

Global Frontiers

Veranstalter: Daniel Menning, Tübingen; Kristin Condotta Lee, St. Louis; Tobias Graf, Oxford

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The Winter School „Global Frontiers“ convened by Daniel Menning (Tübingen), Kristin Condotta Lee (St. Louis), and Tobias Graf (Oxford) brought together an international, interdisciplinary group of doctoral students and early-career postdocs working on different regions of the world in different periods to reflect on the frontier and related concepts. The event was sponsored by the University of Tübingen's Excellence Initiative (ZUK 63), the German Academic Exchange Service, and the University of Tübingen's Institute for Modern History.

The first session opened with CAROLINE MARRIS's (New York) discussion of boundary-making in the English Channel. The various geographic labels used in the late sixteenth century illustrate attempts to not only understand the geography of this strait, but to subject it to specific political authority. As Marris pointed out, referring to contemporary reflections on this subject, exercising control over bodies of water is fraught with difficulty since conditions at sea vastly differ from conditions on land. She suggested that the farthest contemporary states could claim sovereignty was the distance they – that is, their military – could see from shore. This underlying problem was reflected in JOHN WYATT GREENLEE's (Ithaca, NY) poster presentation concerning Dutch eel ships on the Thames, which occupied a legally ambiguous position throughout the early modern period as floating foreign enclaves.

Maps also played a central role in Meiji Japan's attempts to understand the geography of its northern frontier in Ezo. Because this region was peripheral to Japanese concerns until Russian expansion constituted a threat to Japan's territorial integrity, Japanese geographers and state administrators had no

clear understanding of its geography until the late 1800s. As EDWARD BOYLE (Fukuoka) showed, new geographical information reaching Japan from abroad proved difficult to reconcile with existing knowledge until the iconic expedition of Matsuda and Mamiya to Karafuto in the early nineteenth century provided sufficient toponymic data to enable the scholar Takahashi in Edo to verify European and Chinese maps.

While these explorations resulted in a better understanding of Ezo, the case of the explorations into the Himalayas sponsored by the East India Company discussed by LACHLAN FLEETWOOD (Cambridge) generated greater uncertainty. The expeditions had been prompted by increasing concerns over the porousness of these vast mountain ranges and the resulting security risks for British India. Since survey parties were deliberately unarmed and instructed to act with utter circumspection, the resulting maps were inaccurate and contained numerous blank spaces. The East India Company finally abandoned the survey of the Himalayas, concluding that the uncertainties did not present an imminent threat to security and accepting a situation of unclear boundaries and overlapping sovereignties negotiated on the spot.

Devolved frontier management also characterized part of the Ottoman periphery during the Tanzimat (1839–76), as UĞUR BAYRAKTAR's (Istanbul) comparison of the border districts of Hazro (near Diyarbakır) and Dibra (in present-day Macedonia) made clear. Contrary to the Ottoman government's policy of eliminating intermediary authorities and centralizing power elsewhere in the Empire, it frequently co-opted local elites into the administration of these provinces rather than appointing salaried officials. Unlike similar practices in the past, such co-optations were now accompanied by 'civilizing' measures to educate and discipline local populations and draw them more firmly into the imperial system.

In the keynote lecture, MATTHEW MOSCA (Seattle) investigated the historiography of the Mongol Empire in Qing China and Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In this period, knowledge about the Mongols expanded in both regions. Trac-

ing their ancestry to the Mongols, the Qing sponsored the translation into Mandarin and Manchu of Mongolian chronicles as a corrective to the more dismissive views enshrined in the official history commissioned by the Ming. In Europe, new information was made available by burgeoning oriental scholarship. Mosca argued for a complex relationship between imperial expansion and intellectual change, suggesting that a frontier-oriented approach helps highlight the importance of placing intellectual developments within their specific social contexts.

The second day of the School focused on mobility, with THOMAS SCHADER (Tübingen) exploring the experience of Jesuit missionaries awaiting their departure to the New World. Andalusia became a particularly subjective frontier for those suspended in waiting here, unable to return home without admitting failure, but not yet having reached their eventual destination, a process which would in most cases irreversibly cut them off from Europe. Building on Michel Foucault's conceptual work, Schader described this particular frontier, which designates a state-of-being as much as a space, as a „heterotopia of crisis.“

While for these missionaries the frontier was a zone to be crossed only once, OMRI ELMALEH (Tel Aviv) and DAVID GLOVSKY (East Lansing, MI) explored settings in which political borders had little significance in practice, giving rise to transnational communities and identities that question the very existence of the nation-states whose borders they transcend. In the case of the Lebanese emigrants in the triple-frontier of Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina, the intensive ties to Lebanon of family, language, religion, and education add a trans-Atlantic dimension to a complex frontier-zone in which Lebanese immigrants cross the border between Paraguay and Brazil daily. In a similar vein, Glovsky's paper on the Fulbe people of West Africa – a community spread over the four countries of Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Guinea – demonstrated the ineffectiveness of post-colonial political borders attempting to dissect a community characterized by strong internal ties and high mobility.

This continued mobility of the Fulbe people

contrasts with the relative effectiveness of the similarly artificial political boundaries established across the Arabian desert by colonial powers in the early twentieth century studied by MAGNUS HALSNES (Bergen). This enforcement, however, required a significant investment in the form of automobiles and airplanes, which enabled authorities to pursue tribesmen deep into the desert.

The mobility of animals across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea was at the center of EWA MOTYLIŃSKA's (Seoul) paper. The DMZ established in 1953 has become a nature reserve with staggering biodiversity, yet environmental issues affect both sides of this frontier, giving rise to international preservation efforts targeting North Korea's wetlands and migratory birds. Motylińska suggested that the co-operation between international NGOs and the North Korean government can provide an opportunity for political rapprochement on the divided peninsula.

The poster presentations, which explored a fascinatingly wide range of applications of the paradigms under discussion, provided further important stimuli to the School's debates. JOHN CHAPPELL (London) extended the investigation of border management in China into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, highlighting the different dimensions of frontiers – political, environmental, cultural, and historical – operative in this transitional period. BENOIT VAILLOT (Paris/Florence) summarized the consequences of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany in 1871 for the nationalities of the inhabitants of this region. Although provided with the option of adopting German citizenship, most Alsatian-Lorrainers preferred to emigrate to France. The resulting drain of people, capital, and expertise crippled the economy in this region for decades. SONIA ROBLES's (Mexico City) poster showcased Mexican radio entrepreneurs along the border between the United States and Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century. In a situation evocative of Oscar J. Martínez's borderland paradigm, Mexican radio stations and US business owners entered into a symbiotic relationship, as the latter bought airtime for advertising targeted at the Spanish-speaking population of

the southern United States, providing stimulus to the settlement and industrialization of northern Mexico.

IULIA BUYSKYKH (Kyiv/Berlin) presented her anthropological research into religious practices in confessionally-mixed communities on both sides of the Polish-Ukrainian border. The memory of World War II and its lingering effects on the relationship between the two countries surfaced as an important topic in her interviews, an originally unintended development prompted by her own history of border-crossing. Her research experience is a valuable reminder that scholars themselves are often their most important (and least critically acknowledged) heuristic tool.

Memory also played an important role in DAGMAR ZADRIZILOVA's (Cambridge) presentation on Berlin Tempelhof as a special *lieu de memoire*. Built as a representational gateway to the „Reich“ by the Nazis, the airport continues to be identified with the Berlin Airlift that kept the city supplied during the Soviet blockade of 1948-9. Even after its closure to traffic, the site has remained connected to the theme of border-crossing, with some of its hangars providing shelter for refugees.

Moving on to the imagination of the frontier – the overarching theme of the School's final session – STUART COTTLE (Sydney) explored cinematic representations of the frontier from the 1950s until today. He argued that films such as „Dances with the Wolves“ (1990) and „Avatar“ (2009) create utopian visions of the frontier which criticize contemporary ways of life. Antebellum US literature similarly romanticized the 'classical' frontier of the American West as a space of authenticity, according to STEFFEN WÖLL (Leipzig). Nevertheless, many texts like the short stories by James Hall significantly depart from the well-known frontier narrative of the dominant white settler to create complex imaginary spaces of interactions between white settlers, Native Americans, and Africans.

Discussing Saadet Hasan Manto's short story „Toba Tek Singh“ (1955), NISHANT K. NARAYANAN (Hyderabad) focused on an attempt to cope with the division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. Set soon after partition, the story follows Bishan Singh, an in-

mate of a mental asylum in Lahore, as he is relocated to India during the population exchange between India and Pakistan. In defiance, Singh lies down in the no man's land between the two countries, where he eventually dies. Narayanan interprets the story as a powerful exploration of the unexpected consequences of partition and its associated biopolitics. LAWRENCE KESSLER (Philadelphia), in contrast, highlighted the use of the idea of the frontier as an instrument of integration in campaigns supporting the annexation of Hawai'i by the United States in 1898. These deliberately portrayed the island chain as a new frontier offering economic opportunities and land as well as a convenient base for commercial shipping and naval defense. Maps became an important tool in promoting Hawai'i's value for US interests while undermining critics who argued that the islands were too distant from the mainland to make integration into the United States feasible.

The concluding roundtable summarized and further developed conceptual observations made over the course of the Winter School. In discussion, the frontier emerged as a fluid concept that does not always have – or need – a geographically specific location. Rather, where the frontier is, is usually a question of respective actors' points of view. Even when defined spatially, therefore, the frontier remains essentially relational. Moreover, the term frequently involves a value judgement pitting 'civilization' against 'barbarity' or 'emptiness'. As such, the frontier is a strong generator of identity, both in the sense of defining an in-group bounded by it and a sense of superiority and pioneering spirit associated, for instance, with the frontiersmen of the American West. The frontier can also be said to mark a given center's lack of knowledge about – or interest in – what lay beyond. Finally, frontiers are anchored in time, shifting or dissolving according to changing circumstances.

Building on the understanding of the frontier as a subjective category, participants agreed that it is important to pay attention to the terminology used by actors themselves, including their actual languages since many terms regularly translated as 'frontier' into English or closely resembling the English

word carry different connotations.

While the consensus was to reject attempts at narrowly defining 'frontier' and applying it as an analytical category, the concept will doubtlessly remain relevant to scholarship as a heuristic and descriptive tool. Indeed, as we found over the course of the program, the frontier paradigm provides a valuable starting point for interdisciplinary discussion and comparison. Finally, as Mosca pointed out and as, for example, the opening title of the science-fiction TV show „Star Trek“ illustrates, the frontier as an idea is above all marketable. As an emotive expression, it has an established place in fiction, advertising, social and political action, not to mention grant proposal rhetoric.

Conference Overview:

DANIEL MENNING (Tübingen), KRISTIN CONDOTTA LEE (St. Louis, MO), and TOBIAS GRAF (Oxford), Introduction

SIBEL VURGUN (Tübingen), Welcome from the Graduate Academy

PANEL 1: Marking the Frontier

CAROLINE MARRIS (New York), Maritime Borderlands and the Nation-State: Regionalizing the Early Modern English Channel

EDWARD BOYLE (Fukuoka), Triangulating Frontiers: Northeast Asia as Relational Territory between Russia, China, and Japan

UĞUR BAYRAKTAR (Istanbul), Taming the Land: Making of Imperial Peripheries in Ottoman Kurdistan and Albania, 1850–1878

ROUNDTABLE: Working and Writing as an Early Career Scholar

KEYNOTE LECTURE

MATTHEW MOSCA (Seattle), Finding Frontiers in the Early Modern Study of the Mongol Empire

PANEL 2: Living along the Frontier

THOMAS SCHADER (Tübingen), Waiting Room Andalusia: A Heterotopia of Crisis?

OMRI ELMALEH (Tel Aviv University), False Fantasies of Muslim Extremism vs. a Lebanese Trans-National Identity on a South American Triple Frontier

DAVID GLOVSKY (Michigan State University, East Lansing), „It's All the Same Place“: Local Autonomy in a Colonial and Post-Colonial Borderland

EWA MOTYLIŃSKA (Sogang University), Birds Do Not Know Borders: A Case Study on Environmental Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula

POSTER SESSION

IULIA BUYSKYKH (Kyiv/Berlin), The Polyphony of Coexistence: „Everyday Diplomacy“ in Border Communities of Polish Podkarpackie

JON CHAPPELL (London), Remaking Frontiers: Global Influences on China's Borderland Management, 1850–1950

STUART COTTLE (Sydney), The Ethnographer's Nostalgia in Hollywood: Toward a Dialectic of the Frontier

JOHN WYATT GREENLEE (Ithaca, NY), Sovereignty at Anchor: Internal Frontiers and the Dutch Eel Ships on the Thames

MAGNUS HALSNES (Bergen), Dividing the Syrian Desert: From Imperial Frontier Zone to National Borderlines

SONIA ROBLES (Mexico City), Cross-Border Dreams: Mexican Radio Entrepreneurs and Their International Audience

BENOIT VAILLOT (Paris/Florence), Reshaping Borders, Reshaping Nationality: The Alsatians' and Lorrainers' Nationality Option

DAGMAR ZADRAZILOVA (Cambridge), Berlin Tempelhof—Where Cultural and Political Frontiers Meet

PANEL 3: Memorializing the Frontier

STEFFEN WÖLL (Leipzig), Globe, Region and Periphery: The Spatialization of the American West in Antebellum U.S. Literature

NISHANT K. NARAYANAN (Hyderabad), The Bare(d) Life: Between Frontiers and Borders

LACHLAN FLEETWOOD (Cambridge), Instruments and Insecurity: The Imaginative, Scientific and Political Constitution of the Himalaya as a High Mountain Frontier,

1800–1850

LAWRENCE KESSLER (Philadelphia, PA),
The Construction of a Transnational Frontier
in Nineteenth-Century Hawai'i

*ROUNDTABLE: The Benefits and Pitfalls of
the Frontier Paradigm*

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