policies suggests that ethnic nationalism is a recent phenomenon, largely influenced by Marxism-Leninism, which has shaped Ethiopian politics since the 1960s. However, it was only after 1991 that ethnicity was institutionalized as core elements of nation-building narratives. Ethiopia is unique in constitutionally granting each

ethnic group a right to "self-determination," including secession. While some welcomed the restructuring of the Ethiopian state along ethnic lines, others depict it as a divisive strategy to dismantle historic Ethiopia. The study concludes the regime failure to establish an inclusive approach, combined with the continued instrumentation ethnicity for political gains and deep-rooted interethnic tensions, has trapped the country in a cycle of civil wars. It appears that the future unity of Ethiopia depends primarily on the intentions and actions of nationalist forces.

Nation-Building in the Wake of Empire: Identifying Patterns of Minority Policies in the Aftermath of Soviet Collapse

Andrei Tarasov

The collapse of the USSR presented newly independent states with the dual challenge of forging cohesive national identities while contending with the complex legacies of imperial rule. This study explores the nation-building strategies adopted by post-Soviet states during the first decade (1990-1999) following the Soviet Union's dissolution. Utilizing the innovative Nation-Building Policies (NBP) dataset from the ETHNICGOODS project capturing all socially and politically relevant minority groups in the region, this research employs cluster analysis to inductively identify three distinct typologies of nation-building policies: exclusionary, constitutional accommodation, and full accommodation. These typologies reveal varying degrees of minority inclusion across critical domains, including language provisions in education, citizenship policies, and constitutional measures for minority groups. By examining short-term temporal

variations in nation-building approaches, this study challenges the oversimplified portrayal of post-Soviet nation-building as uniformly "nationalizing." Instead, it highlights significant regional and group-specific differences, with policy shifts reflecting dynamic interactions between states and minority groups. By accounting for the geographic, cultural, and political characteristics of these groups, this research sheds new light on the diversity of nation-building strategies and contributes to comparative studies of nation- and state-building. The findings offer broader insights into contemporary minority relations in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus.

F8 - Nationalism and Identity in Transition

The Security of Borderlander Identities: Exploring the Narratives of Young Minority Members in Border Regions
Marcus Nicolson and Elzbieta Opiłowska

In recent years the European Union has witnessed an increase of re-bordering processes, which have had a significant impact on border regions, and the national minorities that inhabit them (Opiłowska, 2021). Securitising narratives are often used to justify the need for border closures, and subsequent measures designed to protect state interests. While much of the literature in border and security studies has explored geopolitical and elite-level perspectives, less attention has been paid to the voice of individual citizens, and their (re)interpretations of macro-level political narratives. As such, this paper explores how young people in borderland regions respond to securitising border

narratives. This study draws on data gathered through interviews and creative arts research workshops conducted with young people (aged 18–30) from borderland regions in South Tyrol, Italy, and Silesia, in Poland and Czech Republic. Participants were asked to respond to border narratives collected from minority media and to share their experiences of borders and Europe as young members of a national minority. We therefore focus on issues of identity and belonging from the intersectional perspective of young minority representatives living in peripheral border regions. A theoretical perspective of vernacular border security (Vaughan-Williams, 2021) is used alongside ontological security theory (Giddens 1991), to analyse how young borderlanders have experienced recent border crises, relate to securitised border narratives, and reflect on their identities. Thus, we argue that this bottom-up perspective of the securitisation processes can help scholars better understand the complexities of life for young borderland citizens and their relationship with macro-level narratives.

Cross-Border Practices and Ethics: Communities of Practice along the Italy-Slovenia Border in Gorizia-Nova Gorica
Elisabetta Nadalutti

This paper critically examines the socio-cultural underpinnings of cross-border integration within the European Union, through the analytical lens of Practice Theory (Adler and Pouliot, 2011). Focusing on the Gorizia-Nova Gorica region along the Italian-Slovenian border, the research seeks to understand how cross-border interactions contribute to both the construction of shared

identities and the perpetuation of division. We introduce the perspective of G. E. M. Anscombe (1956) on intention and action to analyze how individual and collective intentions influence these interactions. The study explores “communities of practice” as arenas where socio-cultural exchanges occur, yet it also questions the ethical implications of these interactions, challenging the assumption that they inherently foster unity (Nadalutti, 2024). By integrating Anscombe’s moral philosophy, we interrogate how practices within these communities not only catalyze integration but also reinforce divides, particularly in the context of securitizing narratives that frame borders as sites of threat. This approach allows for an exploration of the moral complexities in everyday practices of border regions, emphasizing the need for a critical analysis of their ethical dimensions. The findings propose that while socio-cultural synergies can enhance regional cohesion, they must also be critically evaluated against the backdrop of political and security discourses that shape perceptions and realities of borderlands. Through this nuanced lens, the paper contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of European integration through borders “cooperation”, highlighting the complex roles that borders play in both connecting and dividing communities.

Place attachment and identity-formation in maritime cross-border regions: the case of the Oresund region

Sara Svensson, Tomas Nilson, and Oriana Miraka

The paper explores if and how waterway infrastructure become anchors of place attachment as well as part of the

dominating narratives in regions with a maritime border, and how that relates to identity formation. The setting of the case study is the Danish-Swedish border region around the Oresund strait, which has received significant policy attention to cross-border cooperation and joint region-building before and after the inauguration in 2000 of the 15-km combined bridge and tunnel uniting the Danish Sjaelland Island with Scania, the most southern region of Sweden and the Scandinavian peninsula. The region has often been promoted as a best practice of cross-border integration, but recent research frequently highlights the enormous strain caused by the political events of recent years (migration, Covid-19). While encompassing also this dynamic, the paper seeks to explore identify-formation within the context of less researched areas within this region, such as the Helsingborg-Helsingor area and the island of Bornholm.

Theoretically, the paper uses a simplified version of a theoretical and methodological framework developed by Sebestien (2020), which distinguishes between different place-related concepts and suggests how they relate to each other. Sebestien suggests that place attachment is related to place identity and place dependence. This is applied with relation to the geopolitical formations of the Scandinavian, the Nordics and the European.

Minority youth, the border and crisis

Martin Klatt

The general, global trend to re-bordering affects borderland minorities separated from their kin-state by a state border. Border closures during the Covid-19 pandemic have demonstrated the crucial importance of open borders and

integrated cross-border living spaces for borderland minorities (Tarvet 2025; Klatt 2025). Like the previous paper, my paper will also draw on data collected within the Borders Shaping Perceptions of European Societies (B-SHAPES) Horizon Europe project on how young minority members perceive borders, re-borderings and their impact on their daily life, both in rather peaceful, Schengen borderlands as the Denmark-Germany border region, but also in more politically sensitive borderlands as the Greece-Bulgaria-Türkiye border region. The theoretical perspective will be taken from border/cross-border region approaches: bandwidth of unfamiliarity (Szytniewski og Spierings 2014; Spierings og van der Velde 2008) as a category for cross-border social practices, as well as secondary foreign policy (Klatt 2018; Klatt og Wassenberg 2018) scrutinizing minorities opportunities to engage in cross-border policymaking and to strengthen cross-border social activities, development and integration. The paper demonstrates that minorities have been impacted heavily by border closures and that the sensitive majority-minority situation in Thrace is a burden on the development of a cross-border living space, and that action is needed to promote more inclusive narratives about the diverse heritage of that region. Here, youth can play a central role.

G1 - Pragmatic Expectations: Nationalizing Multi-ethnic Cities, 1918–1939

Ethnicity and changes of material and non-material borders in the northern Adriatic post-Habsburg transition to national state,

Vanni D'Alessio

As in the other multi-lingual and pluri-religious territories of the former Habsburg realms, after World War I the people of the mixed northern Adriatic space went through a rapid process of political transition and redefinition of their status and patterns of identifications. Italy occupied and ultimately annexed in 1920 most of the northern Adriatic territories, while the former autonomous area of Fiume/Rijeka went through various occupations, declarations of state independency, and eventually a partition between Italy and Yugoslavia, which annexed the territories to the north-east and south-east of the newly established Italian "Venezia Giulia". This paper discusses the consequences on the local society of the first steps of nationalization which started during the years of Italo-Yugoslav diplomatic rivalry, the continuous political unrest, the local deploy of the armies on both sides of the temporary border and the measures to secure the occupied territories, followed by the early policies of the new administrations to nationalize the territory and population. The Italian areas of occupations and annexation were marked by nationalistic violence and administrative purges in administration and schools against "anti-national" local elements as socialists and Slavs, in the framework of rapid expansion of Italian fascist movement. This paper will deal

with the problems of national identification and categorization of a relatively mixed population and on the redefinition of allegiances and cultural strategies of the inhabitants in the post-war rapidly changing political and social circumstances.

Getting Ahead in a "National" World: Imperial Collapse and Strategies of Social Advancement in Post-Habsburg Yugoslavia

Oliver Pejic

Following the conclusion of the First World War, Central and Eastern Europe's vast contiguous empires collapsed and were replaced by a patchwork of newly established or recently expanded nation-states. With national sovereignty now reigning as the supreme legitimizing principle of statehood, many ordinary people came to believe that their fortunes in this world of nation-states critically depended on their ability to pass as members of their host state's titular nationality. While some contemporaries hoped for privileged treatment in what they considered their "own" nation-state, others feared various forms of discrimination as purported members of national minorities. Since the boundaries separating these two categories were all but self-evident, people engaged in diverse strategies of rhetorical self-framing to better their positions in a new "national" world. Drawing insights from recent scholarship on everyday ethnicity and nationalism from below, the present paper offers a localized glimpse into this phenomenon by examining interactions between people and administrators in the former Habsburg-Austrian region of Lower Styria (today in Slovenia) under early Yugoslav rule (1918-1929). By looking at

the relative importance of perceived or performed national belonging in such interactions, it shows how non-elite actors of diverse backgrounds instrumentalized national categories to secure their existence in a Yugoslav nation-state. While the appropriate rhetorical self-framing sometimes led to success, the paper also emphasizes the practical limits of top-down nationalizing policy by highlighting cases when such strategies failed.

"Ljubljana Town Hall Does Not Want the Jews": An Antisemitic Social Closure in a Nationalizing State

Rok Stergar

Since its inception in 1918, Yugoslavia has defined itself as a nation-state made up of the tripartite Slovene-Croatian-Serbian nation. Consequently, it has pursued a policy of nationalization from the outset, and people defined as non-Yugoslavs were subjected to either assimilation or expulsion. This process was frequently accompanied by a rhetoric of liberation. In the Slovene part of Yugoslavia, the German-speaking population was thus depicted as a tool of an imagined German domination over the so-called Slovene lands during the reign of the Habsburgs. Accordingly, their removal could be justified as a necessary and long-overdue rectification of a historical injustice. This resulted in a comprehensive "nationalization" of the administration and the judiciary. All officials and judges categorized as German were promptly dismissed mere weeks after the declaration of independence. Similarly, the Slovene nationalists who were in control in the Slovene portion of Yugoslavia were also engaged in the process of nationalizing various other sectors, including the

educational system, cultural institutions, and the economy. While the German-speakers constituted the primary target, some Slovene nationalists perceived the establishment of Yugoslavia as an opportunity to exclude the small Jewish population from the newly "liberated" nation as well. By focusing on these cases, this paper will demonstrate that antisemitic social closure was inextricably linked to an emerging biological understanding of the nation, which shaped official policies and influenced individual actions.

G2 - The Borders of Greece

Do national histories shape national identities? Ancient Athens, Byzantium, and Greece today, a survey experiment, Peter Gries

Do national histories shape national identities in the present? Most nations have complex and multiple pasts. National historians can smooth over discontinuities (the borders between distinct national pasts) by either merging them into an unbroken national history, or by skipping over pasts that do not fit the story ("continuous" vs. "recurrent" perennialisms; Smith, 2000). Do these narrative choices matter for present-day nationalisms? This study explores the Greek case: the "Helleno-Christian" synthesis dominant since the 1850s. Do distinct Ancient Greek and Byzantine pasts persist in Greece today, differentially shaping co-existing Democratic and Christian Greek national identities in the present? Or have these pasts fused into one, erasing the borders between them? In a 2022 survey experiment conducted on a nationally representative sample of Greek adults,

we found that Greeks randomly assigned to read an imitation Wikipedia entry about Ancient Greece (vs. Byzantium) were more likely to endorse a Democratic Greek national identity in the present, while pre-existing left-right ideologies moderated the impact of the two pasts on a Christian Greek national identity today. The causal relationship between national histories and identities is then further discussed.

Türkiye and its Influence on the Education of Western Thrace Turks in Greece

Sebahattin Abdurrahman

The Western Thrace Turks in Greece are one of the remaining Turkish communities in the Balkans from the Ottoman Empire. They became a minority in Western Thrace, in the north-eastern part of Greece, following the ratification of the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. The Treaty provides, inter-alia, minority rights in education. The minority members were allowed to establish minority schools where bilingual education in Greek and Turkish languages is provided. The history of Turkey's influence on the Western Thrace minority education goes back to the late 1920s when some minority schools began to accept the new Latin alphabet as the language of instruction following the Turkish Alphabet Reform in Turkey. Turkey strengthened its position in minority education during the Greek-Turkish rapprochement. Students from Western Thrace began to receive training in teacher-training schools in Turkey. The 1968 Protocol further deepened Turkey's influence on minority education by guaranteeing the mutual exchange of textbooks and teachers. However, by the early 1970s, Greece

began to apply restrictive regulations and policies towards the minority, aimed at weakening the influence of both the members of the minority and Turkey on minority education. This paper will primarily examine the motivations behind Turkey's involvement in Western Thrace Turkish minority education and discuss its influence on shaping Turkish identity in the region. Additionally, the paper will explore how Turkey's involvement is perceived by both the minority community and Greece.

Nation and its contestations during the border-making of Greece and Turkey at the Lausanne Peace Conference, 1922-23

Sotiris Paris Kyritsis

The Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 determined the borders between Greece and Turkey, involving the displacement of millions of people based on their religion. The treaty was the result of eight months of debate at the Lausanne Peace Conference, attended by major European powers. The delegations based their arguments on various factors and data used to determine the position of the border, whether or not self-determination referendums had to be conducted in adjacent territories, and the legal regime in the borderlands. By analyzing the arguments put forward during the negotiations and in the associated documents and data, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the role played by the national factor in the delimitation phase of this border-making process. The national factor is more complex than the others, with contradictory data. It often came into conflict with natural geography and economic, historical, legal, and military factors. More than the latter, it was used

opportunistically by the delegations depending on the territory under discussion and could prove to be double-edged. Another point of interest is to place this event in the theoretical context of border-making at the time, when the integration of the national factor in border delimitation was still emerging in an imperialist context. But also in the ideological context, as the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923 was to modify the symbolic limits of the nation for both countries, marking in particular the end of the irredentist policy of the Great Idea for Greece.

G3 - Heritage and Borders

Borders and Pan-Islamism in Turkish Islamist Thought: Pluralist and Monist Approaches

Tunahan Yıldız

This study examines how the Turkish Islamists negotiate and contest national borders while striving for Pan-Islamism. Building on a discourse analysis of nearly four hundred Islamist journals published in Turkey from the 1940 onwards, it argues that the Turkish Islamist conception of national borders has oscillated between pluralist and monist understandings. On the one hand, pluralism, the dominant approach in the Turkish Islamist thought, implies the ontological legitimacy of multiple like-units in an imagined Muslim international society, where the existing order and borders of the units of the Muslim world and the sovereign rights of Muslim states are largely preserved. Pan-Islamism is accordingly reduced to an improvement of cooperative relations between Muslim states, and turns into an issue of diplomacy and international law. In this

sense, the pluralist approach formulates a thinner version of Pan-Islamism, emerging as one major way to overcome the tension between the umma. On the other hand, at the heart of monism or what can be called thicker Pan-Islamism is a rejection of the legitimacy of the Muslim inter-state society, in which several units claim equal sovereignty. Considering the umma as one nation, the monist approach defines the contemporary borders of the Muslim world as deceptive and artificial at best and idolatrous and blasphemous at worst. It offers a retrospective imperial model to revive and restructure the umma, remapping the Muslim world as a borderless super-state of Muslims.

Heritage, Identity, and Politics of Memory: Daejeon, Gunsan, and Hwaseong's Approaches to the Japanese Colonial Legacy in South Korea
Natalia Matiaszczyk

South Korea's experience of Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945 remains one of the most traumatic and sensitive periods in its modern history, sparking ongoing controversies around issues of national memory and identity, historical trauma, and politics of memory. While the topic remains contentious, the ways in which South Korean cities engage with this past are surprisingly diverse, revealing a complex interplay between memory, identity, and urban policy. This paper examines how different South Korean cities approach the legacy of this occupation, highlighting the diverse, and often contradictory, strategies and narratives that local governments employ. Through case studies of Hwaseong, Daejeon, and Gunsan, the paper reveals a spectrum of approaches: from deliberate erasure of Japanese

remnants to ambiguous actions and even active preservation of colonial heritage for economic and tourism development. Additionally, it presents varied narratives within these approaches, ranging from anti-Japanese sentiment, through stories emphasizing the role of women in the independence movement to accounts of "good Japanese" who were against Japanese imperialism. By focusing on local responses to this difficult past, the paper contributes new insights to political science, memory studies, and urban studies, offering a nuanced look at how cities navigate the politics of memory. Ultimately, this paper contributes to deeper understanding of nationalism and post-colonial identity as expressed through urban memory practices in South Korea.

Heritage in pieces - Redefining national heritage in post-Trianon Hungary
Andrea Kocsis

The Treaty of Trianon (1920), which concluded Hungary's participation in World War I, drastically reduced the country's territory by modifying its borders. This territorial loss reshaped both the spatial and symbolic frameworks of national identity and the Authorised Heritage Discourse (cf. Smith 2006). This paper examines how Hungarian heritage narratives were formulated before and transformed after the Treaty of Trianon by analysing and comparing visual and textual representations in late 19th-century and interwar touristic magazines and postcards. The research combines computational and qualitative methods: distant reading, using computer-facilitated thematic analysis and topic modelling, was applied to over a thousand digitised archival records,

while manual discourse analysis was used to interpret nuanced patterns in heritage narratives. It investigates three interconnected developments. Firstly, it explores the medievalist romanticism of the 19th century, which laid the foundation for heritage representations steeped in national symbolism. Secondly, it exemplifies how tourism, once a local economic activity, became a vehicle for nationalism, as the tourist industry capitalised on patriotic ideas to secure governmental support for isolated excavations and renovations. Thirdly, the paper highlights how heritage interpretations shifted after Trianon, as the loss of significant cultural and natural landmarks necessitated a reconceptualisation of overlooked heritage sites from local pride to national emblem. Overall, the paper illuminates how the post-war border changes influenced the production, mass dissemination, and reformulation of heritage narratives. It demonstrates how the built environment and its representations were mobilised to sustain a collective national identity and reassert Hungary's cultural legitimacy on a diminished map.

G4 - Migration in the EU

Bordering the nation – dynamics of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion among non-white Italians living in the UK

Marco Antonsich

International migration is changing the demographic composition of nations around the world. How to re-envision the symbolic borders of national belonging nation in the age of migration remains one of the most pressing issue, which however continues to be relatively

understudied from an empirical perspective. To add evidence to this issue, the paper will focus on the voices of non-white Italians living in the UK. Based on 32 semi-structured individual interviews conducted between May 2022 and August 2023, the paper examines the 'what' and 'how' of the nation: what kind of nation is discursively made present by the interviewees and how this nation is reproduced in practice in the everyday life. Data allows to reflect on which spaces are available for racialised minorities to claim and perform their national belonging beyond the pervasive and hegemonic nexus between nation and whiteness. This in turn will allow to reflect on the limits and possibilities to redraw the symbolic boundaries of national inclusion/exclusion.

Perceptions of exclusion: a theoretical challenge for migration diplomacy behind European externalisation and offshoring schemes

Daniel Gabor Pongracz

This research project explores theoretical gaps of migration diplomacy by discussing empirical examples between 2014 and 2024 in Europe. It addresses two cases, focusing on the development of the Rwanda deals in the UK, the offshoring deal between Italy and Albania, and their European reception. The goal of this research is to present an overarching literature review on the theoretical background behind migration diplomacy, and by using the case studies to highlight critical points and theoretical issues linked to the concept of exclusion aided by narrative analysis of government actors. The research question addresses how perceptions of exclusions affect migration diplomacy. Considering Putnam's (1988) two-level

game theory domestic pressures need to be taken into account. The rise of anti-immigration narratives powered by electorates who feel left out of the process of migration diplomacy poses a particular challenge. Following Beck's (1992) risk society and Wendy Brown's (2010) concepts on border anxieties I make the case for incorporating the feeling of exclusion more deeply into the theoretical framework of migration diplomacy. The relevance of this socio-psychological phenomena poses further theoretical questions. There is a particularly acute challenge as the existence and state of global migration governance is riddled with holes. Concepts such as Hollifield's (1992, 2004) liberal paradox highlight weaknesses that question the application of liberal principles under a perceived illiberal challenge in Europe. In the process, I argue that selective exclusion and identity politics do take a toll on the individualist foundations of the liberal international order.

The Shifting Borders of Belonging: EU Citizenship and Identity Negotiation among EU Highly Skilled Migrants in Budapest and Athens

Saime Özçürümez and Pınar Dilan Sönmez Gioftsiou

The supranational legal status and vision the European Union (EU) provides challenge traditional notions of citizenship and national belonging as EU citizens engage in a complex process of imagining a common European community while re-negotiating national citizenship and belonging. This research focuses on how mobile EU citizens navigate between their supranational European identity and their national attachments in the everyday life of

transnational conviviality within the EU. Drawing on 35 interviews with EU HSMs in Budapest and Athens, this study investigates whether national and supranational attachments exist in conflict, complement one another, or require a delicate balancing act. By examining European identity formation of EU HSMs in two cosmopolitan cities emerging as global hubs in the semi-periphery of the EU, the study asserts that EU citizenship promotes a novel form of cosmopolitan belonging which imagines inclusive spaces that embrace multilayered forms of attachments and commitments. The analysis suggests that highly skilled EU migrants in Budapest have a strong attachment to their EU citizenship and a strong sense of belonging to the European community. Those in Athens, though culturally identifying as European, show a weaker attachment to EU citizenship. The findings reveal that EU citizenship, as a cosmopolitan framework, empowers individuals with personal autonomy to shape their identities and broaden their sense of belonging. However, this re-negotiation of belonging does not eliminate national or patriotic attachments. Instead, it repositions these ties as enduring roots that often coexist alongside cosmopolitan commitments.

G5 - The Legacy of Soviet Borders

"Blurring 'Borders within Borders': Cultural Nationalization of Karabakh in Soviet Azerbaijan"

Toghrul Abbasov

The speech is going to focus on the nationalization of Karabakh by Azerbaijan

during the Soviet period of 1960–70s at the intersection of cinema and music. That is, the Azerbaijani political elite, with the help of cultural products has turned emotions connected to Karabakh into one of the building blocks of national identity. After the establishment of Soviets in Azerbaijan and Armenia, the Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh were incorporated into the territory of Azerbaijan under the status of an autonomous province with its own borders. However, in subsequent years, demands by the Armenian political elite for the unification of Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia raised concerns in Baku. As a result, narratives portraying Karabakh as an essential and inseparable territory of Azerbaijan were developed in the Azerbaijani national imagination. The confession by Heydar Aliyev summarized how the Azerbaijani political elite saw Nagorno-Karabagh: "NKAO was a bomb planted inside Azerbaijan." During the Soviet era, when open nationalism was difficult to promote in the political sphere and "erasing borders within borders" was challenging, national discourse about Karabakh was conveyed through cultural products as a means of "blurring internal borders". Notably, films and songs stood out among these cultural products for their accessibility to the public and their strong emotional resonance. Music held a particularly significant role in this national narrative, as Karabakh was often referred to as "the conservatory of Azerbaijan." Films also played a pivotal role in popularizing this narrative. Thus, this speech will primarily examine the nationalization of Karabakh through the dual lenses of cinema and music.

Ethnic Identity of the Slovaks of Transcarpathia and the Soviet Nation Concept

Štefan Ižák

The paper deals with the ethnic identification of the Slovaks of Transcarpathia (current Ukraine) from the 1960s until the beginning of the 1990s. These decades are characterized by the Soviet effort to create the Soviet nation without specific (non-Russian) ethnic, cultural, language, or religious characteristics. The Slovak minority located in the Transcarpathia region was also affected by these policies. The paper aims to analyse how the Soviet assimilation policies had influenced the ethnic identification of Slovaks and how Slovaks had been trying to preserve their ethnic, cultural, language, and religious characteristics differing them from the majority. To answer the research questions, I conducted field research in Transcarpathia from 11 March until 11 June 2024 and visited localities with the Slovak minority. The oral history method has helped me to collect local people's memories of the studied period. The concept of the collective memory of a social group (the Slovaks of Transcarpathia) is a basic theoretical concept through which I understand the respondents' interpretations of the past. Even though this memory is made up of the individual memories of the group members, it is shaped by the collective, its norms, and current needs, therefore, it is regularly re-interpreted. Assimilation policies and the concept of the Soviet nation had dynamized natural assimilation processes but could not fully marginalize Slovak ethnic identity. The main scientific contribution is that the research reveals how ethnic minorities can preserve their identities in

the undemocratic environment and how they can resist assimilation policies.

The lasting impact of the Beneš decrees in Slovakia – applying collective guilt in the European Union?

Janos Fiala-Butora

The so-called Beneš decrees, laws adopted in 1945–48 in post-war Czechoslovakia continue to divide Slovakian society along ethnic lines. Because the decrees applied collective guilt to members of the Hungarian and German communities, whose property was confiscated, current representatives of these communities strongly resent them. The decrees' annulment, restitution of property, and compensation of victims regularly resurface in the political debates both domestically, and in bilateral relations with Hungary. The Slovakian government has consistently refused to annul the decrees and even reinforced them in 2007. Nevertheless, they were always thought of as a problem of the past – Slovakia was admitted into the European Union on the understanding that the decrees no longer affect property rights. In 2019, the issue took a new turn when the European Court of Human Rights found in *Bosits v. Slovakia* that Slovakia applies the decrees currently to confiscate the property of its citizens of Hungarian and German ethnicity. These confiscations have an uncertain legal basis and are at odds with current human rights norms. Nevertheless, they are not the only area of policy the decrees have an impact on. This presentation analyses how an unsolved historical problem continues to determine majority-minority relationships today, and how it determines policy in several areas of minority rights. It argues that

overcoming the past is important not only for reconciliation, but it has implications for the human rights of people living today, and can undermine the values of the European Union.

G6 - Border controls

Borders of Recognition: Passport Recognition in Newly Independent States – The Cases of East Timor and Kosovo

Vuslat Nur Sahin Temel

This paper investigates the intersection of nationalism, borders, and international recognition by focusing on the passport recognition strategies of East Timor and Kosovo, two newly independent states with distinct geopolitical contexts. The contested nature of national borders, both physical and symbolic, is reflected in the uneven recognition of these states' passports. National borders do more than define the territorial limits of a state—they are essential tools for legitimizing a nation's identity in the international system. This study explores how these states navigate the complex diplomatic processes required for passport recognition, with regional organizations like ASEAN and the EU playing influential roles. Using a document analysis approach, the paper examines how sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political legitimacy impact the recognition of national borders. The paper sheds light on how post-colonial and post-conflict states manage their borders in the context of globalization and shifting geopolitical realities, with a focus on diplomacy and regional actors. The study's primary contribution lies in its analysis of how newly independent states assert their identities through international recognition mechanisms,

with East Timor and Kosovo serving as key examples.

Borders at the Heart of the Nation: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Airport Border Control Policies

Can Tao and Junki Nakahara

The institutionalisation of the “nation-state” is always facilitated by regulating international mobility, from setting up borders to developing passports. This paper examines national borders through the lens of border control policies at international airports, often located in the economic and political centres of nation-states. It analyses the border control and customs policies and practices of 20 top-ranking airports identified by Airports Council International, which collectively manage 18% of global passenger traffic. The study addresses two key questions. First, how do airport border control policies construct and communicate national identity to both domestic and international audiences? We explore how border policies and officers participate in a meaning-making process, shaping perceptions of national identity and projecting an international image that nations wish to present to their visitors and returnees. Second, in what ways do airport border control policies reflect processes of “othering” and reveal underlying global alliances and diplomatic strategies? This question examines practices such as fast-track access for certain groups and criteria for heightened scrutiny. Through a critical analysis of legal and policy documents concerning border and customs procedures at each selected airport, as well as ministerial documents and records (e.g., Department of Homeland Security, Ministry of Justice), this study

rethinks the concept of borders in the context of international airports. It discusses themes such as sorting, othering, national security, sovereignty, and racial profiling to provide a nuanced understanding of how airports function as pivotal sites of national identity and border (re)construction.

Preserving the EU Border in Slovenia: Migration and the Purity of the Nation

Veronika Bajt

Border control and immigration law traditionally act as gatekeepers of national membership, defining the terms of inclusion/exclusion. Within the paranoia of nationalism, Dangerous Other brings fear of disease, destruction, pollution. Existing theories of nationalism have much to offer in their conceptualisation of, for instance, the “nationalising nationalism” (Brubaker 2010) and a symbolic retreat to the past (Smith 1986), where national identity adopts the concept of border as related to the symbolism of (non)membership, and the concept of purity as bound to the construction of the belief in the uniqueness of the nation (and the alleged impurity and risk of intrusion by the Other). In Slovenia, as elsewhere, we see new kinds of nativism which, under the claims of returning to “authentic” culture and tradition, radically enlarge the differential ways in which belonging is constructed, but also the overall power relations between nationals and foreigners. I propose to re-define the relationship between nationalism (as the core “neutral” ideology of nation-state) and migration (as a social fact with increasingly attached negative connotations). Drawing on public opinion survey, and interviews with migrant and local population, the border is analysed

as a place, a process, and a symbol. The entrapment within borders can be internal, external, symbolic, spatial and digital. The border always represents the symbolic definition of (self)categorization in terms of (non)belonging, whereas the multivocality of the concept of purity (in its relation to autochthonous-ness/native-ness) also helps us think about the construction of purity of the nation on the one hand, and the danger, impurity of the Other on the other.

G7 - The Mexican-American Border

Reimagining Borders: Resilience and Revitalization in Ambos Nogales, Mexico/United States
Mario Alberto Macías Ayala

Since the 1990s, the United States has significantly fortified its border with Mexico by constructing large physical barriers and implementing increasingly strict and hostile anti-immigrant laws. These measures have fractured numerous border communities, a situation exacerbated by Mexico's war on drugs, which began in 2006 and continues to have lasting effects. Ambos Nogales, a community divided by a fence along the Arizona-Sonora border, exemplifies this division, where a once-unified community is now physically separated by an enforced border. Despite these challenges, several bilateral initiatives have emerged in recent years to counteract the prevailing narratives of violence and the harsh realities of steel and concrete that characterize the region. This paper examines efforts aimed at revitalizing social and cultural ties between the

communities of Ambos Nogales, actively challenging the physical and ideological barriers imposed by the border. Through cross-border artistic and cultural projects, these initiatives seek to reshape the dominant narrative by emphasizing themes of resilience, unity, and the revitalization of border spaces. These efforts not only foster social cohesion but also provide alternatives to exclusionary policies and the prevailing discourse of violence associated with the border. By promoting a vision of the border as a dynamic space of interaction and resistance, this work contributes to a broader understanding of how communities navigate the complexities of identity and belonging amid contemporary border fortifications.

Deporting Mexican "Scabs": The Forgotten Demands of the US Civil Rights Movement, 1965-1969
Nahomi Linda Esquivel

The US election results have demonstrated that the Republican Party has cultivated a multi-racial working-class coalition. My work historicizes this phenomenon and reveals that the Mexican American political voting bloc was founded over entangled anxieties about economic disenfranchisement and migrant movement. The paper explores the history of Mexican "green card commuters" - workers whom the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) admitted to the US for permanent residency but who maintained their homes in Mexico, opting to cross the border on a daily or seasonal basis to their place of work. I show how the INS created this paradoxical status through administrative fiat, situating it outside the purview of statutory immigration law and enabling agricultural industrialists to

access cheap and tethered foreign labor at the very moment that the Mexican Contract Labor system expired. The paper focuses on how the Mexican American United Farm Workers union contended with this new international workforce by making Mexican strikebreaking a civil rights issue and engendering a deportation campaign in the US interior in 1968. I demonstrate how legal informality obstructed workers' ability to set the standards of agricultural production and labor reproduction; in the process, informal governance imbued the picket line with bordering power. I use the history of the commuter status to complicate and rewrite the histories of 1960s immigration law, Mexican American politics, and liberal governance, revealing how the state and racialized communities used the border to negotiate biopolitics and national inclusion. The paper uses gossip, state records, correspondence, and legal cases.

Build a Mexican Wall!: the influence of US border policies in the change in attitudes towards immigrants in Mexico
Henio Hoyo

Traditionally, Mexico has been a country of transit for migrants and asylum seekers aiming for USA. However, the first Trump administration (2017-2025) imposed severe demands on Mexico to (1) preventing migration flows from reaching the US border, and (2) forcing it to become a de facto "third safe country", as now aspiring migrants and asylum seekers must wait in it for the decision on their applications by the American authorities. This did not change substantially during Biden and, probably, will only escalate during the 2nd Trump administration. The Mexican response:

much stronger border and migration controls, large increases in deportations not only of fellow Latin Americans, but also of citizens from afar as Africa, India or Nepal, etc. has been well covered in the current literature. However, my plan is to study the impact of such developments in the social and political attitudes within Mexico a far less studied topic. For instance: surveys show increasing social support for harder policies; some political actors and media outlets have adopted discourses linking migration to crime and disease; and even Mexican nationalism, which traditionally has been based in cultural / historical features, now is increasingly changing towards a territory-based defensive nationalism, where topics such as "secure borders" take preeminence. Hence, Mexico is not only subjected to US demands and policies of the Trump era, but also importing ideas from it, such as a claim for strong borders and the defense against migrant "invasions" – a significant change in Mexican nationalism.

G8 - The Memory of Borders

The Negotiations of Belonging from the Experience of Living in the Borderlands of Indonesia-Malaysia
Adityo Darmawan Sudagung

The research aims to scientifically contribute to border studies by incorporating the belonging approaches to studying everyday life in the borderland. I use the socio-territorial belonging perspective in combination with elements and analytical tools of belonging to explain how people in the borderlands of West Kalimantan-Sarawak negotiate, construct and

perform belongings in their everyday lives. This research was conducted through ethnographic fieldwork from August 2022 to March 2023 at the two border villages in Sekayam (Indonesia) and Tebedu (Malaysia) Subdistrict. The data was collected through semi-structured and informal interviews with the local people. In addition to the interviews, I observed the research site by participating in an international ethnic festival and several religious events, a workshop on the local radio, gathering with the local people and crossing the border to visit both villages. The study's outcomes found that the people in the borderland of West Kalimantan and Sarawak had ethnic, family, and national belongings. Historical and collective memories, commonalities, differentiation and attachments on cultural and religious attribution and their daily interaction in dealing with the borders influence the negotiation of multiple belongings, as well as towards the local people's relationship across the borders and the presence of the state in the border areas. From my findings, I understood that the local people adjusted the use of their multiple belongings for their interest in dealing with international borders, such as establishing social and economic interaction and responding to both authorities' national policies.

Media as Borders: Nationalist Rhetoric in Kazakhstan

Zeinep Abetova, Zhuldyz Battalova, Zhuldyz Karim, Sabina Shaimerdenova and Assiya Urazbayeva

The relevance of this topic stems from the attempt to actualize imperial rhetoric in the post-Soviet space, framed within the discourse of historical memory,

which serves as a basis for legitimizing the imperial narrative Analytical framework: Constructivist epistemology and the concept of the subaltern reveal former colonies' dependence on their metropolises through cultural and discursive practices (Spivak, 1988). The framework also incorporates symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991), which addresses the assertion of dominance through symbols and rituals (e.g., historical events, memorable dates, and national holidays). The analysis will present how Russian politicians use the rhetoric of "common history" and "brotherly peoples" to legitimize the idea of Russia as a cultural and political center for Central Asian countries, thereby reinforcing post-colonial relations. The postcolonial narrative also engages with the discourse of historical memory and the decolonial narrative, invoking symbols associated with the national government of Alash-Orda, the heritage of the Golden Horde, nomadism, and pan-Turkism. Empirical tools - critical discourse analysis of Fairclough, N. (1992) ideological aspects of imperial rhetoric, multimodal discourse analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001)(text, images, gestures, symbols, images), content analysis of postcolonial narrative in public discourse of Kazakhstan.

Transcending Physical and Political Borders: Nostalgia and the Aras River Maryam Gholizadeh and Reza Talebi

We study how ethnic Azerbaijani people on both sides of the Aras River persistently experience a sense of group-based nostalgia, which leads to the mental erosion of actual borders. This relatively unrecognized trend has been going on for at least two hundred years, even though the ruling Russian

and Persian governments on both sides have been working hard to integrate Azerbaijanis by cultural assimilation and making the border even harder to cross. Attempting to reveal the root cause of this “nostalgia-assisted border erosion,” we examined characteristic aspects of Azerbaijani socio-cultural landscape, which we deemed to be most arousing to its main antagonist, i.e. ultranationalist Persians. We identified the Iran-Aran dichotomy as the key term that Persians use to differentiate themselves from the inhabitants of the region, which is located within the triangle formed by the junction of the Kura and Aras rivers, currently within the territories of the Azerbaijan republic. In contrast, ethnic Azerbaijanis employ the emotionally charged phrases *Otay-Butay* or *Oyan-Buyan* (literally, the other side—this side) when alluding to their separated ethnic fellows. Folk songs, particularly the quartets known as *Bayati*, have consolidated this phrase and its strong unifying aspect, allegorically expressing the agonizing separation from beloved individuals living on “the other side.” We present details of our statistical analysis on the *Bayatis* and their implications in the political arena, highlighting their role in fostering unity among dispersed communities.

H1 - The Discourse of Borders

In Loving Memory of the Empire:
Reconceptualizing the Borders of the
Nation through Civilizational Discourse in
the Turkish Case

Giray Gerim

Modern Türkiye represents an endeavor orchestrated by political elites to forge a nation-state predicated upon a secular

Turkish identity confined to the new republic's borders. Within this framework, in contrast to the Ottoman epoch, there was a significant initiative to diminish the influence of religion in the formation of national identity. This initiative was championed by the Kemalist secular elite, who exerted considerable control over various institutions, notably the Turkish military. The Justice and Development Party, which ascended to power in November 2002, gradually and effectively dismantled the authority of these institutions, which it perceived as bastions of tutelage over democratic governance, through reforms implemented with both domestic and Western support. In the aftermath, the government initiated the development of a national identity characterized by a more pronounced connection to the Ottoman heritage and a greater emphasis on religious elements in its ideological narratives. Nonetheless, this national identity project is framed within a civilizational context rooted in the Ottoman legacy and transcends the geographical confines of the Turkish nation-state. Consequently, this analysis primarily interrogates the territorial boundaries delineated in this nascent national project by scrutinizing Erdoğan's discourses from the shift to the presidential system in 2017—a pivotal juncture in the consolidation of his authoritarian governance—up to the present, employing critical discourse analysis (CDA) on a curated selection of his thematically relevant speeches. It posits that the geographic boundaries of the redefined Turkish identity articulated in Erdoğan's rhetoric are inherently fluid and ambiguous, despite their undeniable extension beyond the political frontiers of the existing nation-state.

Emotional Borders: Sevres Syndrome and the Politics of Fear and Anger in Turkey's Nationalist Discourse

Günce Sabah Eryilmaz

The Treaty of Sèvres (1920), which symbolized the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, has had a profound impact on the formation of the Turkish national identity. The legacy of the Treaty of Sèvres endures in the collective psyche, fostering a perception that Western powers have the intention of dividing Turkey and violating its borders. Although frequently linked with ultranationalist or conservative groups, this study demonstrates that Sevres Syndrome also influences the political and emotional discourses of other factions, including the nationalist wing of the Republican People's Party (CHP). This study employs in-depth interviews and participant observations with 20 members of the Atatürkist Thought Association (ADD) in Izmir, a city often regarded as a bastion of Western values in Turkey, to examine the intersection between historical trauma and contemporary political dynamics. In their reflections on the perceived incongruities in power and status dynamics between Western states and Turkey, participants frequently invoked Sevres-related conspiracies, particularly in relation to Western praise for the AK Party government (2002–2007). These narratives, which are rooted in fears of border violations and sovereignty threats, elicit intense emotional responses, particularly fear and anger. This paper utilizes emotion-based and critical discourse analysis to examine how emotions reinforce symbolic borders between "us" and "them," fostering a defensive nationalism even among groups identifying with Western

lifestyles. The findings illuminate how historical traumas sustain a "politics of fear" and "politics of anger," underscoring the role of emotions in perpetuating ideological and symbolic boundaries in Turkey's political landscape.

Contested border icons: polarisation between cosmopolitan and parochial identity discourses on relations and territories

Kees Terlouw

This paper analyses the changing role of borders in identity discourses. Whereas traditionally, the location of a specific border was contested between nations, nowadays, in Western Europe, the general importance of national and other borders has become contested. There is a shift from horizontal confrontations between specific territories to vertical contestations on territoriality between cosmopolitan and parochial identity discourses. This paper analyses several case studies of the changing use of iconic places. The border region East-Belgium transformed after the Second World War from an iconic place of confrontation between national communities to an icon of a European region. This became central in their new regional identity discourse. European Integration and the federalisation of the Belgian state tilted the horizontal confrontation between nation-states to a vertical realignment of power away from the nation-state linked to a cosmopolitan identity discourse. The white cliffs of Dover shifted in recent years from an icon signifying in British national identity discourses resistance to the threats from European nation-states. It became an iconic place used in the polarisation between parochial and

cosmopolitan identity discourses. Migrants crossing the English Channel are either identified as threatening the British nation or as victims whose universal human rights are violated. An analysis of the Calais Jungle camp and the Grandhotel Cosmopolis in Augsburg further explores the positive or negative valuation of iconic places linked to migration. This paper ends with a typology of the changing role of borders in national, cosmopolitan and parochial identity discourses and the polarisation between them.

H2 - Borders in Early Twentieth Century Europe

Frontiersman as an object of Czech nationalism 1918-1935

Dominik Šípoš

Central Europe after the Great War was the site of a clash between the idea of the homogeneity of the new nation-states and the reality of their multinational composition. The latter inevitably affected the newly formed Czechoslovakia as well. The republic had to deal with several issues arising from the presence of national minorities. The largest one - the Germans - and their relationship with the Czechs eventually became not only an internal political but also an international problem. This paper traces the reflection of Czech-German coexistence in the thought and practice of the political party Czechoslovak National Democracy, the most prominent representative of Czech nationalism. The subject of interest is the issue of the so-called "frontiersman", Czechs living on language-mixed frontiers. The National Democracy treated the borderlands inhabited by the German population as

stolen or occupied territory, which, although in the Czechoslovak state, did not belong to the Czechs. The National Democrats attached specific importance to the area and the inhabitants of Czech nationality there because for them they were a guarantee of the future and unity of the Czech nation. This paper aims to reconstruct the narrative repeated by the national democrats about the necessity of defending the Czech "frontiersman" and to concretize its function within the ideology of Czech nationalism. The paper focuses on two levels. The first traces the rhetoric and strategies applied in specific situations within the Czechoslovak Republic. The second examines the narrative as part of a philosophy of history in which the myth of Czech-German rivalry was a fundamental building block of national identity.

The forest of the nation. The nationalisation of forest areas on the French-German border (1871-1914)

Benoit Vaillot

Following the Franco-German War (1870), the Treaty of Frankfurt (1871) ceded Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, establishing a border along the Vosges Mountains, largely within forested areas. These forests were central to border negotiations due to their strategic, economic, and cultural significance. However, an anthropocentric lens often overlooks forests as habitats for "non-human" actors – trees, plants, and animals – whose dynamics reflect historical forces. This paper explores how nationalism shaped ecosystems in transborder forest regions. By examining the nationalisation of forests – the social, cultural, and political processes of appropriation, conservation, and

management in a national way – it reveals how forests reflect human actions, perceptions, and social relations shaped by environmental factors. These insights also offer an environmental perspective on nationalism and sovereignty construction. Environmental aspects remain underrepresented in border historiography, though North American scholars like Conrad J. Bahre and Charles F. Hutchinson have examined ecological divergences along the U.S.-Mexico border. French and German foresters' writings and administrative reports provide valuable data on ecological changes at the French-German border between 1871 and 1914. This research highlights contrasting forest policies and ecological power relations, reflecting nationalism and differing national approaches to nature. Focusing on the French-German border forests (Vosges), this study analyzes how the border reshaped these ecosystems and how they, in turn, influenced sovereignty and nationalism. It proposes an interdisciplinary approach linking environmental history and nationalism, offering novel insights into the socio-ecological transformations of borderlands.

Finnish-Russian Borderland Transformations 1917-1922

Sofia Silfvast

In my paper, I will shed light on the previously little studied experiences of the closing of the border between newly independent Finland and Russia/USSR 1917-1922 in Finnish Border Karelia. Until 1917, cross-border mobility for marriage, work and religious festivities was frequent, as the population in the borderlands of Finnish Border Karelia and Russian Karelia were Orthodox

Christians and spoke the Karelian language. My source material is an interview material from 1971, originally collected to document Orthodox traditions of Border Karelian evacuees. I will analyze the narratives of interviewees originating from borderland villages using an oral history research methodology. The pre-independence border provided social, economic, religious and educational opportunities for the local population. Using transnationalism as my theoretical framework, I will look at the oral history accounts on the transformation of the border from open and porous to closed and guarded. The borderland villagers experienced a loss of cross-border mobility and social ties, while they had to conform to the Fennicization of the Orthodox ecclesiastical practices. I will argue that the lived experiences of Orthodox Karelians in the borderland differed significantly from the Finnish nation-building narrative. This paper is part of my PhD project on lived Orthodoxy in Border Karelia in the interwar period, funded by the Finnish Cultural Foundation (2024-2027).

H3 - Hadrian's Wall: The Anglo-Scottish Border

The SNP's Construction of Symbolic Borders through the Individuality-Sociality Duality

Onur Isci

This study examines how the Scottish National Party (SNP) constructs Scottish national identity and discourse by navigating the individuality-communality duality and leveraging symbolic capital to delineate Scotland's cultural and political distinctiveness. Central to the SNP's

discourse is a contrast between Scottish communitarianism and English individualism, framing Scotland as a nation characterized by inclusiveness, collective values, and social solidarity. This duality serves to reinforce a cohesive identity, fostering a sense of belonging among Scotland's population. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's symbolic capital, the SNP positions its communitarian values as a form of cultural and political currency. Symbolic capital enables the SNP to legitimize its claims of distinctiveness. The demand for a written constitution, for example, signifies a commitment to shared governance and inclusivity, contrasting with the common law system shared with England. This underscores the effort to elevate Scottish communitarianism as a marker of national pride and legitimacy, counterbalancing the perceived exclusivity and individualism of English political and cultural systems. Data from interviews with SNP Members of Scottish Parliaments, party manifestos, and electoral rhetoric reveal how symbolic borders and this duality shape the SNP's national discourse. The study argues that these boundaries extend beyond electoral strategies, functioning as vital elements in constructing an inclusive and cohesive Scottish identity. By employing symbolic borders rooted in shared values and collective pride, the SNP navigates the duality to present Scotland as a nation distinct in its principles and aspirations. This research highlights the interplay between symbolic borders, symbolic capital, and national identity, revealing their significance.

The Tartan Curtain: Exploring the Anglo-Scottish Border's Role in Creating a Sharp Cultural Divide

Amir Hosny

The purpose of a border is to mark the absolute limit of sovereign legal authority – the line beyond which a ruler no longer rules. National borders are drawn as lines on maps to show the territorial extent of countries. Borders can also serve as internal boundary markers. Whereas in the former case we have a 'live' demarcation of the division of global politics, the latter reveal older political divisions that no longer matter due to shifts in political power. Through the reflexive relationship of law and culture, borders also bound cultural development. This paper analyses the evolution of a national culture in the context of a border being established during the decline of feudalism and the centralisation of political power in the late-medieval and early modern period. The 'Debatable Lands,' witnessed the waxing and waning of the power of the English and Scottish Crowns. The Unions of 1603 and 1707 put an end to the quasi-anarchic situation. With the creation of the United Kingdom, national identities were able to develop under the auspices of British imperial expansion, which provided the security necessary for the development of a non-threatening Scottish cultural identity. The relationship between sovereign power, establishment of 'soft' internal borders, and the formation of cultural spaces is clarified. I argue Scots language use, adherence to Presbyterianism, and wearing of the kilt show that the settlement of the Anglo-Scottish border ended a period of cultural homogeneity in the border region and erected a 'tartan curtain' from Berwick to Gretna.

Borders in the mind and boundaries in the heart? Nationalism and its fragmentation amongst Scots in London
Christopher Cannell

"Where do you put the border between what is London and what is not London?" (Interviewee Rebecca) What do borders mean in multi-national states? In the United Kingdom, their existence as physical boundaries is of limited analytical use and personal notice. The crossing of borders within the UK barely registers for the subject population of this presentation, Scottish people living in London. However, national boundary making and differentiation still relies on the existence of borders, physical and mental, to operate. Thus, this paper will question where borders lie, on the ground, but also in the 'heart', and in the 'head'; what constitutes a national "spatial edge" (Fox 2017), and how borders operate in the "mental life" (Simmel 1997) of internal migrants to a metropolis capital city, the hugely multicultural multiple 'borderland' of London. This will interrogate the notion of "boundary" in Barth's (1969) sense. The image of a difference between a politics of the 'heart' and 'head' oft invoked in discourse of Scottishness provides an emic analytical framework. Based on original research and observations conducted in London amongst Scottish people, this paper will argue that one way of understanding how borders work in London is "grounding" nationalism (Malesevic 2019) but also its fragmentation. There is the breakdown of institutions, sovereignty and space toward the individual in the contemporary neoliberal and multicultural city. There is also the reification and mutual imbrication of British and Scottish national forms,

whose "fragments" (Chatterjee 1993) co-construct "spiritual", values-based forms of identification.

H4 - Printing Borders

Building Tibetan Nation from India: A Case Study of Tibetan Print Media in the 1950s and 1960s

Natalia Mikhailova

Tibetan nationalism and Tibetan print media are both relatively late phenomenon which emerged in the 20th century and gained momentum in the development only after central Tibet officially became part of the People's Republic of China in May 1951. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's idea that newspapers uphold an "imagined linkage" of the community and in this way enable fostering nationalist ideas among members of that community, I explore how three Tibetan-language print media outlets (i.e., The Tibet Mirror, Freedom Newspaper, and Defend Tibet's Freedom Newspaper) produced in India in the 1950s and 1960s contributed to the construction of the very concepts of "Tibet" and "Tibetan nation" by articulating the nationalist discourse that has been officially adopted by the Tibetan government-in-exile (also known as Central Tibetan Administration, or CTA) established by the 14th Dalai Lama after his flight from the PRC in March 1959. For centuries long, the self-identification of the population of the vast Tibetan Plateau has been defined by the dominating regionalism and religious sectarianism. However, when a large number of Tibetan-speaking peoples following the example of the Dalai Lama emigrated into India, the political elite of the rapidly growing diaspora faced the

dilemma of legitimization of its authority over a diverse community, certain members of which neither wanted to acknowledge the political rule of the CTA over them nor identified as “Tibetan.” Through discourse analysis of the three major newspapers, I discuss how the creation of the “Tibetan nation-in-exile” has redefined “Tibet” and shaped modern Tibetan nationalism.

The Borders Within: Slovenian Right-wing Media and Affective Authoritarianism

Barbara Gornik

Borders are a constitutive element in the processes of national identity construction. While borders are often seen as political technologies that demarcate one nation from another, political processes of internal border-making within nations are equally important for the understanding of the ‘self’ through the symbolic exclusion of the ‘other’ (members of the same nation) from the national community. The processes of internal border-making are common in nation-states with authoritarian tendencies: in these states, individuals who are seen as deviating from the politically approved social/ideological order and thus harmful to society, are subjected to various forms of exclusion and degradation. Such cases of authoritarian internal border-making were also observed in Slovenia during the government of Janez Janša in connection with the anti-government bicycle protests at the time of the Covid-19 pandemic. In this paper, I examine the affectivity of journalistic narratives on anti-government bicycle protests published in the ‘pro-government’ magazine *Demokracija* as boundary-making strategy that excluded

social activists from being seen as a part of Slovenian nation. Based on an ethnographic qualitative content analysis of the articles, I examine the social acts “making people feel” as situational cues that enable the identification of emotional dimensions in the journalistic narratives. I show that narratives strategically leveraged emotions to induce affective change in their audiences. Importantly, by doing so, narratives opened up a space for affective authoritarianism, which I define as a political process that exploits and generates specific public emotions that make it easier for people to accept and internalise authoritarian norms.

The Role of the Printed Public Sphere in the Spread of Stateless Nationalisms

Pau Torres

This paper examines how the printed public sphere critically influenced the rise of stateless nationalism in Catalonia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. To explore this, the three Spanish Catalan-speaking regions - Catalonia, Valencia and the Balearic Islands- are compared. Although all three regions shared cultural and linguistic traits, Catalonia experienced a much stronger nationalist movement. We argue that this divergence is partly explained by higher literacy rates driven by Catalonia’s advanced industrialization, which fostered newspaper growth and a dynamic public sphere where nationalist ideas could spread more effectively. In contrast, lower literacy rates in Valencia and the Balearic Islands limited the spread of similar nationalist ideologies. Drawing on both quantitative and qualitative archival data on literacy and newspaper circulation from 1866 to 1913, this study highlights the critical role of

media access and education in the spread of nationalism, offering new insight into why stateless nationalism succeeded in some regions but not others. To assess the broader applicability of this argument, additional regions are subsequently examined.

H5 - Postcolonial Borders

An Anomaly of Nationalism, Imperialism, and Multilateralism? The Case of Diego Garcia

Dominic Alessio and Saira Joomun

The borders drawn by 19th – 20th century European colonialist powers still impact societies to date, and perpetuates a politics of exclusion against certain racial and ethnic groups. This paper will be framed by a constructivist ontological position and take a qualitative approach to explore: i) the role that multilateralism and international law has played in creating these borders (e.g. The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, UN Resolution 1514); ii) the geo-political and commercial realities that maintain the status quo to make certain populations ""prisoners of geography"" (Tim Marshall); and iii) apply Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Krishan Kumar's critiques of empires and nation-states in challenging the ubiquity of these borders. In particular, this paper will draw on the authors' existing texts to highlight the role of the United Nations in the Indonesian occupation of West Papua (Alessio & Alessio, 2023), and the role of geo-politics in the illegal displacement of the Chagossian population of Diego Garcia to make way for a U.S. naval base in the Indian Ocean (Fair Observer, 2024). Finally, the paper

will thread through how the present-day impacts of climate change are exacerbating the social injustices created by a colonial past, highlighting how issues of climate and society are in fact intertwined.

Nationalism at the margins:

Incorporating the former Bangladeshi enclave residents along the India-Bangladesh borderlands

Anindita Ghosh

The fifty odd enclaves of Bangladesh - small pockets of Bangladeshi territory geographically located in India- had interrupted the territorially contiguous national imagination of India as a nation since its inception in 1947. These enclaves were incorporated into India as Indian territory through the Land Boundary Act of 2015 signed by the two nations. The enclave residents became the citizens of India through various paper trails. Yet, they experience exclusions in multiple ways- lack of civic amenities, trailing official documentation, scanty employment opportunities, and no education and health care facilities. In my essay, I focus on the incorporation of the residents and territory of the enclaves or the lack thereof to understand the nation formation process along the borderlands of India and Bangladesh. More importantly, I highlight the performance of nationalized identities and Indian nationalism in the formerly Bangladeshi enclaves that thrived despite state failures to provide residents with full rights, the benefits of citizenship and its very core, human dignity. This essay is an important intervention into understanding a rare case where the emergence of nationalism and national identities is not a product of colonial or

post – colonial experiences but that of the absence of statehood and citizenship rights. I will base my case on the extensive archival and ethnographic work that I have conducted in the former Bangladeshi enclaves of India since the summer of 2022 as a part of my doctoral journey.

The “Hated” Migrant: Exploring the Nuances of Border(s) and Identity Construction in Northeast India

Udita Banerjee

Since the British colonial era, the states of Northeast India have experienced a steady influx of Bengali migrants. Even after the partition of India in 1947, large-scale migrations from Bangladesh into undivided Assam continued, significantly shaping the political ecology of the region. This paper attempts to examine migrant subjectivity and identity politics in the Northeast India as represented in the Indian English novels, *The Point of Return* by Siddhartha Deb, and *Red River* by Somnath Batabyal. Taking recourse to Gloria Anzaldúa’s theoretical paradigm, it delves into the complexities of both territorial borders and the internal borders, emerging out of deep-rooted ethno-political tension in the region. The paper further explores the profound impact of these borders on the construction of individual and collective identities in the region, interrogating the ways in which the nation-state complicates the native-migrant divide, leading the migrant characters to experience affective alienation. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s conceptualization of hate within a broader affective economy, this analysis examines the dissemination of the emotion of ‘hate’ between the different ethnic and linguistic groups. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, Ahmed

argues that “emotions do not positively inhabit anybody or anything, meaning that the subject is simply one nodal point in the economy, rather than its origin or destination” (46). Accordingly, this paper analyses how the marginal and conflicting intersectional identities of migrant characters in the select novels position them as complex nodes within the affective economy of hate as they navigate the complex terrain of difference and displacement.

H6 - Digital Borders

Feminist Solidarity as Borderless or Borderful? Chinese Weibo Responses to South Korea’s Deepfake Crisis

Jing Cai and Junki Nakahara

Drawing on the literature on digital sovereignty/territoriality and transnational feminism, this study investigates public responses to South Korea’s “deepfake pornography” crisis on China’s Weibo platform. The so-called “deepfake” technology, which uses AI to create hyper-realistic manipulated media content, has been weaponized to non-consensually produce and distribute explicit images of South Korean women and girls. While many Chinese users expressed empathy and solidarity, others cynically resisted engagement and resonance, framing the issue as a “foreign” or “Korea-specific” concern. This highlights the challenges and possibilities for transnational feminist activism within the constraints of national(ist) ideologies. Employing a mixed-methods approach—including data scraping, computational text analysis, and critical discourse analysis—this research examines 6,399 posts and 53,854 comments under hashtags such

as #N号房2.0# (#NthRoom2.0) and #韩国换脸# (#SouthKoreaDeepfake) from August 29 to September 27, 2024. Our preliminary analysis identifies two interconnected and mutually reinforcing dimensions: 1. digital discourse on sovereignty and 2. discourse on digital sovereignty. The former examines how concepts of sovereignty and territorial boundaries are reproduced in online interactions. The latter explores how digital sovereignty functions as an underlying logic that not only challenges transnational feminist activism but also, perhaps inadvertently, generates widespread engagement with this topic within highly regulated Chinese social media. Additionally, the imagined boundary distinguishing “our” nation’s concerns from “their” issues is further intensified by Chinese users’ longstanding ambivalence toward South Korea’s political culture and perceived geopolitical stance.

Digital crosscommunities and
ethnolinguistic borders: the case of
Galician and Portuguese
Ramón Brais Freire Braña

By focusing on Galician digital communities, this paper examines how online interactions among and beyond minoritized ethnonational and linguistic communities not only shape the concept of identity in itself, but also how these shed light upon the contentiousness of linguistic and national borders. This is explored on the basis of the debates surrounding the intelligibility, linguistic continuity, and shared heritage of Galician and Portuguese—a relationship often suppressed by the nation-building dynamics of Spain and Portugal—; and through the current role digital platforms hold in fostering new perceptions of

linguistic and cultural boundaries within the case at hand. Methodologically, the study employs discourse and thematic analysis of both semi-structured interviews conducted on twelve Galician language content creators, as well as of the interactions happening within their digital communities. This allows an inquiry upon how online platforms serve as arenas where ideas such as ‘borders,’ ‘communities,’ ‘nations,’ and ‘languages’ are constantly negotiated. Empirically, it contributes to nationalism studies and sociolinguistics by analyzing the impact of the novel and understudied phenomenon of minoritized language digital creation. Finally, this paper’s theoretical contribution focuses on explaining how the internet provides a unique lens through which to re-examine concepts of community formation, by enabling fluid expressions of belonging and challenging fixed notions of nationhood. By centering the voices of Galician creators, this research illuminates how minoritized communities assert their presence in digital spaces, explore cross-border affinities, and redefine identity frameworks. In a globalized digital era where traditional borders are blurred, the transformative potential of online platforms as catalysts for renewed identity processes.

Online bordering: (Re)creating national
borders in digital spaces
Michael Skey and Katrina Gaber

This paper introduces the concept “online bordering” to understand the symbolic (re)construction of national borders on digital platforms during a period of socio-political crisis. It uses an ‘extreme case study’, the Torne Valley, a region straddling the border between Sweden and Finland, during the Covid

pandemic, to highlight the ways in which 'ordinary people' contribute to bordering processes. As the pandemic unfolded, digital platforms became a critical arena where symbolic borders were (re)drawn and national identities reasserted in an area traditionally known for its cross-border cooperation and shared regional identity. The paper uses a purposive sample of online interactions between borderlanders to demonstrate processes of 'heating nationalism' on digital platforms. Over time, these lead to increasing tensions with the use of 'them' and 'us' categories, scapegoating, and the erosion of cross-border solidarity. The concept of "online bordering" is central to the understanding of how digital platforms have become crucial sites for the negotiation and redefinition of borders, as they enable the rapid dissemination and contestation of narratives related to identity, belonging, and otherness.

H7 - Majorities and Minorities in Hungary

Border and territory: the material and symbolic irredentism at Budapest's Kossuth Square after 2011

Graziela Ares

Since 2011, the political community represented by the supermajority has intervened in the symbolic and material landscape of Kossuth Square in Budapest. The reconfiguration approved by the parliamentary resolution 61/2011 aimed to restore the square to its image prior to the German invasion in 1944. This eclipse of memories has brought a representation of the cultural nation, to the geographical site of political power and republic, impacting collective

memory and its future. I intend to analyze the material and symbolic elements of the monuments in the square to demonstrate how this current politics of memory and its respective monumentalization use to promote a performatic historical experience in the present based on idealized collective traumas and consciousness about the past. In addition to the literature review, I use photos, news and excerpts from the Hungarian Fundamental Law to understand the objects that represent the territory and the Trianon Treaty within the current political-cultural interpretation of the Hungarian Nation. I expect to prove that the return of the artistic image of the square to the past aims to replace the country's responsibility on its fate in 20th Century with an enduring sympathy and resiliency, besides promoting the "resurrection" of the idea of a great nation that Hungary could have been had it not been for the will of others, including its neighbors. Such views corroborate the embodiment of otherness by illiberal democracy, regardless of the fact that it is unlikely that any dispute over territory will actually take place in Hungary.

Minority representation as a mean to unify the ethnic majority? – What is said and what is not by minority representatives in the Hungarian Parliament

Péter Kállai

Policies towards national and ethnic minorities in Hungary long served as a model child for neighbouring countries, so they should treat their Hungarian minorities just as well. However, the government took a big step forward introducing preferential minority

representation in the Parliament in 2014. This paper unfolds how the representatives of the 13 registered minority in Hungary not only accepts, but actively lean into the role of serving as a model-child. Analysing the speeches of two and a half parliamentary terms, it is clearly visible, that the so-called minority advocates systematically refer to the minorities as means to unify the Hungarian nation in terms of hoping to ensure that Hungarians outside the borders are affected by appropriate policies in their home countries. Policies or raises of subsidy amounts are meant to show other countries, how minorities should be treated. And, again, this approach is not just a tool of the government, but quite often, in different circumstances raised by the minority representatives themselves. It is particularly interesting, how it is very much in contrast with another phenomenon. Namely, that issues, problems or question concerning minorities are almost never articulated in a broader perspective that explicitly concerns the Hungarian society as a whole. Representatives of the minorities are always stick to their own (in this sense particular) interests. Meaning that minority representation in the Hungarian parliament is effectively separated as regards the topics from the general work of the Parliament but emphatically embedded into the national policy of the Hungarian government.

Contesting and recreating the borders of a nation at a festival

Blanka Barabás

The Bálványos Free Summer University and Student Camp (also known as Tusványos) is an annually organized festival in the Hungarian-majority region

of Transylvania (Romania). Its purpose is to bring together Hungarians from Hungary and Hungarians living as a minority in the neighboring countries, mostly in territories that used to be part of the Kingdom of Hungary before the Treaty of Trianon redefined its borders. Supported by the Government of Hungary, the festival provides a forum for political actors from Hungary, including the Prime Minister, to introduce their political programs, or to promote already existing agendas, such as the one about the unification of the Hungarian nation. In my presentation, I discuss how the existing state borders between Hungary and Romania are contested at Tusványos through the semiotic colonization of this Transylvanian space. To do so, I show how Hungarian national symbols are reiterated at the festival. Furthermore, based on my ethnographic fieldwork carried out at Tusványos, I examine how Transylvanian Hungarian festival participants discursively recreate the existing state borders in their narratives of exclusion. These bring to the fore Transylvanian Hungarians' experiences of language-based othering, as well as instances of having their Hungarian identity questioned or even denied by Hungarians from Hungary.

H8 - Book Panel: Activism Across the Spectrum -

Influencers, Online Alliances and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe #Balkans

Ivana Stepanovic, Sanja Vico, Izabella Agárdi, and Zala Pavšič

This panel explores the transformative potential of social media platforms in

undermining nationalism and fostering interethnic reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia, a region where historical tensions and ethnic divisions remain deeply rooted. Based on insights from *Influencers, Online Alliances and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe #Balkans*, this discussion centres on the emergence of “algorithmic reconciliation” – a phenomenon where social media algorithms, often criticized for amplifying nationalist and right-wing narratives, inadvertently cultivate spaces for cross-border, collaborative engagement that arguably leads to peacebuilding.

Focusing on platforms like YouTube and TikTok, this book demonstrates how Balkan influencers use storytelling and creative collaboration to foster understanding across ethnic lines. The book reveals how these influencers engage in grassroots activism, blending personal narratives with economic interests to form transnational communities that transcend traditional borders. By examining these digital interactions, we illuminate the social and economic practices that position social media as a modern arena for peacebuilding and reconciliation.

Contrary to the common view that social media reinforces divisive ideologies, this study underscores its capacity to create market spaces and communities that bridge ethnic divides through collaborative, left-wing activism. Through digital ethnography and narrative analysis, the book argues that social media has become a significant tool for peacebuilding, offering an alternative to the often top-down, elite-driven reconciliation efforts of the past. This panel aims to spark discussion on

the implications of social media as a space where nationalism is challenged and a shared digital culture encourages new forms of unity in the Balkans.

Colophon

The conference artwork depicts the US-Mexico border. It is set in Jeremy Tribby's Barlow, which takes its inspiration from signage used across California, including at the border.



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