

# Dynamics of Dis/Order in Border Complexities

*Carolin Leutloff-Grandits and Christian Wille*

## Abstract

This chapter introduces the dynamics of dis/order in border complexities as the overarching theme of this anthology. In the first step, the underlying understanding of borders and the relationship between borders and orders are explained and linked to the concept of border complexities. In the second step, the insights into the interrelationship between borders and orders are deepened in a complexity-oriented perspective that takes into account different dimensions of the border and its interconnections, the resulting ordering logics and dynamics, and the liminality of borders. In doing so, the different perspectives on border complexities and the logics of dis/order chosen in the contributions of this anthology and their respective results are briefly presented.

Keywords: Border, Order, Disorder, B/Order, Complexities

## 1. Introduction

This anthology addresses the complexity of borders and the relationship between borders and dis/order. It starts from the premise that borders, in their simplest understanding, can be seen as markers of difference that have a status function (Cooper/Perkins 2012). Similarly, Sarah Green (2012, 576–577; 2019, 2), argues that borders have an ordering function, as they can be seen as classification systems that define and categorize people, places, and things, and enable us to make distinctions. Referring to a quote from Gregory Bateson, Green (2019, 14) states that borders make “a difference that makes a difference” (Bateson 1972, 453). She highlights the social construction of borders and the need to create clarity and make sense of the social world, even if the reality is far from clear and borders are often contested or incoherent.

Apart from the universal characteristic of borders as markers of difference, borders can have multiple forms and functions as well as qualities. In a complexity-reduced version, a state-border—or more broadly, a geopolitical border—might appear as a line on the map separating one territory from another. Still, when crossing a state-border on the ground, it may be hardly recognized, as not all state-borders are fortified. Others are materialized as iconic walls and secured with barbed wire fences to emphasize their function of controlling mobility. The border is often set in analogy to the

skin securing the body politic of the state—understood as the totality of all members of a state polity (Schwell 2010). Because the materialization of borders is so conspicuous and has increased enormously worldwide, especially in recent years, it can distract us from recognizing other dimensions of borders, such as the social dimension, even though these are often particularly powerful. In fact, the social dimension of borders—including geopolitical ones—is very important because they are used for social demarcation, e.g., to distinguish between “us”—on one side of the border—and “them” on the other. Social demarcation is often linked to symbolic and legal demarcations that contribute to (complex) status positioning. Being socially constructed, these demarcations may change in time. In a broader sense, state borders often include spatial, social, and temporal dimensions that have social, temporal, and spatial effects (Schiffauer et al. 2018). What we perceive as a border can thus also be understood as a bundle of interconnected border dimensions and their constitutive elements that can vary greatly. This understanding of borders contributes to the recent and ongoing “complexity shift” (Wille 2021) in border studies, and it is the aim of this volume to take a closer look at border complexities, particularly the complex interrelations of border elements and the emerging social orders.

Inherent in this complexity-oriented approach is the premise that borders are not static but changeable and take on very different forms and functions. They need to be reproduced—not necessarily through the performative production of the material setup of borders in form of fences and walls, but through everyday bordering practices—be they cultural, social, symbolic, legal, or linguistic (Paasi 1999). Indeed, as Claudia Bruns (forthcoming) pointed out, one could argue that even the hardest (materialized) borders would not last without their social and symbolic representation. To emphasize this constructivist approach, which has prevailed in border studies since the 2000s, borders have been denominalized and put in an active verb as “bordering” (van Houtum/van Naerssen 2002; Rumford 2008), which encompasses processes of establishing, shifting, transgressing, or subverting borders. For the analysis of the emergence and (re)production of a border, it thus makes sense to focus on negotiation and transfer processes and to ask how these are codirected and experienced by different actors. At state-borders, e.g. in the field of border security, a heterogeneous actor constellation of state, private, and corporate actors plays a role, constituting the order of the state-border with the help of different security discourses and material as well as non-material practices and infrastructures (Gerst et al. 2018). In fact, since borders are produced by different actors and

institutions, it should be noted that they are partly ambiguous. Importantly, the location in which bordering processes take place may not fall together with the physical border line at the fringes of states or larger political entities like the European Union but may move to the inner or outer of the state or EU territory. Because today's bordering processes often take place both outside and inside the state's territory, they are difficult to locate and may be barely noticeable, yet these bordering processes are often very effective. The increasing urge to require a visa to be able to cross a state/the EU border, which people must apply for in embassies, lead to what van Houtum and van Uden (2022) have called "paper borders". Furthermore, borders have a polysemic nature, as they do not have the same qualities for everyone, as noted by Balibar (2002, 75–86). For example, visas are selectively issued to some people and not to others, allowing those who have visas to cross state borders legally and often quickly, while others are prevented from crossing and are forced to wait, sometimes indefinitely, or take dangerous, complicated, costly, and often long routes to cross the border unauthorized (Wille et al. 2023).

In this anthology and a subsequent second volume, border complexities are discussed from a variety of analytical perspectives, focusing on spatial, social, and temporal dimensions, the constitutive elements at work in b/ordering processes, and their entanglements. Both volumes are based on the trinational workshop series "Border Complexities" funded by the Franco-German University, in which five thematically linked interdisciplinary workshops took place from 2019 to 2022 organized by the University of Luxembourg (UniGR-Center for Border Studies), European University of Viadrina (Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION), École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Centre Georg Simmel), European University of Flensburg (Interdisciplinary Centre for European Studies), and the University of Lorraine (UniGR-Center for Border Studies). Within the workshop series, different analytical approaches that take up recent developments in border studies and conceptualize borders as complex and dynamic constellations that either structure social orders or emerge from them were chosen. As an overarching aim, the associated scholars wanted to investigate complex and multidimensional formations of borders from different disciplinary perspectives—involving geography, history, social anthropology, political science, literary studies, media studies, European studies, or linguistics, for example—to learn empirically about and conceptualize border complexities. With this interdisciplinary approach, the workshop series took into consideration the fact that border studies is not based

on an established canon of theories and concepts like classical academic disciplines but makes different schools of thought and theoretical traditions productive across disciplinary boundaries.

This first volume is based on the discussions in the kick-off workshop organized by the University of Luxembourg in Esch-sur-Alzette (5–6 December 2019), in which theoretical approaches and empirical examples of border complexities were presented, as well as the second workshop at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder) (18–19 March 2021), which further explored border complexities by focusing on the “Logics of Dis/Order of Border Complexities”. In the following workshops, the scholars took different dimensions of borders—such as the temporal, spatial, and material—into the center of their analysis, which will be further developed and presented in the second volume. The third workshop, organized by the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in the Villa Vigoni in Loveno di Menaggio (7–9 June 2021), examined the “Temporalities of Border Complexities”. The fourth workshop at the European University in Flensburg addressed the “Materialities of Border Complexities” (2–3 December 2021), and the fifth workshop at the University of Lorraine in Metz focused on “Spatialities and Networks of Border Complexities” (2–3 June 2022). In the first part of this volume, we outline various conceptual approaches to border complexities. This includes theoretical as well as methodological considerations, which are in part discussed or presented based on case studies. In the second part of this volume, we take a closer look at what we think is the universal functioning of borders: the creation and emergence of dis/order. This builds on the assumption that borders and social orders inevitably refer to each other, as borders—whether spatially and materially fixed or socially expressed (as such often referred to as social boundaries in distinction from spatial borders)—structure orientations in time and space as well as thinking and practices and thus assume decisive ordering functions. However, as we will show, the relationship between borders and social orders is far from clear cut. While borders form the foundation of social orders and stabilize them, borders and orders are neither fixed nor given but a result of social practice and meaning-making that is in constant change—“in the making”, “in motion”.

Moreover, borders and orders are dynamically interrelated; the relationship between both is also ambivalent. While the drawing of borders aims to establish and maintain social orders, borders can also challenge and shift existing social orders, create disorder, or form new orders. Newly established state or other geopolitical borders may, for example, cut across

historically grown communities, as can be observed with the division of Germany in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal State of Germany in 1949 (Berdahl 1999), or more generally with the establishment of the so-called Iron Curtain (Pelkmans 2012). In fact, borderland communities—as well as migrant communities—often do not fit into the categories established by state-borders but establish their own (local) order (Wilson/Donnan 1998; Green 2010; Brunet-Jailly 2011; Leutloff-Grandits 2023a), be it due to multilingualism (Dost et al. 2020), to cross-border family relations (Leutloff-Grandits 2023b), or to (partly asymmetric) political and economic relations across the border (Jańczak 2018)—which also impact their identities.

Borders and social orders are therefore also in a tense relationship with each other, in part because people deal with a multitude of border and order configurations which relate to each other. These configurations and their interrelations can be explored along three central analytical perspectives developed at the Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION: (1) It is necessary to analyze the complex actor constellations, practices, and discourses of border-drawing and the underlying logics and rule structures of order to understand how borders and orders are interwoven as processual and complex entities and how they are mutually produced. (2) The relationships between different orders and their borders should be addressed, since borders can intersect and different orders, such as the EU order and the nation-state order, can overlap. (3) The liminal spaces or grey zones that arise from contradictions and conflicts along different border and order dynamics shall be brought into the focus of the analysis, as they can—partly unintentionally—create disorder and insecurity as well as new orders and borders. These analytical perspectives will be further outlined below and are applied in various contributions to this volume. Furthermore, they were helpful during the workshop at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder), as they seem particularly productive for examining the relationship between borders and social orders.

## *2. Bordering and Border Complexities*

The complexity-oriented approach we are focusing on in this volume has been brought forward by critical migration and border scholars, who are focusing on the mobility regulation function of borders, as well as cultural border scholars, who look at the sociocultural construction of borders.

What is common among these scholars is the fact that they increasingly regard borders as outcomes and focal points of multi-layered formations that result from the (situational) interplay of different actors, activities, bodies, objects, and knowledge (Amilhat Szary/Giraut 2015; Brambilla 2015; Hess 2018; Gerst et al. 2018; Parker/Vaughan-Williams 2012; Kasperek/Hess 2010), and as such as an increasingly complex phenomenon. However, an explicit discussion of the notion of complexity and the methodological consequences of assuming and studying borders as complex phenomena has yet to occur in border studies. Based on this background, the authors of the present volume have taken up this task in an exploratory manner. The first four contributions in this volume (Wille, Cyrus, Gerst, and Connor) analytically examine previous approaches to borders and border complexities and discuss more recent methodological-analytical developments that have ensured that border processes have been conceptualized more precisely and have become accessible for (supposedly) more complex considerations.

Serving this end, various chapters contribute to fostering the understanding of border complexities by defining the concept of complexity in more detail, presenting methodological-analytical perspectives for complexity-oriented border research, and empirically examining case studies for the relationship between dis/orders and border complexities. Norbert Cyrus and Christian Wille, for example, demonstrate that different understandings circulate regarding border complexity and that in the scientific debate, an everyday understanding of complexity as equated with complicatedness, confusion, or indeterminacy is sometimes encountered. They furthermore show that complexity thinking, which can provide new impulses in border studies, developed in the 1980s because of increased computing power and chaos theory. It focuses on emergent phenomena that were previously elusive or barely tangible without paradigmatic computations and linear modeling. With the study of emergent properties of social collectives and global dynamics, complexity thinking eventually found its way into the social sciences and cultural studies. The complexity theories, which are differentiated into a widely ramified field, assume—pointedly formulated—that the whole is more than the sum of its parts and are interested in the causal processes for this. Thus, the emergent properties of complex systems are addressed, or less abstractly formulated: the “‘higher-level’ properties that do not occur in the isolated ‘basal’ elements that [...] compose [complex systems]” (Greve/Schnabel 2011, 7). Emergent properties—as an important feature of complexity—are thus unexplained by the

parts of a system but are either located in the unpredictable interplay of its parts or emerge from it (also Cyrus and Wille in this volume).

The performative moment, which is difficult to determine and is based on relationships and self-dynamic processes, is at the center of complexity thinking and is here associated with bordering processes. By introducing the term “textural border”, Christian Wille illustrates that in the study of border processes the numerous practices, dimensions, actors, and forms of borders are increasingly taken into account—and this increasingly via methodological views “inside” the border. From a complexity-oriented perspective, this trend can be understood as paving the way for a complexity shift in border studies, since the elements at work in bordering processes constitute the interrelated parts of a whole that can stand for the border. Some existing approaches partially follow this idea, such as the approach of border regime (Hess et al. 2018), borderscapes (Brambilla 2015), border-textures (Weier et al. 2018, 2020), or assemblage (Sohn 2016) (also Wille and Gerst in this volume). These approaches understand the border as a transterritorial and/or transscalar relational structure to make visible the parts of the whole that are related to each other and to subject them to analysis. The emergent and thus complex moment in bordering processes, however, is still minimally or not considered at all by these approaches. To grasp the complexity or the moment of emergence, they instead have to specifically ask what makes a border a border and how the elements involved in become performatively effective in their relationality, i.e., in their interplay. These questions are decidedly addressed by the concept of border complexities, tested in this and the following second volume, which opens a perspective on bordering processes that are sensitive to complexity and its emergent effects. More specifically, the concept focuses on the emergent effects of dis/order that become socially and spatially effective. In this context, borders are understood as textures, i.e., as complex structures consisting of interconnected elements, which in their plurality, however, do not yet produce effects of dis/order. Rather, border complexities are concerned with the interplay of the elements involved which is still often ‘overlooked’ in border studies and in which logics of dis/order and their effects are to be located as emergent properties. Border complexities, according to Christian Wille in this volume, thus stand for a concept that grasps borders as relational structures, focuses on the unpredictable, self-dynamic interplay of their event elements and on their emergent effects of dis/order resulting from this interplay.



Guiding this broader perspective on bordering processes in this volume is the performative relationality of the elements at work in border complexities, which is both methodologically-analytically and empirically elaborated on. Following the discussion on complexity thinking, Norbert Cyrus distinguishes between non-linear relationships, stabilizing attractors, and a dynamic equilibrium, which can characterize the interplay of elements constitutive of border complexities. He applies these features of complex interaction dynamics to the example of the German-Polish border and shows in an exemplary analysis that “[c]omplexity thinking offers guidance for an appraisal of the dynamic formation and maintenance of a particular state-border, its organizational design, assigned functions, and features such as permeability.” Dominik Gerst also deals with the “internal relationality of borders” in this volume and sees suitable starting points to uncover emergent effects of dis/order, especially in opposing or conflicting relational logics: “This sometimes manifests as articulations of dissent or experiences of opacity, uncertainty, and contradiction that can serve as a starting point for complexity-oriented reconstructions.” In his contribution, Dominik Gerst also discusses a complexity-sensitive research attitude, which he calls “seeing like a complex border” and develops methodological principles that imply border complexities. These include the tension between the separating and connecting character of borders, which from a complexity-oriented perspective should be understood as a dynamic continuum and be determined empirically against the background of a complex set of conditions. Furthermore, in complexity-oriented border research, the multidimensionality of borders is to be considered. However, it should be understood less as a fanning out of individual analytical dimensions than as a complex interweaving or interpenetration of different dimensions and requires a sensitivity for the multiple contexts and forms of borders. According to Dominik Gerst, the relationality of border complexities can be explored through a methodological decentering of the border, i.e., through an observer position in the border or, in Gerst’s words, through an “analyzing borders from the border” which helps to uncover relational logics and effects of dis/order. In this context, following the bordering turn, Dominik Gerst finally refers to the complexity-oriented requirement to always examine borders as social accomplishments to get a view of their contingency, changeability, controversiality, and emergence. Ulla Connor takes up this hint in this volume and develops a praxeological approach for the empirical description and analysis of border complexities under the keyword “situated bordering”. It is based on sociological theories of practice and



can detect and reconstruct complexity in the empirical accomplishments of borders: “Border complexities result from the assumption that borders can be described as specific and singular linkages of practice elements”. This approach, also called border praxeology, demands a researcher’s participation in bordering practices and explicitly poses the question of relationality logics and emergent effects of dis/order as one to be answered empirically.

### *3. B/Ordering Dynamics and Logics of Dis/Order*

#### *3.1 Borders, Orders and B/Order Constellations*

In various contributions to this volume, borders are understood primarily as a system of socio-symbolic demarcation that establishes and maintains social order. However, these contributions consider very different constellations of borders and orders in space and time. In the following, therefore, we outline how the interrelationship of borders, their constitutive elements, and (social) orders can be conceptualized.

Following Niklas Luhmann’s (1984) systems theory, Monika Eigmüller (2016) states that borders manifest the distinction between system and environment, between inside and outside. According to Sarah Green (2019), borders not only separate, but also establish relationships by creating differences between people, regions, and landscapes. However, Green (2019, 14) also notes that these differences are not always clear or unambiguous:

In practice, of course, the degree to which that effort at classification is successful varies considerably. The world is full of vague, contested, incomplete and incoherent borders. Yet that does not detract from the fact that what borders are supposed to do, what is intended by those who build them, is to create clarity – at the very least legally and politically, if not also socially and symbolically.

As borders are prone to change, so is the quality of “borderness” and thus the way in which borders classify. This also affects the relationships between borders and social orders. To develop a deeper understanding of the borders and orders in question, it is therefore crucial to look at the ideas and ordering processes behind the processes of border-making. As Henk van Houtum and Ton van Naerssen (2002) have pointed out, processes of ordering and demarcation are also linked to othering, as social identity is based on the construction of a constitutive outside, which

often has discriminatory tendencies. In general, when analyzing borders from an ordering perspective, the multidimensional processes of ordering, categorizing and demarcating become apparent, through which objects, persons or even time periods are differentiated and often hierarchized. These processes are linked to what we call border complexity, as they are based on a complex and performative interplay of practices, discourses, networks, and infrastructures. Instead of only asking about the ordering function of borders, it is therefore helpful to focus on the border and ask about the quality of borders themselves and to unfold the “order of the border” itself (Gerst et al. 2018).

In order to think of systems ‘from their borders’, Schiffauer et al. (2018, 7) refer to the system theory of Parsons (1951), who defines social systems as “boundary maintaining systems” that stabilize themselves by forming both a meaning within the social system and a border to other social systems (Schiffauer et al. 2018, 11). They also refer to Luhmann (1984), who poses the question of system stability and change regarding the contacts between two entities as well as their borders. According to Luhmann (1984), it is instructive to look at socio-symbolic border-drawing processes between the system and the environment. Luhmann (1984) assumes that these demarcations have a system-integrative character through certain, jointly shared codes and expectations, because they are structure-forming and at the same time selectively restrict contact with the environment (which is assumed to be very complex) through “reduction of complexity”. At the same time, however, there is also an “observation” of the environment (thought to be outside the system) by the system, to which the system in turn reacts by either reproducing or changing structures and thus also maintaining the system.

Even if the reference to Luhmann is not explicitly elaborated on in the contributions to this volume, many of them focus on the interrelation between borders and social orders highlighted by the sociologist and take a closer look at the ordering dynamics of borders by delineating social, symbolic, juridical, and spatial dimensions, as well as their interrelations. They do so from different disciplinary and empirical perspectives, thus offering a panorama of border and order relations in time and space that includes historical border cases as well as current constellations such as the EU external border and migration regime and the associated challenges for local communities as well as for migrants, but also for national and European societies, as well as increasing digitalization and the question of how state-borders take effect in digital spaces. The dynamic relationship

between borders and orders is also expressed in the term b/order, which is used in this introduction and in other contributions to this anthology. The same applies to the relationship between order and disorder, which is expressed by the term dis/order.

The historian Falk Bretschneider, whose contribution deals with the early modern Holy Roman Empire and the peculiarities of its diverse borders and the social orders, shows through the example of the punishment of expulsion that the juridical, social, and symbolic exclusion of the lawbreakers was more important than their physical expulsion, not least because the territorial border between the various principalities was hardly marked. It was more about having certain rights in a community that was part of the social order of the individual principalities of the modern Holy Roman Empire than about living within its territorial borders.

In their contribution, the political geographers and border scholars Henk van Houtum and Rodrigo Bueno Lacy focus on the EU migration regime and the various border practices associated with it. They show that the EU's border and migration regime relies heavily on the perception of irregular migrants as a threat to the European Union. The orderly functions of the EU border regime are manifested in multiple forms of physical, but also social and symbolic demarcations against potential migrants from non-EU countries, who are often discriminated against based on their nationality and prevented from migrating.

Daniel Lambach's contribution focuses on a relatively new field for border studies, cyberspace, and asks how state b/orders relate to cyberspace and how states attempt to exert control over cyberspace. Inspired by the notion of "boundary practices", Lambach develops the concept of territorial practices as a governance technique that consists in the reification and inscription of spaces, the drawing of borders, and the exercise of control. With the digital transformation reshaping societies and economies, states are also adapting. In relation to cyberspace, states seek to create cyber analogues of territories to protect themselves against potential threats and to underpin narratives of sovereignty. They have developed jurisdictional rules for cyber activities, designated virtual territories to be defended against cyber wars, and deploy symbols of statehood to communicate their authority claims. Cyberspace is thus not the "electronic frontier" that forms a border between the digital and physical lifeworlds, but rather an integral part of a hybridizing digital/physical lifeworld that is subject to state efforts at order and limitation.

In her contribution, literary scholar Cécile Chamayou-Kuhn examines the border-law nexus and its ordering effects and underlying logics based on the novel “The Wrong Indian” by Abbas Khider (2008). She conceptualizes the border-law nexus via the bordertextures approach as a border complexity and reconstructs order dynamics through three perspectives. She asks how borders, with their selective exclusion effects, produce the “figure of the refugee”. At the same time, Cécile Chamayou-Kuhn uses the protagonist in the novel—an Iraqi who has fled to Germany—to work out subversive negotiations and resistances as constitutive elements of the border-law texture. Finally, the literary scholar asks about the interventionist potential of the aesthetics of the border. In this context, she proposes the term “textu(r)ality,” which alludes, on the one hand, to the transgression of aesthetic norms and thus to unconventional techniques of textual use and analysis as interventionist practices. On the other hand, the term aims at the idea of border complexities that become accessible as textures which include aesthetic practices and artifacts.

More generally, the contributions in this volume examine a variety of borders, their constitutive elements at work, and the emerging orders. Conversely, they examine the orders behind or within certain borders, focusing on the spatial, social, and temporal dimensions. However, they also show the disorder potential of borders and the difficulties of clearly deciphering the order of a border—not least because of the complex interplay of spatial, social, and temporal dimensions.

### 3.2 The Interplay of Border-Drawing and Order Dynamics

In a globalized world, processes of border drawing, border crossing, b/order formation, and b/order dissolution take place simultaneously and therefore seem to be contradictory. While the call for state-borders is becoming louder to control the mobility of people and to limit access to social goods, these state-borders are less significant for flows of goods and capital or technologies and knowledge. Within the European Union, state-borders are hardly relevant for channeling human mobilities, and within EU states, EU citizens are treated equally in many respects despite different national citizenships. At the same time, the EU’s external borders are increasingly controlled to limit access for those who are classified as undesirable or illegal border crossers. This shows that it can matter whether a political-territorial border is coded in multiple order-differentiating ways, in that it

not only defines the territory of the nation-state, but also constitutes an EU external or internal border (Wille et al. 2023). In doing so, we assume that in addition to nation-state orders, transnational and non-state border and order configurations such as those of the European Union are relevant and that these b/orders—which partly coincide—have a special relationship to each other. As Sarah Green (2020) writes, it is not only spatial entities of states separated by conventional state-borders that derive their meaning and value from these border markers but also other borders created by powerful actors such as financial institutions, supranational organizations, and infrastructure systems. How these different b/order configurations relate to each other, however, is unclear and needs further investigation. As Sarah Green (2020, 3) points out, “sometimes, these diverse entities are perfectly aligned into single borders; much more often, they crosscut one another or are entangled in a variety of ways”. Contradictions and conflicts can arise when borders overlap—for example, when the territorial border of a state does not coincide with a language border, or when globalized economic relations and transnational social interdependencies oppose national rights and state orders.

In this volume, various contributions deal with the interplay of different border-drawing and order dynamics. The question is when, for whom, and under what conditions the borders of these orders become significant, and to what extent different b/orders are brought into a relationship with each other; they can, for example, overlap, strengthen, weaken each other or even dissolve. In doing so, we will take a closer look at the mixture of social, cultural, legal, and economic as well as knowledge-based border formations that stand for border complexity and examine how the different border dimensions interplay. By analytically unpacking the different b/order formations and examining the relationships of individual border and order configurations to each other, we can ask in what ways such relationships are stabilized and what paradoxes they contain. In this way, we can account for the complexity of border and order phenomena made significant by global configurations of technology, knowledge, politics, and economics, and avoid methodological nationalism. Moreover, we can also decipher the underlying border and order conflicts that may arise when different border and order configurations interrelate.

As an example, in his contribution to this volume, Guillaume Javourez shows that the border region between Greece and the Republic of Northern Macedonia (known as the Republic of Macedonia until 2019) is an ethnically mixed area that was historically part of the Ottoman Empire before it

was divided by two nation-states, becoming an external EU border region even more recently. Since the early 2000s, the region has been undergoing a gradual Europeanization of its operational regulations, enabling a certain degree of mobility across the border, not just for citizens of Greece to Northern Macedonia but also the other way around, although mobility options are unequal. Guillaume Javourez shows that alongside the order of the European Union, local and national orders also play a role here, which reemerge by being put into a dynamic interrelation.

In his contribution, Falk Bretschneider uses expulsion penalties in the early Holy Roman Empire to show that the Holy Roman Empire in the early modern period was characterized not only by the imperial order and its borders but also by the highly fragmented princely orders, which had their own administrative and jurisdictional borders. This led to a multiplicity or even ubiquity of borders in the early Holy Roman Empire, as well as to various overlapping orders: next to those of the Roman Empire itself and the numerous principalities within the Empire, family or religious networks often extended beyond the borders of the princely order, so that the various (imperial, princely, family religious) orders partly overlapped and formed a conglomerate of b/order spaces that merged into one another. This also had an impact on the form of punishment. Those who were expelled from a principality in the Holy Roman Empire partly found refuge in a place only a few kilometers away on the other side of the border, where the accused had relatives or other acquaintances. This was because the principalities, which were the main juridical and administrative units, were often small and thus their territorial borders were often near the place of residence of the accused. This spatial proximity to the border and the border crossing social and family networks mitigated the severity of the punishment. The expellees thus benefitted from the situation of transteritorial interconnectedness in everyday life—especially at the level of family ties—as well as from religious orders, which enabled them to counter the exclusion they had suffered with strategies of partial social reintegration. At the same time, this interconnectedness also generated cooperation on another level. Due to the ubiquity of the border and the small-scale nature of the political space, neighboring authorities had to cooperate in carrying out the punishment. As Bretschneider writes:

That is, the territorial borders did not act as total borders that combined all forms of political, social, economic, or confessional demarcation (Lehnert 2017). Rather, they were only one type of demarcation

alongside others, indicating first and foremost the distribution of certain rights of domination that could well be at cross-purposes with the spatial organization of other dimensions of life such as language and dialect boundaries, economic linkages, confessional affiliations, kinship relations, or forms of sociability such as festive culture. These different forms of borders and boundaries intersected and overlapped in the most diverse ways.

In their contribution, Henk van Houtum and Rodrigo Bueno Lacy look at b/order conflicts and the logic of dis/order from a critical perspective on the EU migration regime. They show that besides the construction of fences and walls as barriers to mobility, which receive spectacular attention in the media, the much more effective borders are drawn by visa policies—so-called paper borders—which discriminate against many people “by birth” based on their nationality even before they approach the territorial borderline. To understand the interconnectedness of nation-state and EU border regimes, it is therefore important to look at processes of social and symbolic exclusion beyond one’s own national borders and even outside the EU territory, which are still closely intertwined with them. Furthermore, they show that the discriminatory exclusion and the inhumane treatment of migrants at the EU external borders, which is based on the increasingly dominant narrative that these humans pose as a threat to the European Union, again have an impact on the EU order, as it is not only contradictory to the human rights order for which the European Union claims to stand for, but it also fosters anti-liberal sentiments which are harmful to the European Union and the democratic constitution of the individual nation-states.

In general, the contributions to this volume show that in considering border complexities we must not only consider the various dimensions of b/order—be it spatial, temporal, and social (and here juridical, administrative, symbolic, and more)—but that we must think of borders and orders in their multiplicity—be they the b/orders of the European Union, of nation-states, counties, or principalities. We must look for the interconnections, intersections, and interrelationships of these b/order configurations, as well as their polysemic nature, meaning that the b/order configurations appear differently from different positions and have different meanings to different people (Rumford 2014, 14).



### 3.3 The Liminality of Borders and the Re-creation of Orders

While borders are usually first understood as dividing and demarcating lines between different orders—e.g. between two nation-states—their function as bridges that enable and sometimes even promote contact and exchange between different orders is less noticeable. In fact, even the hardest border, such as the so-called Iron Curtain, was never a complete barrier, as shown by the existence of tunnels under the Berlin Wall, as well as the many economic exchanges and diplomatic contacts between the German Democratic Republic and Western countries (Nanz 2018). Borders are thus always Janus-faced, opening and closing, separating and connecting at the same time, and as such are highly ambivalent and hybrid entities. As soon as we think of border(s) as multiscalar and multidimensional—be it social (understood in its broader definition and including economic, legal, political, cultural, and linguistic dimensions), spatial or also temporal—the different border dimensions in their connecting and separating characteristics may form a relational network from which border spaces can unintentionally emerge. These spaces are characterized by ambivalence: On the one hand, they can mean insecurity, disenfranchisement, and precarity. On the other hand, they are productive spaces of possibilities from which new orders—also called “hybrid orders” (Kraushaar/Lambach 2009)—can emerge. These processes of reordering, of reconfiguring orders, can be analyzed from a b/order perspective. In fact, by taking a closer look at these border drawing processes and the contact zones between—to use Luhman’s terminology—the system and the environment, or—to remain in the terminology used in this volume, between different b/orders—the unstable, transformative character of b/orders comes into focus. These deviations “from the norm” create space for innovative behavior and enable ongoing adaptation to a complex and changing environment, as well as the reproduction and transformation of the system (or the order). Thus, when social systems/orders are viewed “from the border”, a variety of border drawing processes come into view, which not only have a separating but also a connecting character and, on closer examination, represent a space of their own. In this way, the dynamic nature of border-drawing processes, as well as the dynamics of social orders themselves, can be emphasized. Since new orders that emerge as liminal border zones can also become relevant for the so-called centers, looking at these zones makes it possible to anticipate developments of general significance. Moreover, the borderlands of nation-states are often marginalized and peripheralized by the policies

of nation-states, and the local orders of borderlands often remain invisible to the center (Donnan/Wilson 1999). Highlighting their existence and their internal dynamics of being peripheralized can be a valuable endeavor for people living on the border (Marchbank 2015).

In her contribution, cultural studies scholar Astrid M. Fellner turns to such borderlands and the people who live there. From a complexity-oriented perspective, she analyzes the *Whoop-Up Country* in the Canadian-American West, which extends across borders but was cut through by set national borders in the 19th century. The borderland, which has been all but forgotten, is still effective in cultural imaginaries today and was significant in the development of North American nations. Using the interpretative method of bordertexturing, which focuses on interrelations and grasps the border as an (im)material complex structure, Astrid M. Fellner works out hidden histories, geographies, and knowledge of the *Whoop-Up Country* as documented in the texts of Paul F. Sharp, Wallace Stegner and Thomas King. In this way, the cultural studies scholar is able to uncover the contested nature of the Canadian-American bordering process, the relevant dimensions, emerging orders, and multiple interrelations, as well as the role of Indigenous people and writers, and draw conclusions about dynamics of nation-building, imperialism, and colonialism.

The fixed divisions drawn by state-borders are far from being clear when looking at them from a complexity-oriented perspective beyond Northern America as well. In Eastern Europe, borders have changed dramatically throughout history and in recent decades as seen in the context of the European Union. Yet clearly defined state-borders on maps rarely correspond to the fluid nature of borders as people experience them in everyday life (Wille/Nienaber 2020). Past b/orders, appearing as kind of phantom borders (von Hirschhausen et al. 2019) or tidemarks (Green 2015) that are officially no longer valid and have been replaced can persist in people's memories and are used as frames of reference that can still be relevant and serve as knowledge b/orders. People relate them to their current situation and create visions of spatiotemporal positioning and hierarchization (Jansen 2009, 2014; Green 2015). After the fall of the Iron Curtain, the primarily temporally conceived demarcations of "pre-socialist vs. socialist vs. post-socialist" became culturally charged again. This temporal layering must therefore also be considered when considering the interplay of different orders and borders and their governance of im/mobility.

Using the example of the border area between the Republic of Northern Macedonia and Greece, which had been divided by a relatively hard bor-

der during socialism, Guillaume Javourez's contribution shows the development of the new local order, which goes hand in hand with the increasingly permeable border due to the ongoing EU accession process and development of cross-border mobility practices. In the shadow of the two national orders as well as the EU order, Guillaume Javourez highlights that this new local order, which is emerging from border crossing and contact, relates to a timely layered knowledge order dating back to Ottoman times, when the region known as Macedonia was still united prior to its division with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1913. In this local order, relicts of the social order in Ottoman times, such as the use of a common Slavic language, mutual (and now cross-border) family ties, and some common cultural patterns, are mobilized on both sides of the border, which is double layered as nation-state and EU border. As such, previous orders matter (again) and are impacting the current social order, shifting spatiotemporal positioning. The contribution explicitly addresses the relationship between bordering processes and the emergence of a new, ambiguous local order which relates to two national orders, which are hierarchized in relation to the European Union (Greece, an EU member state, and Northern Macedonia, not yet a member state).

These foregrounded productive properties of the relationship between border and order are also found in the concept of the "grey zone", which describes a space of ambiguity, also called "in-between space" or "border space". According to Martin Demant Frederiksen and Ida Harboe Knudsen (2015), a grey zone can include regions along state-borders, especially when people move irregularly "across the border" or when this border has been only recently established. A grey zone may also include concentration camps or refugee shelters where people live without legal status and are sometimes reduced to their "bare existence" (Agamben 1998). Furthermore, the concept of the grey zone can also be used to better grasp regional developments in Eastern Europe and worldwide, to move away from misleading dichotomies, such as in this case the spatially conceived and at the same time culturally charged demarcations of "West vs. East" or "North" vs. "South" (Frederiksen/Knudsen 2015).

According to Sarah Green's (2015) definition, a grey zone is created by the coexistence of overlapping, parallel, or contradictory border regimes based on different epistemological and ideological ordering logics. This means that two different border regimes can operate simultaneously in the same geographical space, mixing and reinforcing each other, or sliding past each other as if they were two orders that barely touch. In the latter

case, they can create different places in the same place. For example, a grey zone may consist of an overlap between a state-border regime that effects reterritorialization along national parameters and an EU border regime that partially dissolves this territorialization within the European Union and allows internal mobility, while extending border control in relation to irregular migrants to the EU's neighboring countries—often in exchange for visa liberalization and mobility options. Thus, the border becomes a zone that extends beyond the borders of a political territory (Dünnwald 2015).

Although the term “grey zone” is hardly used in the contributions to this anthology, several articles take up a similar analytical approach by exploring the ambiguity, permeability, and non-binarity that is created when different border dimensions interplay. We want to know to what extent different border dimensions influence the self-location and local order of the inhabitants, and to what extent grey zones are shaped by the interplay of different border regimes as well as (the regulation of) cross-border mobility(s) and immobility(s).

As Henk van Houtum and Bueno Lacy show in their contribution, the discriminatory EU border regime leads to irregular border crossings as well as the outsourcing of border control functions to neighboring countries. Moreover, b/order mechanisms also exist after border crossing: the camp where many migrants are placed once they reach the European Union can be seen as an order of its own, as it separates migrants from the societal order by dislocating them within it. However, this dislocated space in which migrants reside is produced by and linked to the EU order and has an impact on societies within EU nation-states. However, these mechanisms do not necessarily lead to more order and control. By seeing migrants from third countries as a potential threat to the European Union and acting against them, feelings of insecurity and populism within EU nation-states—and thus anti-EU sentiments—are reinforced. These political attitudes and sentiments threaten the democratic and liberal foundations of the European Union and create disorder, which Henk van Houtum and Rodrigo Bueno Lacy also call an autoimmune disease of the European Union.

The contribution of Islam Rachi deals with the expansion of the practice of “expedited removal” of so-perceived irregular migrants within the United States of America under the Trump administration, which was originally bound to a tight zone at the border line and has then been widened into the interior of the US state, now even covering more or less the whole US territory. As shown by Islam Rachi, this territorial expansion of “expedited

removal” has been presented as an attempt to build more order and security within the United States, which goes hand in hand with the militarization of internal security and border controls. Next to the spatial dimensions of this b/order regime of “expedited removal”, Islam Rachi also shows the powerful temporal aspects of these b/orders; under conditions of detention and within the short time frame given to them, migrants have difficulties in proving their legitimate residence within the USA, which in turn has profound effects on the lives of individuals, as they are then expelled from the territory of the United States.

Reflecting on this procedure, Islam Rachi points out that so-called irregular migrants are subjected to an administrative order that is in conflict with the US human rights’ order, as it leads to a deprivation of freedom and individual rights for migrants. In fact, in relation to (or distinction from) the legal order of the state, the administrative order seems even of higher hierarchy—not least because the administration forces certain time constraints onto the migrant. Migrants are thus placed in an extra-territorial space within the US, which is still regarded as the liminal time-space of a border zone, in which the social order might take special contextualized forms. However, the treatment of so-called irregular migrants relates back to the social order of the US, which, as one border guard said, turns the US into a “land of wolves”—a metaphor for a land in which humans are hunted with disrespect to human rights. With this case study, Islam Rachi also contributes to the study of the post-Westphalian borders, and generally the changing character of borders and social orders in the post-Westphalian era. He shows that after 9/11, border controls, and with them the liminal state of being almost without rights and in “the hands” of the border guards to whom one must be able to prove one’s legitimacy without having the means to do so, are not spatially limited to a territory geographically close to the US borderline but are extend into the inner of the US state, thus turning the entire US into a border space. The people affected by these border controls are subject to a different order, which runs parallel to the order which legal residents of the US are subject to and which is an order of liminality per se, placing its subjects in a situation of vulnerability and lawlessness.

More generally, in this volume, we advocate for an analysis in border studies that is complexity-oriented and puts the relationship and dynamics of borders and orders in the center. To this end, we argue for a perspective addressing the various border dimensions and elements in play that allows to go beyond the binaries associated with borders and based on hierarchies

created by centers of power. This includes moving between different scales or layers of analysis (European, national, regional, local, individual, interpersonal)—also known as a “scalar gaze” (Green 2005; Brković 2020)—and tracking practices, objects, bodies, knowledge, discourses across scales, and layers in a complex-oriented perspective. This approach helps to illuminate the existence and dynamics of different, often overlapping b/order regimes, as well as their polysemic qualities based on the multiple relational positionings within the grid of overlapping b/orders.

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### Author information

Carolin Leutloff-Grandits (Dr. habil.), Senior Researcher at the Viadrina Center B/ORDERS IN MOTION at the European University Viadrina in Frankfurt (Oder); working areas: borders, migration, social security, family, gender and generation, as well as temporality and transformation, often in an intertwined perspective.

Christian Wille (Dr.), Senior Researcher in Cultural Border Studies, Head of the Interdisciplinary Center of Expertise “UniGR-Center for Border Studies” and Deputy Study Director of the tri-national Master in Border Studies at the University of Luxembourg; working areas: bordered everyday cultures; spatial, identity, practice and border theories, [www.wille.lu](http://www.wille.lu).