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The Vernacularization of Borders

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Introduction

A major shift in border studies in recent years has been away from an exclusive and primary concern with conventional nation-state borders (the external edges of a polity) to a concern with borders being dispersed throughout society and found "wherever the movement of information, people and things is happening and is controlled" (Balibar 2004: 1). This move towards the study of 'diffused' borders has been partially offset by the post-9/11 preoccupation with securitization and surveillance. Rosière and Jones (2012) have noted the 'hardening' of diffused borders through the construction of walls or fences, a process they term 'teichopolitics'. The resultant and somewhat contradictory dynamics of contemporary border studies are summed up by Lyon (2013: 6) in the following terms, "Even national borders, which once had geographical locations—however arbitrary—now appear in airports distant from the 'edge' of the territory and, more significantly, in databases that may not even be 'in' the country in question." The 'biometric border' (Amoore 2006) is emblematic of these major shifts, as is the idea of 'remote control' (obliging airlines to conduct their own security checks on passengers and their travel documents) (Guiraudon and Lahav 2000). The study of borders which no longer only take the form of securitized perimeters, and which are sometimes enacted by commercial agents, and can possibly be controlled from a distant center suggests a radically transformed landscape of borders and bordering. However, certain key aspects of borders (and the way we study them) remain largely untouched by much current thinking, including a continued preoccupation with the borders of the state. Similarly, the role of citizens in bordering activity remains largely the same in the border studies imagination despite the ability of 'remote control' to recruit a range of actors to carry out work on behalf of the state.

There is evidence of dissatisfaction with the state/security/mobility agenda which continues to dominate the field of border studies. The need to identify new meanings of the border not tied to the state (Bauder 2011) has emerged as a key theme in the critical literature, as has its corollary, the inadequacy of conceptualizations of the border (Rovisco 2010). In this

chapter we seek to advance this emerging agenda by shifting the focus in a particular direction, one that acknowledges both the role of ordinary people in making, shifting, and removing borders—the idea of 'borderwork' (Rumford 2007, 2008, 2012, forthcoming) and the variety of roles that borders can fulfill in addition to being markers of (state) division. A border studies which embraces the vernacularization of borders allows for a shift of emphasis from state bordering, securitization, and the regulation of mobilities to a concern both with the role of borders in 'the politics of everyday fear' (Massumi 1993) and bordering as a political resource for citizens who are able to both contest nation-state bordering practices and institute their own versions of borders. Borders can be political resources in the sense that they can be drawn upon by a range of actors who seek to either selectively regulate mobility, use the border as a staging post which connects to the wider world, or simply use the border as a way of navigating the multiplicity of spaces which characterize a world in perpetual motion.

Arguably the single most important conceptual development laying the ground for the emergence of a vernacularized study of borders is Balibar's insight that borders are increasingly diffused. To sit alongside this we propose a second key innovation: the idea of borders as 'engines of connectivity'. Borders not only divide; they also connect, both to the other side of the border and also, on occasions, far beyond (see Cooper, forthcoming). To better understand how borders can be utilized for connectivity, at various sites, by various actors in their everyday practices we need to engage with the idea of 'scale' in relation to borders, drawing upon van Schendel's (2005) insight that borders make it possible for those at the border to 'jump scales', thereby making possible global connectivity. We develop this idea at length later in the chapter. Before turning our attention to scales and connectivity we must look at one other key factor in the emergence of a vernacularized border studies, without which the conceptual advances represented by 'diffused' borders and 'scale jumping' would have not found much purchase. This is the recognition that borders have changed in significant ways in a 'world in motion' and that what is needed is a conceptual toolbox for apprehending this changed landscape of borders and bordering. A good indicator that borders are changing is to be found in the range of approaches that now exist in contemporary borders cartography. Representing borderlands, diffuse borders and networked borders, for example, in conventional cartographic terms is problematic (Walters 2009, Gschrey 2011, Kopper 2012). Nevertheless, some very interesting work on alternative border mapping has emerged (Multiplicity 2005, Casas-Cortes and

Cobarrubias 2010, Kramsch 2011). For example, Multiplicity's (2005) mapping of border flows and categorization of the border (as funnels, pipes, folds, sponges, enclosures, and 'phantom limbs') creates a visually arresting depiction of human traffic in border zones. It is an attempt to represent the changing nature of borders through non-conventional mapping techniques.

The changing nature of borders

It is important to outline the key changes in the nature of borders that have emerged in the contemporary literature and the debates contained therein. The first change is the idea already mentioned above that 'borders are everywhere'. Importantly, this is more than the recognition that multiple sites of bordering now exist; at airports, Eurostar terminals, and maritime ports. It suggests that borders exist at other locations, many of which would not be thought of as borders in the conventional sense: in travel agencies and other offices where travel documents are issued and databases checked, along motorways where trucks are scanned and car number plates monitored (Walters 2006), and on the internet where credit card shopping makes possible the 'transaction mining' of information for security purposes (Amoore and de Goede 2008). The border can even be said to exist at private airfields and on farms where the security of small aircraft and supplies of fertilizer is an anti-terrorist priority. In respect of the latter, in the UK the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) has urged farmers to secure inorganic nitrogenous fertilizers against the possibility of appropriation by terrorists.[1]

The second change is the recognition that borders mean different things to different people and act differently on different groups; borders are designed to separate and filter. Taking up this theme in a recently published reference volume Wastl-Walter (2012) writes that borders:

> are manifested in diverse ways, and have various functions and roles. They can be material or non-material and may appear in the form of a barbed-wire fence, a brick wall, a door, a heavily armed border guard or as symbolic boundaries … while a brick wall may represent security for some, for others, it may be a symbol of suppression.

It could be argued that Wastl-Walter does not go far enough in this statement. There are many kinds of borders that exist between brick walls and "symbolic boundaries", such as e-

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[1] www.secureyourfertiliser.gov.uk

borders and the 'juxtaposed' borders found along the Eurostar route, not to mention the non-state borders that we argue are increasingly important. Nevertheless, what is particularly interesting about Wastl-Walter's formulation is the recognition that borders can mean different things to different people; security or suppression, walls or bridges, barriers or turnstiles. This change is also captured by Balibar's (2002) idea of polysemy which suggests that borders are becoming 'asymmetrical membranes' (Hedetoft 2003) or acting like 'firewalls' (Walters 2006). All of these metaphors point to borders being designed so as to allow the passage of 'desirables' while keeping out 'undesirables'. The UK has developed polysemic borders in its attempt to create "security in a global hub" (Cabinet Office 2007) through e–borders designed to be "open to business but closed to terrorists and traffickers". The border is polysemic precisely because it works very differently on those who have 'trusted traveller' status compared to those on whom suspicion falls upon (or before) entry, e.g. those travelling on a student visa, or those without adequate documentation.

The third change is further recognition that the location of borders is changing, away from the edges of a nation-state. It was a key element in a recent 'state of the debate' report published by the European Commission: "the study of borders has moved away from an almost exclusive concern with the borders between States in the international system, to the study of borders at diverse socio-spatial and geographical scales, ranging from the local and the municipal, to the global, regional and supra-State …" (Kolossov 2012: p. 3). In fact, borders can now be remote and distant from the territory they are designed to protect. The UK is now developing "offshore borders all over the world"[2] in order to prevent undesirables from starting their journey to the UK. The Eurostar train link has introduced 'juxtaposed' borders so that UK passport control takes place at Gard du Nord and French passport control at St Pancras. Paraphrasing Lahav and Guiraudon's (2000) we can say that "borders are not always at the border". The fourth change follows logically from the first three: borders are increasingly mechanisms to "control mobility rather than territory" (Dürrschmidt and Taylor 2007: 56). The traditional idea that borders lock down territory or form a security perimeter for the sovereign

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[2] Home Office Minister, Liam Byrne, quoted in Home Office News Release (106/2007) issued by The Government News Network on 18 June 2007

nation–state is supplemented with the idea of the border as a manageable conduit, speeding up transit where necessary, blocking passage when required.

Dimensions of vernacular borders

Having established the context for the emergence of, and need for, a vernacularized border studies let us now turn our attention to the research agenda to which it gives rise. After outlining the three key dimensions of a vernacularized border studies the focus in subsequent sections will be on one of them; 'bordering as connectivity', the aim being to better establish the potential of this particular perspective. The first dimension stems from the idea that bordering is no longer only the business of the nation–state, which should not be taken to imply that only bottom-up bordering is of interest. In Europe, the EU has emerged as a major actor in the business of creating, relocating, and dismissing borders. The EU shifts the borders of Europe every time it enlarges, it turns national borders into European borders, it regulates and harmonizes European borders through Frontex, its borders agency, and it has the power to decide where the important borders in Europe are to be found (Rumford 2006). Elsewhere, one of us has argued that this is evidence that Europe possesses 'cosmopolitan borders' (Rumford 2007). It could be argued that EU bordering is state bordering by a different name, and, as such, the EU's ability to re-border Europe does not advance the vernacularization thesis. But as Papadopoulos et al (2008) point out Europe's borders are constructed wherever they are needed by the EU, not according to nation-state preferences. In any case, the key element here is that bordering activity in Europe is increasingly conducted both above the level of the state and below it. From the vernacularization perspective it is more important to consider the activity of ordinary people in contributing to processes of bordering, introduced here under the rubric of 'borderwork'. Good examples of this phenomenon can be found in the UK: at Berwick-upon-Tweed, on the English/Scottish border, where residents have sought to redraw the Scottish border to include their town, and in a number of English towns (e.g. Totnes, Brixton, Lewes, Bristol) where business people have championed the creation of a local currencies so as to stop money leaching away from the local economy (as part of the wider Transition Towns initiative). The introduction of this local currency effectively draws a new boundary around the town designed to (symbolically) regulate capital flows and build confidence in the local economy. This dimension

of citizen bordering is largely absent from the regular border studies literature in which it is understood that people can utilize borders for their own advantage, as smugglers, tourists, and market traders frequently do, and that people are active in marking the state border through shows of nationalist fervor or grass–roots protest, for example. However, what is rarely considered is that citizens (and indeed non–citizens) may be active in constructing or dismantling borders as a form of political opportunism or self-empowerment. This borderwork may or may not take place at the edge of a polity, but is in fact more likely to take the form of bordering dispersed throughout society, as Balibar has theorized.

The second dimension is the importance of including a perspective from the border. This builds upon existing work on the border as a potential site of cosmopolitan activity. For example, Walter Mignolo has argued that 'border thinking' is a core component of critical cosmopolitanism. For Mignolo, critical cosmopolitanism comes from the "exterior of modernity", in other words coloniality (Mignolo 2000: 724). Border thinking—"the transformation of the hegemonic imaginary" from the perspective of the excluded—is a tool of critical cosmopolitanism (Mignolo 2000: 736–37). We can usefully extend this and propose that 'seeing from the border' is a key dimension of the vernacularization of borders. 'Seeing from the border' cannot be reduced to the idea that it is possible to view a border from both sides (Rumford 2011). More than 'looking both ways' across a border we need to aspire to look from the border. As borders can be found "wherever selective controls are to be found," (Balibar 2002: 84-85) seeing like a border does not equate to 'being on the outside and looking in' (or looking out from the watchtower to the wilderness beyond). As we have seen, borders are not necessarily always working in the service of the state. When seeing like a state one is committed to seeing borders as lines of securitized defense (Scott 1998). Borders do not always conform to this model. In a desire to shore up what may be perceived as the ineffectual borders of the nation-state, borderworkers may engage in local bordering activity designed to enhance status or regulate mobility: gated communities, respect zones, resilient communities of CCTV watching citizens. These borders are not necessarily designed to enhance national security.

The third dimension is borders as connective tissue, an idea as we have already seen which builds upon van Schendel's (2005) notion that borderlanders are able to 'jump' scales (local, national, regional, global) through their everyday practices and therefore do not experience the national border only as a limit: what forms a barrier to some can present itself as a

gateway to others. People can 'invoke' the scale of the border themselves; as a 'local' phenomenon, a nation–state 'edge', or as a transnational staging post, thereby allowing them to experience the border as a conduit. This insight means that we can take issue with the more mainstream idea, expressed for example by Häkli and Kaplan (2002: 7), that "cross-border interactions are more likely to occur when the 'other side' is easily accessible, in contrast to when people live farther away from the border". People can not only possess an interest in distant borders but have realistic expectations of having a 'presence' there. Consider, for example, the locals in an Australian bar who spend time online monitoring the US-Mexico border via live web cam links. In fact the US-Mexico border can now be policed by anyone with an Internet connection . "Once logged in the volunteers spend hours studying the landscape and are encouraged to email authorities when they see anyone on foot, in vehicles or aboard boats heading towards US territory from Mexico" (Luscombe, 2009). In this way, borders can work to provide transnational or global connectivity by allowing people to project themselves beyond their locality by constructing new networking opportunities.

Borders as engines of non-proximate connectivity

We will now continue to look at connectivity as a key dimension of border vernacularization in much more detail. More specifically, in this section we have a particular interest in how border/ing can be utilized (or have the potential) to connect well beyond localities within which the border may be situated. As well as being a novel aspect of border vernacularization that merits detailed discussion in its own right, looking at borders through a lens of non-proximate connectivity is useful in the way it overlaps with the other two aspects detailed above. First, such connectivity does not simply involve traditional state borders; on the contrary, non-state borders, such as PGI (Protective Geographic Indication) designation, UNESCO World Heritage designation, or monument sites (see Cooper and Rumford 2013) can be used for connective ends just as much as state borders. Secondly, this bordering connectivity can take place well away from state edges and peripheries, providing a novel way in which important and tangible borders are dispersed throughout society. A final advantage of such a focus is that non-state actors produce and maintain this connectivity vis-à-vis borders. As discussed in the introduction, this offers a particular aspect of borderwork in the sense that

ordinary people can use the connectivity potential afforded by particular borders as political resources.

Certain aspects of borders have often been discussed in terms of connectivity. Conceptually, they connect an inside to some outside (van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer 2005), they can form 'in-between' spaces of contact and negotiation (Martinez 1994, Boer 2006, Konrad and Nicol 2008) and, particularly in the context of securitization, have been described as 'membranes' (Hedetoft 2003) that simultaneously channel (connect) some while blocking others. Conceptual geopolitical imagery and securitization aside, such connectivity relies on, or is the product of, proximate crossing and contact, often further framed in terms of the experiences of border crossers and borderland dwellers (see, for example, Strüver 2004). In this sense the border, as Konrad and Nicol (1998: 32) put it, becomes a "zone of interaction where people on one side of the border share values, beliefs feelings and expectations with people on the other side of the border". Although it is worth mentioning here that Martinez (1994: 2-4) would qualify this level of "openness" as an example of an "interdependent borderland", in which favorable international relations between two or more states conditions cross-border interdependence, rather than the less favorable 'alienated' or 'co-existent' borderlands within which cross-border interaction is severely limited if at all present. Yet as far as this chapter is concerned, outlining as it does a case for vernacular perspectives on borders, the connectivity briefly outlined thus far—the crossing, interactions and encounters—tend to rely on what is immediately on either side of the border. Likewise there is a sense that the state (border) dominates and thus frames the type of connections taking place because these connections tend to be situated within the close proximity of a recognizable state border.

Looking at the relationship between borders and scale provides a good foundation upon which we can begin to understand non-proximate connectivity. It has, of course, been observed that borders are "multi-scalar", operating and transforming at different geographical levels and should be studied accordingly (Newman and Paasi 1998: 200). That said common discussions concerning scale and borders more often than not refer to, or at the very least privilege, the state as the dominant frame in which to study borders (Kramsch 2010). When discussing scale, for example, Newman and Paasi (1998: 197) posit that while borders should be examined at all levels of scale it is the local sphere of everyday life "where the meanings of (state) boundaries are ultimately reproduced and contested".

Scale is also implicit in van Schendel's work on the Bangladeshi borderlands in which he acknowledges the importance of local everyday life but also departs from it, at least in the way Newman and Paasi describe it. Placing his work in context, van Schendel is keen to move away from previous/still dominant geopolitical imaginaries that posit a neat and easy correlation between state, territory, society, and nationhood. To this end, observing the spatiality of the border as a case in point, van Schendel (2005: 44) argues that "borders not only join what is different but also divide what is similar". Like Newman and Paasi, van Schendel (2005: 44) looks at the ways in which border meanings are contested and reproduced within the local sphere, but deviates from conventional interpretations in the sense that international borders are "crucial localities" for observing "how global restructuring affects territoriality". Unlike Newman and Paasi, therefore, borders must be "understood as dynamic sites of transnational reconfiguration" (ibid), with the driving force being the ability for borderlanders to also 'jump scales', that is, to scale beyond the state rather than simply constructing, re-affirming, and contesting it from a local perspective. For van Schendel's borderlanders, the state border is not an intermediary level between the local and the global, but rather represents both the local and the global giving borderlands the ability to be involved in transnational processes in their everyday lives. van Schendel (2005: 49) sums this up thus:

> For borderlanders, the state scale is not overarching and does not encompass the more 'local' scales of community, family, the household or the body. On the contrary, to them it is the state that, in many ways, represents the local and the confining, seeking to restrict the spatiality of borderlanders' everyday relations. Scales that most heartlanders experience as neatly nested within the state scale – face-to-face relations of production, marketing networks, or community identities – are experienced very differently by borderlanders. In their case, these scales are often less 'local' than the state; they breech the confines of that scale, spill over its limits, escape its mediating pretensions, and therefore set the scene for a specific borderland politics of scale.

It is useful to point out here that, for van Schendel, scale politics involves the inability of the state scale to prevent clandestine (unauthorized) cross border activity. The state scale, in other words, is unable to achieve complete hegemony because it is constantly being challenged

by the restructuring/rescaling capabilities of borderlanders—what van Schendel (2005: 55) has summed up as "everyday transnationality". A crucial component of this everyday transnationality is the ability to construct internal cognitive maps, whereby borderlanders can envisage and situate themselves across multiple scales of which the state is only one. Borders for van Schendel, therefore, are defined as being more than barriers or limits however much they are institutionalized by nation states. State borders represent only one important scale amongst others and, in this regard, the state border does not operate as an all-defining framework, which encompasses 'lower' scales such as the 'local' or the 'community' and so on. Acting as a staging post, the (state) border can be utilized to project and connect identities and social relations outside of and beyond the immediate border.

Importantly for us, van Schendel's work begins to move away from a hierarchical model of scale, which is key to discussing non-proximate connectivity in relation to borders. In this regard, Leitner (2004) argues that conventional approaches to observing scale—defined as level and size—fail to take into account the relations amongst different scales, as well as the ways in which processes supposedly operating at different scale levels influence each other. Leitner (ibid.) argues that scale politics is about "relations of power and authority by actors and institutions operating and situating themselves at different spatial scales". There is a tendency for the reproduction of hierarchical imaginaries of scale—small, large, and so on—to override more horizontal forms of social relations. Yet for Leitner (2004: 252), the different spatiality of networks ruptures "the familiar scaled political map", and in doing so they "connect to places horizontally across the bounded spaces of political territorial entities, which themselves are part of scalar state structures". This is similar to what Brenner (2004: 605) has observed as tangled scalar hierarchies:

> The meaning, function, history and dynamics of any one geographical scale can only be grasped relationally, in terms of upwards, downwards and sidewards links to other geographical scales situated within tangled scalar hierarchies and dispersed interscalar networks.

Importantly, we argue that borders have the capacity to 'make horizontal' the hierarchical scale structure they are often implicit within and/or the product of. That is to say horizontal

networks do not simply traverse borders—indicative of what Bude and Dürrschmidt (2010) term 'flow speak'—that rather borders in and of themselves can function as 'interfaces' that 'level out' socio-spatial relations (Cooper and Rumford 2013). The border, when theorized in terms of the connection on offer here, reduces the verticality and compartmentalized nature of scale traditionally understood, making it tangled, warped, and more horizontal, and allowing contact with 'Others' that would normally be hierarchically separated and distant (see also Cooper, forthcoming). By seeing from the border, non-proximate connectivity is brought to the fore, and we can begin to understand that what appears to be distant, unfamiliar and 'beyond' to some (a vertical imposition of scale), can be equally local, similar and 'near' to others (what could be described as a more horizontal imposition of scale).

This way of looking at borders further resonates with the idea of vernacularization because it also takes into account different types of border, constructed, maintained, and/or performed by different people. Our understanding of borders as engines of non-proximate connectivity, in other words, need not be limited to, or be under the exclusive remit of, recognizable borderlands and borderlanders. The residents of the English town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, for example, have shown a remarkable capacity to use the close proximity of the English/Scottish border to project their uniqueness—that is neither English nor Scottish—well beyond the locality of the border by forging networks and creating cultural events of global significance that would not be possible without the border. Likewise, but located well away from more traditional national borders/borderlands, the English town of Melton Mowbray has successfully established PGI (Protective Geographical Indication) designation (bestowed by the European Commission) that extends its identity well beyond the locality of the PGI border, projecting the town onto the 'global food map' (see Cooper and Rumford 2011). In the next section, we will discuss a more detailed and nuanced example of border vernacularization taking place in Japan which shows how non-state borders are not only being created and dispersed, but also how 'citizens' can move between institutional layers creating new connections because of the borderwork taking place.

Sakaguchi Kyōhei's use of the vernacularized border

This final section offers a case study that illustrates the three different elements of the vernacularized border detailed above. Taking cues from the work of Amoore and Hall (2010, 2013), who have explored bordering practices, performance, and artistic interventions, we focus on the work of Japanese activist and performance artist Sakaguchi Kyōhei (2012), who set about constructing a new state as a critique of the Japanese government's response to Japan's March 2011 triple disaster. Sakaguchi's ad hoc state problematizes sovereignty, state territory, and established bordering practices, and although Sakaguchi does not explicitly talk about his work in terms of bordering, as we show in the following he nevertheless draws attention to the performative, connective, and scalar aspects of borders. Sakaguchi's example also illustrates what Bauder (2011) refers to as 'aspect-seeing' in relation to the border. Bauder (2011: 1132) argues that the concept of aspect-seeing draws attention to the different "uses of a border and border practices", and that "various aspects of the border represent meanings and material practices that cannot be unified into a stable and coherent concept". Sakaguchi himself plays on this concept of aspect seeing, which he refers to as seeing different layers (reyā) of action within public space. This forms and integral component of his political project, which seeks to destabilize the routinized articulation of the state and territorial sovereignty by drawing new borders both within and beyond the Japanese state.

Finally this example illustrates another component essential to understanding the conditions in which vernacularization of the border becomes possible, namely the importance of changes in what Cooper and Perkins (Cooper and Perkins 2012) call the 'background assumptions' that naturalize particular institutional arrangements. In other words, a bordering process that appears natural may been thrown into a different light due to changes in the background conditions in which the bordering process developed, and it is these changes that draw attention to different aspects, meanings, and material practices of the border. Similarly, vernacularization of the border also relies on particular background conditions that enable actors to legitimize their borderwork. To draw on the example of Transition Towns discussed above, Perkins and Rumford (2013: 278) have argued that the 2008 financial crisis produced both discursive and material conditions that enabled residents of Stroud to set up an economic border in the form of the Stroud Pound. Advocates of this economic border justify it through appeals to generalized worries over capital flight, jobs, and the continued salience of local practices, while

simultaneously linking their town to other Transition Towns running similar schemes both in the UK and abroad (ibid).

Japan's 2011 triple disaster provides the context for Sakaguchi's borderwork. The earthquake, which struck on March11, 2011, was the fourth biggest in recorded history and produced a tsunami that devastated the northeastern seaboard of Japan. This tsunami also breached the protective wall surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, causing damage that led to a meltdown. To date Japanese authorities have counted 15,854 dead from the earthquake and tsunami (BBC 2012), while the impact of the nuclear meltdown remains uncertain. Furthermore, the government's perceived weakness and poor policy response led to large protests across the country. In the weeks and months following the disaster, information regarding the structural links between the Japanese state and Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the electricity company that built the Daiichi plant, emerged, and citizen's groups and 'free' journalists have criticized the mainstream media for what was perceived as overly conservative coverage of the unfolding disaster and the protest movement. This event can be conceptualized as producing a crisis of state legitimacy which enabled various actors in Japan to 'see' hitherto suppressed contradictions internal to the Japanese state, such as the conflict between Japan's experience of nuclear devastation and its championing of nuclear power in the postwar era (Shun'ya & Loh 2012). Sakaguchi has himself recognized the importance of 3.11 in shifting the context for debate in Japan, arguing that

> If you talked about these things in the past people would talk about you as if you were crazy, but when something like 3.11 happens everything flips over… It's certainly the case that nature changes people (Asahi Shimbun 2013, n.p.).

The gestalt shift enabled by 3.11 meshed with Sakaguchi's previous project, which focused on housing to interrogate the relationship between work, home ownership and social relationships in contemporary Japanese society. Drawing inspiration from the self-reliance displayed by homeless men in Tokyo, Sakaguchi constructed a number of mobile houses with low cost materials and exploited legal loopholes, such as unresolved land claim disputes that effectively render pockets of land ownerless, to extract himself from the traditional state-citizen relationship. Arguing that this move enabled people to live within a different layer in the city, Sakaguchi used his '0yen' houses to look at how different approaches to housing produces

alternative frameworks for conceptualizing public space and ultimately to alternative social relationships and value systems. In Lefebvre's terms, the 0yen house project interrogated the ways in which lived space is produced through the complex interaction of perceived (material, concrete) space, and conceived (mentally constructed) space (Purcell 2002), and his independent state can be seen as a radicalization of this initial investigation.

After the events of March 2011 Sakaguchi's activities scaled up to include bordering processes. In response to the perceived failure of the state apparatus to provide for people in the disaster zone, Sakaguchi declared a state of emergency and relocated to the city of Kumamoto in Japan's southernmost island, Kyūshū. Here he declared himself the head of an independent state (*dokuritsu kokka*) and offered retreats for children displaced by the Fukushima meltdown. In order to legitimize this new polity he draws upon international legal conventions, such as the Montevideo convention on the recognition of states, which in article 1 declares that: "The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter relations with other states."[3] Sakaguchi fulfils the conditions of the Montevideo convention, by designating his 31,248 (at time of writing) twitter followers as the permanent population (a), setting up a seat of government from an old house in Kumamoto (c), and travelling abroad to give lectures on the 0yen and mobile house project (d). He has also released his contact details, including bank account details, via his website and twitter.

To help facilitate shifts in conceptual space, Sakaguchi has set up a website called 'zeroPublic', and it is here that an important part of his borderwork takes place. Here citizens can mark plots of land in Japan that, due to legally ambiguous ownership status or simply by virtue of being empty, may be included in the new state territory (figure 1). This has the effect of diffusing Sakaguchi's border throughout the physical space of Japan and the virtual space of the Internet, which as a result offers a conceptual challenge to the state's monopoly over the production of space. It also has the effect of connecting non-proximate parcels of land distributed across Japan by virtue of the process of bordering, a process radicalized by the fact that all of Sakaguchi's citizens are authorized to speak in the name of his state and produce

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[3] http://www.cfr.org/sovereignty/montevideo-convention-rights-duties-states/p15897

territory via bordering. Indeed, the fact that the production of borders has been delegated to people spread across Japan is a further indication of the potential for connectivity inherent in bordering practices. This being said, Sakaguchi recognises that expanding his territory is, at least potentially, a challenge to the established Japanese state. However, again drawing on his concepts of layers, he argues that by using the land but rejecting the right to own it, his citizens can 'escape from the current government's layer' which takes the notion of property rights as a constitutive principle of the polity.[4] By rejecting property rights Sakaguchi's borders become oxymoronic and can simply disappear if the state were to exercise its right to territorial sovereignty. This neatly mirrors, and effectively parodies, state and supra state bordering practices, whereby borders increasingly pop-up whenever they are needed. But the borders also become connective in the sense that they produce open public spaces for chance encounters by virtue of their designation via the website.

In Japan's rapidly ageing, low birth-rate society this attempt to reclaim unused, or as Sakaguchi terms it 'left over', property is a significant challenge to the normative life progression of the postwar years. Indeed, by using the border to draw attention to property and land that has fallen through the cracks between institutions involved in the production of lived space in Japan, Sakaguchi challenges naturalized attitudes towards property ownership established in the postwar period (Forrest & Hirayama 2009, Hirayama & Ronald 2008). Therefore this praxis experiment (Perkins and Rumford 2013: 279) in borderwork also highlights the relationship between borders, the production of space, and questions of justice, by demonstrating how they combine to allocate value to people and things within a polity. Returning to Lefebvre's idea of space introduced above, Sakaguchi's playful use of the border can be seen as facilitating a change in lived space by enabling people within the territory of Japan to look again at the physical, perceived space around them unencumbered by the cognitive category of Japan (Brubaker, Loveman, & Stamatov 2004). For example, the goal of owning a new home became firmly embedded within hegemonic life courses in the postwar period (Hirayama & Ronald 2008), and the short term cycle of construction and destruction of housing provides a large stimulus for Japan's construction industry. However, by shedding the cognitive category of Japan, which has within it any number of naturalized prescriptions regarding proper

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[4] http://www.zero-public.com/

ways of interacting with and placing value on space, the value of empty old property can be reassessed. It is here that concerns regarding the state's response to 3.11 become fused with his previous project.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE]

Figure 1 Sakaguchi Kyōhei's 'Land of Zero Public'. Citizens tag different areas using Google Maps, adding descriptions and, in some cases, photographs. The various symbols represent allotments (the tomato), building plots (the sign), vacant houses (the thatched building), areas of land open for public use (the trees) and entertainment spaces (the masks), although they are used rather loosely.

It is Sakaguchi's invocation of an independent state, and thus a border, that facilitates this interface between different political projects at different scales, making use of international legal frameworks to justify sub-national political action. In this sense Sakaguchi's project is an example of the concept of bordering being used as a political resource (Perkins and Rumford 2013) and to defamiliarize the familiar and imagine different political articulations of space that cut across established notions of state boundedness. But what is the status of the politics in this example? As Amoore and Hall (2010: 311) argue, artistic interventions of this kind raise tricky questions about "how one considers a particular intervention to be political, or to have political effects, without engaging in an exercise of 'what counts' that simply authorizes certain forms of politics". As such it is difficult to measure the impact of his project. He has certainly been successful in terms of generating media interest. His 2012 book was a best seller, and he has gained some traction with the mainstream media, with interviews and review pieces appearing in major newspapers including both the Asahi and Yomiuri.   In an opinion piece for the Asahi, philosopher Takahashi Genichiro went as far as likening Sakaguchi's claims to those made by famous figures of Japan's Meiji restoration in 1868, who also called for a new state in a period of acute crisis (Takahashi 2012). Also, Sakaguchi was recently awarded the Second Yoshizaka Architecture Award for work that makes interventions in political and economic life: quite an achievement for an architect who refuses to build anything.[5]

But to return to the question of politics, it would be easy to dismiss Sakaguchi's project as politically insignificant because it does not fit into 'what counts' as politics; similarly it would be easy to dismiss his project as bordering because it is not part of Japan's state bordering

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[5] http://www.yosizaka-award.org/

practices. However we would be quick to reject this evaluation. Sakaguchi's performative invocation of a state, and with it a border, becomes not only a method of doing politics, but also a way of interrogating what Mouffe (2006) refers to as the 'ontological political': the constitutive principles of politics itself. Sakaguchi's borderwork fulfils the important political role of producing alternative imaginaries of public space and political arrangements, which in turn provoke a reconsideration of the naturalized processes that sit in the background of our daily lives.

Sakaguchi is also involved in imagining a new scalar politics. Sakaguchi's state that rejects property rights, justifies itself via international conventions, and devolves bordering practices to its citizens (all of which go on within an already established nation-state) subverts the nested hierarchies of the Westphalian system by making horizontal connections and the spontaneous production of space possible. Therefore Sakaguchi's ad hoc state draws attention to the contingency of sovereignty, state territory, and established bordering practices. To quote Amoore and Hall (2010: 314) once more, this interruption of the everyday is "the true potential of art's political provocation; to make us notice and look again so that nothing is quite as it seems."

Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to bring attention to, and importantly push forward an agenda for, a border studies that embraces vernacularization. Such an agenda shifts emphasis away from the state as the primary borderer of choice and draws attention to other, equally important, borders and actors doing their borderwork well away from territorial edges and peripheries. Likewise, seeing from the border, rather than looking across borders or seeing like a state, allows researchers to take into account the integral relationship between less visible and less traditional borders, borderers as well as those who are bordered. Such an agenda also brings connectivity to the forefront of study in such a way that departs from observations of contact and cooperation within what Martinez (1994) would term 'interdependent' or 'integrated' borderlands defined and framed as they are by recognizable (and benign) state borders. Taking into account non-state borderworkers doing their borderwork in non-traditional locations, different types of borders— state and non-state alike—can be conceptualized as engines or tissues of non-proximate connectivity placing borders more centrally within wider process of global connectivity. In the

final section of the chapter, our three dimensions of vernacularization cumulated with a focus on Sakaguchi's borderwork in Japan. The example highlighted how borderwork could be employed as a political resource in order to challenge institutional failings and inadequacies by the Japanese government in light of the March 2011 triple disaster. By evocatively promoting a diffuse and horizontal (non) state—connecting non-proximate parcels of land within and across the conventional state of Japan—and rejecting the institutionalized bordering between public and private property ownership often attributed to the traditional Westphalian state model, we showed how Sakaguchi's borderwork challenges and subverts the ability of the state to fix conventional space and associated scale hierarchies. In other words, focusing on border vernacularization (and seeing from the border), has shown how Sakaguchi's protest has used borderwork to produce alternative, more spontaneous, imaginaries of space that uncover and problematize seemingly naturalized and institutionalized bordering processes that permeate our daily lives. Overall, and in this regard, we hope that in putting forward vernacularization as an agenda or framework for border studies creates a substantial foundation for researchers to engage in their own borderwork across the discipline.

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