

Northumbria Research Link

Citation: Cassidy, Kathryn, Yuval-Davis, Nira and Wemyss, Georgie (2018) Intersectional Border(ing)s. *Political Geography*, 66. pp. 139-141. ISSN 0962-6298

Published by: Elsevier

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.08.004> <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2018.08.004>>

This version was downloaded from Northumbria Research Link:
<http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/id/eprint/35013/>

Northumbria University has developed Northumbria Research Link (NRL) to enable users to access the University's research output. Copyright © and moral rights for items on NRL are retained by the individual author(s) and/or other copyright owners. Single copies of full items can be reproduced, displayed or performed, and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided the authors, title and full bibliographic details are given, as well as a hyperlink and/or URL to the original metadata page. The content must not be changed in any way. Full items must not be sold commercially in any format or medium without formal permission of the copyright holder. The full policy is available online: <http://nrl.northumbria.ac.uk/policies.html>

This document may differ from the final, published version of the research and has been made available online in accordance with publisher policies. To read and/or cite from the published version of the research, please visit the publisher's website (a subscription may be required.)



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



UniversityLibrary

Intersectional Border(ing)s

Dr. Kathryn Cassidy, Northumbria University

Professor Nira Yuval-Davis, University of East London

Dr. Georgie Wemyss, University of East London

This special issue of *Political Geography* marks a contribution to the fields of feminist geopolitics and border studies by bringing together a series of papers, which use approaches based on Yuval-Davis' 'situated intersectionality' (2015) to explore everyday bordering within and without contemporary Europe. The special issue is comprised of work undertaken by colleagues from across Europe and beyond as part of work package 9 'Borders, Intersectionality and the Everyday' of the EUBorderscapes project (2012-2016). We term our approach to studying borders, borderscapes and bordering processes as 'situated intersectional bordering'. The main contribution of this approach is that borders and borderings are understood as dialogical constructs and that if we are to understand how they are being made and re-made we must attempt to explore them through the situated gazes of differentially positioned social actors. We therefore suggest a holistic approach to understanding border(ing)s, which is embedded in everyday life. Through the study of the multi-layered complexities of everyday borderings we can 'approach the truth' (Hill-Collins, 1990).

CRITICAL BORDER STUDIES

Since the 1990s, we have seen an emergence of critical approaches in border studies that have sought to challenge the idea that they are somehow an inevitable part of contemporary, territorial organisation that delineates the separation of one 'people' or 'nation' from another. Instead, scholars have highlighted the complex ways in which borders differentiate between groups within space (van Houtum and van Naersson, 2002: 126). This shift has been referred to as 'the processual turn' (Brambilla, 2015). Such recognition has brought with it an understanding that many different practices are shaping these bordering processes (Green, 2013), which are located not 'at the edge' of nation-states but are at the heart of their discursive production, as well as everyday life for people across the world (Lahav and Guiraudon, 2000). Cons and Sanyal (2013) have argued that we see these internal and external bordering processes as both relational and comparative. These ongoing academic developments have been accompanied by shifting politics and policy agendas in border control. Border policy and regimes have entered into everyday life across Europe and elsewhere (Brambilla, 2015). Residents of many countries are increasingly subject to 'bordering' practices in their day to day life (Balibar, 2004) that produce both inclusion and exclusion (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013), and not one political boundary but many (Cons, 2013).

State borders need to be understood as both state boundaries and as symbolic social and cultural lines of inclusion and difference, material and imagined, physical and cultural (Reid et al, 2013). They are based both on collective historical narratives and individual identity constructions of self in which difference is related, but not reducible to, space. Van Houtum et al (2005) use the term 'b/ordering' to refer to the interplay between (social) ordering and border-making. Physical borders are not there only by tradition, wars, agreements and high politics but are also made and maintained by other cultural, economic political and social activities. Everyday 'bordering and ordering' practices create and recreate new social-cultural boundaries and divisions which are also spatial in nature.

Doreen Massey (1994: 149) used the term 'power geometry' to address new images of space, highlighting that such analysis includes 'how different social groups and different individuals are placed in very distinct ways in relation to ... flows and interconnections'. It is not only about who moves and who does not but also about who is in a position of control in relation to movement. As we have argued elsewhere (Yuval-Davis et al, 2018), the de- and re-bordering processes that involve the territorial displacement and relocation of borders and border controls are being carried out by anyone anywhere. Borderings are thereby conceptualised as practices that are situated and constituted in the specificity of political negotiations as well as the everyday life performance of them, being shifting and contested between individuals and groupings as well as in the constructions of individual subjectivities. Such processes are also mediated and remediated through TV documentaries of the role of state border enforcement (Jones, 2014; Philo et al, 2013) and mainstream news coverage of immigration enforcement in which the border is made spectacularly visible (de Genova, 2013). Consequently, we argue that particular constructions of bordering constitute specific forms of political projects of belonging (Yuval-Davis et al 2018, Yuval-Davis et al, forthcoming). Processes of bordering always differentiate between 'us' and 'them', those who are in and those who are out, those who are allowed to cross the borders and those who are not. Moreover, in the context of everyday bordering, 'agents of the state' also make decisions about who and who not to check as they cross the border. Different political projects of belonging construct borders as more or less permeable, view those who want to cross the border as more or less of a threat and construct borders around different criteria for participation and entitlement for those who do cross them.

FEMINIST APPROACHES IN POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

Our approach owes much to the work of feminist scholars, who have sought to ground geopolitics in everyday life and whose work has added to the critical voices challenging the assumptions of classical geopolitical approaches. Feminist scholars often frame this in Foucauldian terms as a 'struggle over dominant meanings' (Waylen, 1996, cited in Secor, 2001: 193). Much of this research focuses on

connecting everyday life with other scales of geopolitical analysis (cf. Secor, 2001). Pratt and Rosner (2006) argue that the intimate is not the opposite of the global but its supplement or even its undoing. Consequently, intimate spaces are not excluded from political life but embedded in it and therefore separating and defining particular spaces as 'political' is an *artificial and political move* (ibid). Whilst feminist work initially focused on doing research in intimate spaces to 'challenge' classical definitions of geopolitical, this clearly reinforced the hegemony of classical geopolitics. Therefore, Rachel Pain and Lynn Staeheli (2014) claim there is a need to acknowledge that intimacy is already present in and foundational to geopolitics (Pain and Staeheli, 2014). Intimate lives and therefore intimacy are also politicised. They conclude that 'all forms of violent oppression work through intimate emotional and psychological registers as a means of exerting control' (Pain and Staeheli, 2014: 344). In Pain's further work, she has highlighted the ways in which domestic violence exists because it is connected to and rooted in violence across other scales (Pain, 2015).

Another example of this multiscalarity is the relationship between the international and the everyday, which has been explored by Dowler and Sharp (2001). Mundane practices are in dialogue with and mutually co-constructing 'national' and 'international' scales. Feminist geopolitics argues for research in the everyday, where the geopolitical is worked out and embodied. In doing this research, feminists have highlighted the ways in which bodies are not inactive agents in this process. Examples of this include the work of Nick Gill and colleagues (2014) on asylum and immigration detention in the UK and Kye Askins (2014) on a refugee befriending scheme in Newcastle. Both studies describe the importance of access or being together in these attempts to disrupt or resist the impact of policy-making, which seeks to exclude or create belonging/unbelonging (Askins, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2011). Askins describes the way in which the befriending programme operated by a refugee organisation in Newcastle sees participants 'co-constructing securities through reciprocal care' (2014: 354). She refers to the relationships between refugees and the befrienders as 'quiet politics'. There is not, therefore, one but in fact many feminist geopolitics. This work informs and is informed by border studies' research in three key ways: research that was previously oppositional, i.e. working at differential levels of the macro and micro comes together in the meso, an arena in which we can see how everyday social actions are shaped by structural factors; secondly it is by default multiscalar, exploring not only the global and/or the intimate, but everything in between; finally, it is differentially sited – actually the 'where' is important too – the body, the home, the workplace, as well as the policy documents and elite political discourse.

SITUATED INTERSECTIONALITY AND BORDERS

Finally, it is important to explain why we contend that intersectionality analysis should be so central to research on bordering. Intersectionality relates to the distribution of power and other resources in society and does not reduce the complexity of power constructions into a single social division, as has been prevalent, for instance in sociological stratification theories which would privilege only class divisions. At the same time, unlike some other intersectionality approaches, situated intersectionality does not see the different social divisions which construct power relations as additive (e.g. in Bryan et al., 1985), cross-cutting (e.g. Crenshaw, 1989) or interlocking (e.g. Hill-Collins, 1990), but rather as mutually constituted and shaped, forming the particular nuanced and contested meanings of particular social locations in particular historical moments, within particular social, economic and political contexts in which some social divisions have more saliency and effect.

However, although in concrete situations the different social divisions constitute each other, they are irreducible to each other – each of them has a different ontological discourse of particular dynamics of power relations of exclusion and/or exploitation, using a variety of legitimate and illegitimate technologies of inferiorizations, intimidations and sometimes actual violence to achieve this (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1983; Yuval-Davis, 2006). For example, class relations are constructed around notions of production and consumption; gender – those of sexuality and reproduction; race/ethnicity as constructed by particular phenotypical or cultural boundaries; ability around the notion of ‘the normal’ etc. Social inequalities amount to much more than the mere lifestyle ‘distinctions’ of the culturalist approach to stratification. Therefore, if we are to understand borderings as constructed within everyday life, we must pay attention not only to these social divisions, but also their constitution within hierarchies of power.

This special issue contains six papers that explore situated intersectional borderings at different scales and in a range of contexts. Bürkner’s paper on social and spatial imaginaries in EU policies considers institutionalized norms, which potentially shape everyday bordering practices. His explorations of conflicts inherent in these imaginaries show that humanitarian imperatives are inevitably overpowered by utilitarian imaginaries – be they economic or social, which often operate together in any case.

Horsti and Pellander introduce us to the ways in which borders are made visible by a form of protest – hunger strike – in urban space, as well as the way in which this making visible is mediated and re-mediated by different social actors revealing their particular situated gazes. Their analysis of particular positionalities illustrates how some asylum seekers come to be discursively created as threatening, whilst others are represented as deserving of humanitarianism. Attempts at moving hunger strikers marked a form of bordering, which echoes the removal of asylum seekers from national territory and their deportation.

Özdemir and Ayata explore everyday bordering in the offices of intermediaries in Turkey to whom EU countries outsource Schengen visa application and administration services, deftly elucidating how the 'Schengen wall' is differentially experienced and understood by Turkish nationals. Middle and upper-middle class Turks view the process as a civilizational border, which challenges their European identity and excludes them from belonging whilst lower class, less educated Turks, view the process as a bureaucratic one, as they do not share a sense of European identity or equality with their European neighbours that is challenged by the process. The EU is not only making its own border with Turkey but also reproducing and recreating social boundaries and inequalities within Turkey itself.

Nikiforova and Brednikova explore everyday de- and rebordering in Russia from the differentiated perspectives of families from Central Asia arguing that the dominant view of Central Asian migrants as 'homo laborans' has shaped policies that effectively deny them the right to a family life. 'Time' and 'space' constraints have a particular impact upon migrant children and their access to and continuity of education.

The special issue contains two papers on the UK that use intersectional analyses to unpack the trans-scalar, trans-spatial and trans-temporal dynamics of everyday bordering; the first explores de- and rebordering in the border town of Dover and the emergence of what we term 'post-borderland borderscapes'; the second brings together the geopolitical with intimate borderings through examining media discourses and legislation concerned with so-called 'sham marriages' following 2004 EU enlargement.

All the papers in this special issue illustrate how intersectionality can be operationalized to better understand contemporary borderings. In our approach, it is not sufficient to acknowledge that the social positioning of individuals means that they differentially experience and contribute to borderings. We need to understand these processes as dynamic and dialogical, i.e. being mutually (re)constructed in a range of different settings. Drawing out this complexity is absolutely critical at a time when we see worrying levels of over-simplification of these issues in public and political discourses.

REFERENCES

- Anthias F and Yuval-Davis N (1983) Contextualizing feminism: Gender, ethnic and class divisions *Feminist review* 15: 62-75.
- Askins K (2014) A quiet politics of being together: Miriam and Rose *Area* 46: 353–64
- Askins K (2015) Being together: everyday geographies and the quiet politics of belonging *ACME: International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 14: 461–9
- Balibar É (2004) *We, the People of Europe. Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*, Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press.

- Brambilla C (2015) Exploring the critical potential of the borderscapes concept. *Geopolitics* 20(1): 14-34.
- Bryan B, Dadzie S and Scafe S (1985) *The Heart of the Race: Black Women's Lives in Britain* London: Virago.
- Cons J (2013) Narrating boundaries: Framing and contesting suffering, community, and belonging in enclaves along the India–Bangladesh border *Political Geography* 35: 37-46.
- Cons J and Sanyal R (2013) Geographies at the margins: borders in South Asia—an introduction *Political Geography* 35: 5-13.
- Crenshaw K (1989) Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics *The University of Chicago Legal Forum* 139-167.
- De Genova N (2013) Spectacles of migrant 'illegality': the scene of exclusion, the obscene of inclusion *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 36(7):1180-1198.
- Dowler L and Sharp J (2001) A feminist geopolitics? *Space and Polity* 5(3): 165-76.
- Gill N, Conlon D, Oeppen C, and Tyler I (2014) The tactics of asylum and irregular migrant support groups: disrupting bodily, technological and neoliberal strategies of control *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 104(2): 373-381.
- Hill-Collins P (1990) *Black Feminist Thought, Consciousness and the politics of empowerment* London: Harper Collins.
- van Houtum H and van Naerssen T (2002) Bordering, ordering and othering. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 93(2):125-136.
- van Houtum H, Kramsch, O and Zierhofen W (2005) Prologue: Bordering space in van Houtum H, Kramsch O and Zierhofen W (Eds.) *Bordering space* Ashgate: Aldershot, pp. 1-13.
- Jones R (2014) Border wars: Narratives and images of the US-Mexico border on TV in Johnson C and Jones R (Eds.) *Placing the Border in Everyday Life* Ashgate: Abingdon, pp.185-204.
- Lahav G and Guiraudon V (2000) Comparative Perspectives on Border Control: Away from the Border and Outside the State in Andreas P and Snyder T (Eds.) *The Wall around the West* Rowman & Littlefield: Boulder, pp 55-77.
- Massey D (1994) *Place, space and gender* University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Mezzadra S and Neilson B (2013) *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labour* Duke University Press: Durham and London.
- Reid MB, Graham B and Nash C (2013) *Partitioned Lives: The Irish Borderlands* Ashgate: London.
- Pain R (2015) Intimate war *Political Geography* 44: 64-73.

- Pain R and Staeheli L (2014) Introduction: Intimacy-geopolitics and violence *Area* 46(4): 344-347.
- Philo G, Briant E and Donald P (2013) *Bad news for refugees*. Pluto Press: London.
- Pratt G and Rosner V (2006) Introduction: the global and the intimate *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34(1&2): 13-24.
- Secor AJ (2001) Toward a Feminist Counter-geopolitics: Gender, Space and Islamist Politics in Istanbul *Space and Polity* 5(3): 191-211.
- Yuval-Davis N (2015) Situated intersectionality and social inequality *Raisons politiques* 2: 91-100.
- Yuval-Davis N (2011) *The politics of belonging: Intersectional contestations*. Sage: London.
- Yuval-Davis N (2006) Intersectionality and feminist politics *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(3): 193-209.
- Yuval-Davis N, Wemyss G and Cassidy K (2018) Everyday bordering, belonging and the re-orientation of British Immigration Legislation *Sociology* 52(2): 228-244.
- Yuval-Davis N, Wemyss, G and Cassidy K (forthcoming) *Bordering* Polity Press: Cambridge.