

Migrations and Borders: Practices and Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century

Margit Fauser, Anne Friedrichs & Levke Harders

To cite this article: Margit Fauser, Anne Friedrichs & Levke Harders (2019) Migrations and Borders: Practices and Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century, Journal of Borderlands Studies, 34:4, 483-488, DOI: [10.1080/08865655.2018.1510334](https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1510334)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2018.1510334>



Published online: 13 Nov 2018.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 4180



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 3 View citing articles [↗](#)

INTRODUCTION



Migrations and Borders: Practices and Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion in Europe from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century

Margit Fauser ^a, Anne Friedrichs ^b and Levke Harders ^c

^aFaculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany; ^bLeibniz Institute of European History (IEG), Mainz, Germany; ^cDepartment of History, Bielefeld University, Bielefeld, Germany

ABSTRACT

Current media images of a “fortress Europe” suggest that migrations and borders are closely connected. This special issue brings together scholars from history, sociology and anthropology to explore cross-border mobility and migration during the formation, development, and transformation of the modern (nation-)state explicating the conflictive and fluctuating character of borders. The historical perspective demonstrates that such bordering processes are not new. However, they have developed new dynamics in different historical phases, from the formation of the modern (nation-)state in the nineteenth century to the creation of the European Union during the second half of the twentieth. This introduction explains the dynamic relationships between borders and migratory movements in Europe from the nineteenth century to the present by approaching them from four different, overlapping angles, which the articles analyze in more detail: (1) the multiple actors involved, (2) scales and places of borders and their crossings, (3) the instruments and techniques employed, and (4) the significance of social categories. Focusing on the historical, local specificity of the complex relations between migration and boundaries will help denaturalize the concept of the border as well as further reflection on the shifting definitions of migration and belonging.

In recent years, images in the media depicting a “fortress Europe” surrounded by sea, walls and fences together with the ongoing arrival of migrants and refugees have reminded us that the processes of migration and those of demarcating borders and boundaries are closely connected. This is reflected in the concomitant political concerns about whether Europe’s borders should be open or closed, about the number of refugees and other migrants arriving in the European Union, and about how they are being treated. Such concerns have brought the relation between migrations and borders into the spotlight of public, political, and academic debates.¹

This special issue brings together scholars from history, sociology and anthropology to further the interdisciplinary debate that critically interrogates the border-migration nexus. It concentrates particularly on the shifts this relationship between migration and borders

CONTACT Margit Fauser  margit.fauser@uni-bielefeld.de  Faculty of Sociology, Bielefeld University, PO Box 100131, Bielefeld 33501, Germany

underwent during the formation, development, and transformation of the modern (nation-)state. By focusing on challenges generated by cross-border mobility and migration in different historical and contemporary settings, the authors explicate the conflictive and fluctuating character of borders. They demonstrate that borders have always been subject to negotiations between a number of actors, including authorities on the local, regional, national, imperial and supra-national levels as well as migrants and other people. In doing so, the articles provide insights into the changing spatiality of borders, which are not only drawn where a nation's territory stops, but can also be constructed and enforced by powerful state or supra-state actors beyond their area of governance, or created and contested by municipal actors or migrants at specific places within the territory of a state. The articles in this special issue show that the techniques of creating social, cultural and political boundaries are sometimes strikingly similar over time, for example, in classifying migrants after their arrival. Last but not least, they demonstrate the varying importance of categories like rank, professional status, class, or gender in addition to nationality and race. Correspondingly, the articles approach the dynamic relationships between borders and migratory movements in Europe from the nineteenth century to the present from four different, overlapping angles, analyzing (1) the multiple actors involved, (2) the scales and places of borders and their crossings, (3) the instruments and techniques employed, and (4) the significance of social categories.

The fact that migration and borders are associated with one another has been widely acknowledged in the humanities and social sciences. Borders and their crossings seem to be characteristic aspects of a globalized world (Laine 2016; McKeown 2008; Newman 2011; Zolberg 1997). At the same time, it is clear that the formation of nation-states throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has greatly shaped contemporary understandings of what a border is. John Torpey argues that the emergence of the nation-state was associated with control over the mobility of people through the invention of new instruments of control, such as the passport (Torpey 2000). In this process, borders came to denote a clear-cut physical boundary around a territory inhabited by an equally clearly defined community of citizens. Only in the late 1990s did historians begin questioning the stability and predominance of nation-state borders (Akbari et al. 2017; Hämäläinen and Truett 2011; Osterhammel 1998). Since then, several studies have drawn attention to different and often conflicting conceptions of political and social order in empires or at the local and regional levels. They remind us that in other times and places, state control of territory was rather limited. In a similar vein, contemporary border studies in the social sciences have called the concept of (national) borders into question (Brunet-Jailly 2010). While studies on borders and migrations have been dominated by state-centered approaches for decades, thus falling in line with the general preponderance of the nation-state paradigm in the social sciences and in history, contemporary migration and border studies have begun to criticize methodological nationalism (e.g. Glick Schiller and Wimmer 2002; Green and Waldinger 2016). Much of the current literature suggests that borders should not be seen primarily or exclusively as fixed territorial borderlines (e.g. van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002). Newer perspectives also consider borders as politically, culturally, and socially constructed both through the international order of states and complex domestic processes, formed by state authorities on multiple spatial scales as well as by non-state actors (Laine 2016). The research focus has shifted from borders to bordering (Rumford 2006). Concepts like borderscapes (e.g. Brambilla 2015)

and borderities (e.g. Amilhat-Szarzy and Giraut 2015) emphasize that borders are the product of power relations and their contestations, and thus that the shapes they take are subject to negotiation, i.e. borders and bordering processes, rather than ontologically given or territorial fixities, can be understood as social institutions.

Building on these current debates, this special issue examines multifaceted border logics and transformations in the context of migrations in Europe from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, particularly strengthening a temporal perspective on migration and bordering processes (Akbari et al. 2017; Hurd et al. 2017). Research on global history inspired by postcolonial studies has provided important new insights about how migration has been controlled in the past. These insights are particularly fruitful for extra-European contexts and further call the nation-state paradigm into question (Fahrmeir 2018). Pursuing a related aim, the articles in this issue focus on similar tendencies in a larger Europe by studying how borders are constructed within and beyond state territories in different kinds of municipal, regional, and imperial spaces. Recent migration and border scholarship has made increased use of the concepts of “migration regime”, “mobility regime” and “border regime” (e.g. Glick Schiller and Salazar 2012; Hess and Tsianos 2010; Horvath et al. 2017; Oltmer 2016). Originally developed in the field of International Relations, the concept of “regime” helps describe migrations as products of negotiations and conflicts involving a number of different actors and institutions. Whereas the concept of “migration regime” originally referred to the management and regulation of migration, recent research suggests analyzing practices undertaken by different actors to prepare, direct and influence mobility (Pott et al. 2018). Similarly, border regime analysis began to shine a light on migrant practices and social networks in the negotiation of the border (Hess and Tsianos 2010). Thereby, the concept of regime brings attention to the complex interplay of migrant practices and the regulations administered by states and supra-state agents that are meant to control them, often reactively rather than proactively. However, it remains an open question as to how the logics followed by mobile people intersect with the political mechanisms of control – an issue that will be addressed by some of the articles.

The historical perspective taken here demonstrates that processes of creating political, cultural, and social borders along with the development of means for controlling those who cross these borders are not new. They reveal that narratives of legitimization have remained strikingly similar in the course of time proponents of controlling borders and population movements have long sought to justify their positions with arguments about economic and cultural “threats,” external security, internal security, and public health. The articles also show that questions of belonging and exclusion have long been and continue to be important features of migration regimes’ attempts to control borders and govern mobility. However, as the papers also reveal, these bordering processes have developed new dynamics in different historical phases, from the formation of the modern (nation-)state in the nineteenth century to the creation of the European Union during the second half of the twentieth. Focusing on the historical, local specificity of the complex relations between migration and boundaries will help to denaturalize the concept of the border.

In order to facilitate multi-disciplinary reflections on borders and migration (Newman 2003), the articles collected in this special issue focus on four common topics to varying degrees: actors, scale and place, techniques, and the role of categories of social difference (rank, age etc.). Where are borders located and why are they created in certain spaces? Who

are the actors involved, what goals do they pursue, and where do their interests intersect or conflict? How are migration and mobility fostered and controlled? Which social categories contribute to migration, exclusion and inclusion? While far from being conclusive, such common axes allow for a multi-disciplinary dialogue about important aspects of borders and migration.

First, the question of who is involved in the construction of borders and what role migrants play in this process is crucial. All papers agree that multiple actors – the state, local communities, non-state actors, migrants – are always involved in the erection or dismantling of borders and the creation of belonging or exclusion. This can also explain why borders are often not stable. Levke Harders discusses the various actors involved in including and excluding migrants in the German-Danish border region in the 1840s, where belonging was constructed both through professional affiliations and local membership. In their discussion of the Turkish and European border regimes recently set up in Turkey, Firat Genç, Gerda Heck and Sabine Hess focus on migrants' strategies for grappling with their precarious positions within complex international relations. Bettina Bruns analyzes the role played by relations between the EU and non-member states, international organizations, and NGOs in the construction of the EU's migration policy.

Second, as discussed above, migration and the mobility of people are not only controlled at the territorial borders. Borders are administered on different spatial scales, whether they be imperial, European, national, regional, or local and thus call for considering a variety of spatial formations. These multilayered constructions of borders through mobility (and other factors) can also contribute to the production and reorganization of places, social spaces, or territorial sites. Häfner's article studies the control of internal mobility within Tsarist Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century and shows that the movement of peasants to the cities contributed to the transgression of spatial, legal and cultural divides. In the nineteenth century, new politics of border and population control also focused on areas where internal and external mobilities crossed; at the same time, this control was never total, as Anne Friedrichs demonstrates in her analysis of migration to the Ruhr Valley in Imperial Germany. In her article, Bruns shows that the European Union is now pushing its border outside the territory of European states. Margit Fauser highlights the renewed importance of European cities and their multiple mechanisms of control for migration regimes.

Third, the formation of borders and the control of migration are processes that have deployed a number of different techniques and strategies over history. Michael Schubert demonstrates how illegal migration began receiving attention and became increasingly regulated by German states during the nineteenth century. Previously the responsibility of municipalities, the central administrations of Bavaria and Prussia began taking over migration control. At the same time, multilateral conventions within Europe became increasingly important for the constitution of borders. However, because the interests of regional and local authorities who continued to exert an influence on migration control often diverged from those of the state, borders often remained porous, as Friedrichs demonstrates. Genç, Heck and Hess show how EU policies and the shifting foreign policy interests of Turkey have contributed to the construction of new means of control. In her analysis of current urban developments, Fauser offers a typology of urban mechanisms of migration control in European cities.

Fourth, the articles consider categories of difference like rank, class, professional status, and gender as important for actors when dealing with mobility and migration, in addition

to constructions like ethnicity or nationality, that have received more attention from researchers. In border and migration studies, these categories of social inequality should be analyzed more extensively as closely connected to bordering processes (e.g. Akbari et al. 2017; Altink and Weedon 2010). Häfner's case study shows that Tsarist migration control was specifically geared towards regulating the movement of peasants. Although women were not allowed to move without the father's or husband's approval, male migration contributed to the changing gender roles inasmuch that women took responsibility for the household, the farm and village politics. Friedrichs' analysis reveals that class was an important consideration for local authorities tasked with keeping out "unwanted" migrants (males and females alike), and the migrant biography narrated by Harders details the significance of profession for those seeking to move to and become naturalized in the German-Danish border region. At the same time, education, skills and professional networks were based in a gendered order of society. Schubert traces the racialization of migration policy in nineteenth century Bavaria and Prussia, which increasingly treated Jews, Roma and Sinti as "illegal" migrants.

In the concluding essay, Andreas Fahrmeir's systematic discussion of historical migration studies ties these different points together. He shows how recent research on the early modern period and on global history reveals that borders have often been contested through migration and are subject to redefinition and change. However, the associated processes of bordering varied under different historical conditions. Acknowledging these trends in historiography can help us rethink the concepts and theories we use to understand borders and migration, not least by criticizing the still sometimes unquestioned adherence to perspectives centered on the nation-state. Finally, we hope that this special issue reminds us that we as scholars are also involved in the construction of "imagined" borders through the ways in which we choose our topics of research, our case studies, and our methods. Being aware that processes of border production take place and have taken place in areas beyond a larger Europe, this special issue aims at reflecting on the conflictive, ambivalent and shifting nature of borders and definitions of migration.

Note

1. First drafts of the papers collected here were discussed at a workshop organized by the editors of the Special Issue at Bielefeld University in 2016. The workshop was financially supported by the Institute of World Society Studies at Bielefeld University and the German Research Foundation. We are grateful to the funders and to the participants of the workshop for comments and debate. We would also like to thank Andreas Fahrmeir and the anonymous reviewer for their helpful comments on this introduction.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

ORCID

Margit Fauser  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2124-4907>

Anne Friedrichs  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2439-2833>

Levke Harders  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5004-6686>

References

- Akbari, S.C., D.Jütte, C.Nightingale, W.Rankin, and K.Weitzberg. 2017. AHR Conversation: Walls, Borders, and Boundaries in World History. *American Historical Review* 122, no. 5: 1501–53.
- Altink, H., and C.Weedon. 2010. Introduction. In *Gendering Border Studies*, eds. J. Aaron, H. Altink, and C. Weedon, 1–15. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Amilhat-Szary, A.-L. and F. Giraut, eds. 2015. *Borderities and the Politics of Contemporary Mobile Borders*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Brambilla, C. 2015. Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept. *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1: 14–34.
- Brunet-Jailly, E. 2010. The State of Borders and Borderlands Studies in 2009: A Historical View and a View from the Journal of Borderlands Studies. *Eurasian Border Review* 1, no. 1: 1–17.
- Fahrmeir, A. 2018. Conclusion: Historical Perspectives on Borderlands, Boundaries and Migration Control. *Journal of Borderlands Studies*. doi:10.1080/08865655.2017.1414625.
- Glick Schiller, N. and N.B. Salazar. 2012. Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39: 183–200.
- Glick Schiller, N. and A. Wimmer. 2002. Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences. *Global Networks* 2, no. 4: 301–34.
- Green, N.L., and R. Waldinger, eds. 2016. *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and their Homeland Connections*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Hämäläinen, P. and S. Truett. 2011. On Borderlands. *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2: 338–61.
- Hess, S. and V.S. Tsianos. 2010. Ethnographische Grenzregimeanalyse: Eine Methodologie der Autonomie der Migration [Ethnographic Border Regime Analysis: A Methodology of Autonomy of Migration]. In *Grenzregime. Diskurse, Praktiken, Institutionen in Europa* [Border Regime. Discourses, Practices, Institutions in Europe], eds. S. Hess, and B. Kasperek, 243–64. Berlin: Assoziation A.
- Horvath, K., A. Amelina, and K. Peters, eds. 2017. Special Issue: Migration Regimes in the Spotlight: The Politics of Migration in an Age of Uncertainty. *Migration Studies* 5, no. 3.
- Hurd, M., H.Donnan, and C.Leutloff-Grandits. 2017. Introduction. Crossing Borders, Changing Times. In *Migrating Borders and Moving Times. Temporality and the Crossing of Borders in Europe*, eds. H. Donnan, M. Hurd, and C. Leutloff-Grandits, 1–24. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Laine, J.P. 2016. The Multiscalar Production of Borders. *Geopolitics* 21, no. 3: 465–82.
- McKeown, A. 2008. *Melancholy Order: Asian Migration and the Globalization of Borders*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Newman, D. 2003. On Borders and Power: A Theoretical Framework. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 18, no. 1: 13–25.
- Newman, D. 2011. Contemporary Research Agendas in Borders Studies: An Overview. In *Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies*, ed. D. Wastl-Walter, 33–47. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Oltmer, J., ed. 2016. *Handbuch Staat und Migration in Deutschland seit dem 17. Jahrhundert* [Handbook State and Migration in Germany Since the 17th Century]. Boston, Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- Osterhammel, J. 1998. Die Wiederkehr des Raumes. Geopolitik, Geohistorie und historische Geographie [The Recurrent Significance of Space: Geopolitics, Geohistory and Historical Geography]. *Neue Politische Literatur* 43: 374–97.
- Pott, A., C. Rass, and F. Wolff, eds. 2018. *Was ist ein Migrationsregime? What Is a Migration Regime?* Wiesbaden: Springer 2018.
- Rumford, C. 2006. Introduction. Theorizing Borders. *European Journal of Social Theory* 9, no. 2: 155–69.
- Torpey, J.C. 2000. *The Invention of the Passport. Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- van Houtum, H. and T. van Naerssen. 2002. Bordering, Ordering and Othering. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 93, no. 2: 125–36.
- Zolberg, A.R. 1997. Global Movements, Global Walls: Responses to Migration, 1885–1925. In *Global History and Migrations*, ed. W. Gungwu, 279–315. Boulder: Westview Press.