Reading Borders in the Everyday

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Reading borders in the everyday: bordering-as-practice

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Introduction

Almost a century ago (notably following the 1918-1920 influenza pandemic), philosophical anthropologist Helmuth Plessner (1924) asserted that humans are essentially border phenomena; they are constantly torn between the desire to be part of community and the simultaneous need to realise themselves as individuals. Indeed, as they co-evolve with the ecosystems of which they are intrinsically part, humans have had to negotiate these contradictory desires since the beginning of time. Throughout history, humans have had to protect themselves from enemies, be they germs, animals, groups of other humans; they have had to protect their resources from adverse weather conditions, pests and raiding invaders; they have had to institutionalise borders in order to ensure the resilient functioning of their community (Barth 1969a). Their evolution and survival has depended on their ability to create and maintain boundaries between themselves and others, be it at the scale of the individual, group, community or, eventually, nation or state. Humans are, indeed, border phenomena, and bordering a quintessential human practice.

The current pandemic brings to the fore the primordial nature of bordering. Today, just as a century ago, when Plessner made his assertions, we are experiencing a deadly pandemic. Business as usual and everyday life as we knew it was brought to an abrupt and painful halt once the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) began spreading and killing people in every corner of the planet. Apart from frequent handwashing, 'social distancing' – the abstaining from face-to-face interactions – came quickly to be understood as a key measure towards preventing infection and slowing the spread of the virus. Bordering, in the time of COVID-19 (the illness associated with SARS-CoV-2), takes place across all scales: from that of the individual (we wear face masks and keep two metres away from others) to that of the city (Wuhan, the epicentre of the pandemic outbreak, was isolated from the rest of the world for several months, and countless other cities followed suit) to that of the nation state (countries across the world were quick to seal their borders in order to avoid transmission).

Albeit social by nature, humans today are, once again, forced to create and maintain boundaries in order to protect themselves and others. Bordering is at work as people adjust to the emerging conditions of a new normal under lockdown. Many have to (re)learn bordering as their accustomed life-worlds are forced to contract: instead of leaving the home in the morning and navigating the city and spend their day at their place of work, people are now confined to the boundaries of their houses, their flats or even rooms (given a large proportion of the world's urban population resides in informal settlements (United Nations 2015)). The spatiality of the work environment is entirely transformed now that dining rooms double as home offices to be fiercely guarded against invasion by flatmates, spouses or children. The temporality of work is transformed as designated working hours are carved out against increased and oftentimes unpredictable caring responsibilities with schools and nurseries no longer open (needless to say that this is of course a highly gendered process that disproportionately affects women, see Lewis 2020).

Bordering is an important everyday practice. In this chapter, I argue for the study of bordering-as-practice using a practice-theoretical approach (Bourdieu and Nice 1977, Reckwitz 2002, Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012). Practice theory offers suitable frameworks that can be applied in response to a wide variety of bordering-related research questions. For instance, Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) conceptualise practice as the composite of materialities (such as the changing physical presence of 'things' that represent a border); competences (such as knowing how to create, maintain, cross etc. a border); and meanings (the symbolic meanings associated with a border). This threefold framework can be applied to capture the changing relationships between the elements that make up the complex and dynamic system of bordering.

Border studies across anthropology, geography and geopolitics has traditionally focused on the borders between ethnic groups and nation states (Boggs 1940, Minghi 1963, Barth 1969b, Newman 2006, 2011). In this chapter, I introduce a practice-theoretical framework for the study of borders and look specifically at the scale of architecture. I argue that bordering is a primordial social practice that takes place across all scales of human activity and influence and can therefore be better understood if we begin studying it as such. In the following sections, I first provide a sketch of borders as sociospatial entities. I then move on to introduce practice theory (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012) as a vehicle for the analysis of bordering as a primordial social practice. The analytical lens of bordering-as-practice will add necessary nuance to sometimes overly theoretical or philosophical approaches in border studies. It will allow us to consider the complex interactions between physical, perceived and enacted borders and how the aggregate of bordering as social practice (and related practices) shapes and is shaped by the existence of concrete borders – their emergence, presence and vanishing.

Border studies in transition

The field of border studies, concerned with the study of borders, boundaries and borderlands, has undergone tremendous transformation over the last decades, from seeing borders as lines in the sand to the contemporary tendency of studying the complex processes that create, maintain and dismantle them (Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009).

Traditionally, borders are understood as the physical manifestations of political, social and economic processes. In line with this, Simmel (1997, 142) argues that a boundary is but 'a sociological fact that forms itself spatially'. Yet border studies is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, having moved from a field exclusive to geographers, cartographers and diplomats to one that is of interest to sociologists, anthropologists and those professionally engaged with borders (Newman 2011). Despite efforts towards consolidation, however, border studies has not yet succeeded in establishing a common theoretical or analytical framework for the study of borders across different disciplines and scales. It remains a 'thematic discipline' – 'an interdisciplinary field, broadly spanning the social sciences and humanities, as far as they focus on borders as empirical phenomena' (Jacobs and Van Assche 2014, 183).

Borders, today, are seen as institutions – whether formal or informal – for the marking of physical or symbolic difference (Newman and Paasi 1998, van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005). In contrast to the traditional classification of boundaries in geography according to their morphology, (natural) features, origin, history, age, delimitation and function (Kolossoff 2005, 611), recent studies have begun to interpret borders in a less spatially bound manner. They are firmly understood as sociospatial entities. Paasi (2012) outlines the twofold practices that underpin the meaning of borders as (a) the invisible, discursive/emotional landscapes of bordering fuelled by the institutionalisation and governance of territorial spaces (bringing the simplistic

people/nation/culture notions into relation with each other in order to trigger associations of national heritage, purity and symbolism); and (b) the technical landscapes of bordering which are related to biopolitics and enabled by the practices of surveillance and control.

Green (2012, 579) suggests that borders (and borderlands) cannot be understood as an empirical category because borders do not have inherent characteristics in the same ways that things or places do. She is right here, if we assume that borders are depicted as 'self-evident entities that have certain fixed characteristics', as 'nothing, as almost pure abstraction', or as the 'outcome of bordering practices'. If, however, we explore borders as the spaces that divide what we would categorise as different in terms of spatial, social or otherwise defined qualities, and if we name these entities, defining their characteristics (both relational as well as actually existing), we can begin to recognise borderness (as an adjective) and therefore borders as entities.

Because they are no longer located exclusively at the border, but can be situated anywhere within a bounded territory (airports, for instance, as a point of entry), borders have become 'mobile' (Sassen 2013, De Genova 2015). De Genova (2015), for instance, explores intersections between transnational migration and urban space - building on work on Mexican migration to Chicago. In particular, he asserts the idea of a 'Mexican Chicago', that is, a Chicago that belongs to Mexico despite being physically situated in the US. He sees Chicago as the 'border' that has 'imploded' into the US - a border that is 'no longer merely a line that could be imagined to separate the "inside" from the "outside" of a presumably integrated and unified national territory. Instead, the border had effectively been folded in upon itself, compressed, perforated and tangled, ruptured and scattered' (De Genova 2015, 6). The border is now considered a dynamic process that transverses location and spatial scales.

Contemporary debate conceptualises borders as transitional spaces. Borders 'create socio-spatial distinctions between places, individuals and groups' and are considered continuously in the making (Kolossov and Scott 2013, para 7). A pragmatic understanding of bordering derives 'generalizable knowledge from practices of border creation, confirmation and transcendence' whilst a critical understanding theorises, questions and contests 'the conditions that give rise to border-generating categories' (Kolossov and Scott 2013, para 7). Green (2012, 576/577) asserts that 'borders always involve a form of classification and categorization of the world [...] Minimally, classification systems provide a means for grouping and distinguishing; and borders become recognizable when one or more distinctions are perceived and/or imposed'. This is, essentially, the act of attaching meaning; it is what I have elsewhere written about as 'identity' processes, the classification and categorisation of the world around us (both the social and spatial world!) and where we situate/locate ourselves within it. Identity processes play out at the scale of the individual (Who am I? Which group do I identify with?) as well as the neighbourhood (the very trigger and/or consequence of segregation), the city and, of course, the nation state.

Paasi (2012) argues for the analysis of 'social practices and discourses' that produce borders 'as processes, sets of sociocultural practices, symbols, institutions and networks' (2304). Beyond looking at the processes that create them as separate from borders as physically existing, however, I argue we should consider a practice theoretical approach to the study of borders which lets us understand them as embedded within bordering-as-practice. That is, physical borders are a constituting part of a larger bordering practice that includes a series of elements that can be classified as materialities, competences and meanings (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012).

A practice-theoretical framework for the study of borders

Social practice theory is a theoretical approach that takes practice to be the central unit of enquiry, hence effectively resolving the classic distinctions between structure and agency – or macro- and micro-levels – in the social sciences (Warde 2005). 'Practice' here denotes 'a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002, 249). Practices are thought as 'recognisable entities that exist across time and space, that depend on inherently provisional integrations of elements, and that are enacted by cohorts' of those who carry them out (Shove 2014, 418).

The practice-theoretical perspective 'defines the social neither on the basis of the agents nor of the structure. [The] locus of the social is the practice [...] which is located, structured and observable in the 'in-between' (Wille 2015, 61). A practice-theoretical approach, therefore, assumes that society is not a 'thing', but rather 'an entity that continuously constitutes and deconstitutes itself' (Wille 2015, 61) – something that is constantly becoming.

Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) provide a conceptual framework for the understanding of social practice that relates materials, competences and meanings. Materials are the tangible physical entities that are part of practices, such as things or technologies. Competences are the required knowledge, techniques, skills and know-how. Meanings are the ideas and aspirations that shape practices. A commonly used example to illustrate this three-fold framework is that of skateboarding: it requires a skateboard, the street and possibly a range of other 'things', such as sturdy shoes; it also requires the skills to ride a skateboard and knowledge of and ability to operate specific techniques, such as difficult turns or jumps; finally, skateboarding is associated with a subculture revolting against capitalism and commodity (Borden 2001).

Practices depend on the availability and distribution of financial and material resources, the expertise and physical ability of those performing them as well as the social constructs associated with them. As humans interact with the material world, they produce, reproduce and attach to this world meanings that change over time (Miettinen, Samra-Fredericks, and Yanow 2009). This is reflected in Shove's notion of 'practice systems [...] that co-evolve together' (Shove 2003, 397). A practice-theoretical conceptual, methodological and analytical toolkit allows social science research to uncover just how this complex web of materialities and meanings is formed and transformed. Importantly, the practice-theoretical approach is firmly rooted in attempts to understand the everyday and how everyday social practice reflects shifting social norms – including 'notions of what it is to be a normal and acceptable member of society' (Shove 2004, 77). It seeks to uncover just how everyday routines emerge, take foot and dissolve precisely through the interactions between humans and the socio-eco-technical systems of which they are part.

People take up and drop out of certain practices throughout their lifetimes and thus the 'careers of practices-as-entities are defined by the performances of changing cohorts of carriers' (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012, 65). That is, social practice is dynamic. It is continuously changing because elements as well the links or relationships between these change over time. Furthermore, individual practices co-evolve; how they develop depends on the relationships between different practices.

Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012, 81) distinguish between 'bundles' ('loose-knit patterns based on the co-location and co-existence of practices') and 'complexes' ('stickier and more integrated combinations, some so dense that they constitute new entities in their own right'). Furthermore,

practice complexes have emergent characteristics ‘which cannot be reduced to the individual practices of which they are composed’ (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012, 87). Space and its layout as well as temporality (the sequencing of practices) play important roles in the transformation of social practices. Temporality in particular shapes the practice-time profiles of practices – the ‘embedded conventions of duration, sequence and timing associated with the competent performance of a practice’ (Shove 2009, 25).

Inherently, a practice theoretical framework calls for the study of practices within a clearly defined spatial and temporal context. But how is such a framework useful for the study of borders, boundaries and borderlands? In the simplest of terms, borders are the tangible physical entities (the materiality) of the quintessential human social practice of bordering. Therefore, bordering can and should be studied using a practice-theoretical lens, relating materials, competences and meanings. The practice-theoretical framework allows to capture the complexity of contemporary borders, boundaries and borderlands. From a practice-theoretical perspective, Shove (2014, 425) conceptualises institutional projects as ‘complex amalgams of past trajectories and current aims and aspirations, many of which are materially sustained and reinforced by the state [including] conventions of family life, systems of provision and consumption, economic relations and more’. Such an understanding allows to progress the conceptualisation of borders as institutional projects (Newman and Paasi 1998, van Houtum, Kramsch, and Zierhofer 2005). Whilst the literature in practice theory is currently very much focused on the patterns of resource consumption in everyday life, the ways in which the state is thought as inscribed in the reproduction of institutions and systems can certainly be adopted and applied to grapple with critical questions in border studies.

Bordering-as-practice

The analytical framework presented above offers a clear blueprint for the study of borders as socio-technical fabrications and intrinsic to bordering-as-practice. The approach is particularly suited to the scale of architecture and the city, where borders are at the heart of architectural and urban design/planning (professional) practice. There cannot be architecture without the drawn lines that signify what is inside and what outside; what is public and what private; where one function takes place and where another. The line is the bread and butter of architects, urban designers and other built environment related design professionals. Where it is placed determines where one thing ends – and another begins. Architecture is a ‘border-making practice’ (Hatuka and Kallus 2006, 23).

The product of borders in architectural design are the built fences, walls, doors and windows or otherwise defined objects or spaces that serve the purpose of separating. Usually, they separate spaces according to their designated function, bounding spaces and/or enabling transitions from one space to another. Just which functions are separated, and how, differs greatly from one cultural context to another; from one geographical context to another; from one temporal context to another. For instance, kitchens – serving the purpose of preparing food – transitioned, at least in the United Kingdom, from occupying distinct rooms just a couple of generations ago to the more contemporary standard of the open plan kitchens (i.e., kitchens combined with living rooms). The boundary between preparing food, dining and living as essential parts of everyday life became blurred in response of the integration of changing gender roles (women entering the work force), new consumption habits (ordering in or eating out) and, more pragmatically, seeking to lower the cost of construction in building fewer walls (Cieraad 2002, Saarikangas 2006). To refer back to the practice-theoretical framework presented above (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012): in this case, the seemingly small intervention of removing one partition wall substantially impacts on everyday life in allowing traditionally separate practices to occur in and produce new bundles and complexes.

At the scale of the city, physical (or temporal) proximity is understood to increase ‘the chances of cross-fertilisation between otherwise unrelated practices’ (Shove, Pantzar, and Watson 2012, 86). For instance, Florida (2002) has been extremely influential in urban policy circles in arguing that the co-location of creative industry businesses in clusters within cities leads to the emergence of vibrancy, innovation and creativity. A similar argument, albeit in quite a different guise, is brought forward by Amin and Thrift (2007) who emphasise the important role that co-existing and co-located practices in dense urban environments play in the emergence of creativity and innovation. Borders, boundaries and borderlands therefore play a critical role in the emergence of specifically ‘urban’ practices. Especially at the urban scale, the contiguity and co-existence of other practices within the borderlands of urban fragments give rise to new, hybrid and potentially highly resilient urbanities (Iossifova 2009, 2012, 2015).

In architecture, the role and function of borders and boundaries has long presented a bone of contention among the disciples of different theoretical (and ideological) convictions in architecture and urban design. For instance, the loss of well-defined boundaries has been identified as a main reason for the decline of our buildings and cities in recent decades by those propagating a return to more traditional values in architecture and urban design (e.g., Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 1999, Salingaros 2009, Samalavicius 2013, Salingaros 2016, 2017). According to the New Urbanism movement, the Modern Movement and its persistence on permeable borders (transparent walls, temporary and transportable buildings) stands in stark contrast to the building traditions of the past and brings about the detachment of people from architecture and public space – a loss of sense of place (Augé 1995). Emerging around WWI, the Modern Movement was situated within the context of ‘incalculable migration movements, ranging from migrant workers, tourism and rural exodus to troop movement, exile, foreign occupation and streams of refugees’ (Lethen 1996, 302). It sought to remove everything but the largest scale in the name of design purity, thus stripping spaces of their framing (provided by bollards, colonnades, arcades and the like) and users of their anchors in and attachment to space (Salingaros 2016, 12) – an architecture for nomadic users. Its pureness, permeability and temporary nature would eventually make modernist architecture so difficult to preserve – and a target for the critique of those who desired ‘warmth, rootedness and solid walls of protection’, those who claimed their ‘right to a lack of transparency and darkness’ (Lethen 1996, 303). In a sense, the tension discussed above mirrors Plessner’s (1924) assertion that humans are inherently torn between their desire for freedom and their need to be part of community.

Contemporary architects tend to draw from an extensive repertoire of well-rehearsed gestures to achieve desired boundary effects in the perception of users. They are aware of the multiple functions of boundaries, distinguishing strong boundaries (those clearly separating interior and exterior, for instance, and serving control); blurred boundaries (boundaries that facilitate communication); and explicit boundaries (or borderlands, i.e. transitional spaces that combine the features of the spaces they separate and develop their own identity). The architect’s repertoire builds on formal and material (haptic) moves that carry culturally established meanings. I shall demonstrate this briefly on a design project (the ‘atrium house’, Figure 1) that I completed some two decades ago when training to become an architect. The example serves to illustrate several classic design tactics for the treatment of boundaries in architectural design. These include, among others, the choice of flooring to create thresholds (e.g. stone vs. hardwood); façade material to indicate openness or privacy (e.g., concrete vs. glass); and ceiling height to suggest levels of intimacy (high vs. low).

The brief called for the design of a detached house for an artist, in this particular case a writer. The building perimeter is defined by a hard boundary (an external wall) that coils around an internal courtyard to offer protection and isolation from the external environment. This solid exposed concrete wall in the shape of a square has no openings to the outside to project solitude; the sole exception is a window which illuminates an otherwise completely isolated study (Figure 1, top right). The perimeter wall spirals into the centre of the square and comes to an end immersed in the surrounding reflecting pool. Here, it is met by the glass façade which envelops the courtyard and separates it from the interior – it is a boundary that, in its transparency, offers the illusion to *not* be there at all. The journey into the house begins by entering an open air corridor (Figure 1, top left (top right corner of building plan)), walls to both sides. Upon the first turn one enters the building by stepping through a glass door, part of the glass façade enveloping the courtyard. The blurring of boundaries between inside and outside is supported by the continuity of the stone paving covering the ground. This changes only after passing the enclosed study room – the only explicitly enclosed room in the building – and once the ‘living area’ (bottom left in building plan) is reached. Another turn, solid wall to one side and glass wall to the other, leads to the dining area, then kitchen area, then relaxation area, then sleeping area and finally the bathing area. The journey culminates in an interior bath – the most private and intimate of all spaces – level with the reflecting pool outside and separated from it only by a sheet of glass. The levels of privacy increase gradually with the transition through the house in a counter-clockwise fashion. This increasing privacy is echoed in the sloping of the roof, at its highest at the entrance and reaching the lowest floor-to-ceiling height as it reaches the reflecting pool at the heart of the building.

Figure 1: Plan of 'atrium house' (top left); rendering of study interior (top right); top view, entrance corridor, relaxation area/courtyard and courtyard (bottom, from left to right). Source: Deljana Iossifova (2002).

So far, I have demonstrated just how the materiality of borders in architecture is enmeshed with specific meanings that are carried across the cognitive domains of architects (professionals) and the users of buildings and the built environment. There is, however, still the element of 'competences' as part of Shove, Pantzar, and Watson's (2012) framework. Just how do we produce, reproduce or disassemble boundaries and borders? I will illustrate this briefly on two examples: the treatment of the transition zone between public and private on the case of the British terraced house; and the ways in which we negotiate space (and time) to work from home.

Figure 2: British terrace house. Note the differential treatment of the front yard depending on the desired level of privacy. Source: Deljana Iossifova (2020).

The British terraced house is renowned for its adaptability and flexibility. Presumably, it can be extended both horizontally and vertically: 'the front room might be divided to provide a kitchen next to the living room, or a bathroom might be inserted between the first floor front and back rooms; vertically the generous height allows false ceilings for services where necessary' (Till and Schneider 2005, 288). Beyond the flexibility of altering the interior through the insertion or deletion of partitions to accommodate different and changing functions across the lifetime of its user, the terraced house affords the opportunity to adjust the boundary between inside and outside, between public and private, corresponding to the needs and tastes of users. Figure 2 shows the different ways in which this boundary is delimited by home owners or occupiers: to the right, the choice of adjustable window blinds and no further screens, apart from the obligatory fence and gate, to provide transparency and the ability to look out for those inside as well as to take a peek into the living room from outside (right); to the left, the deliberate choice of a dense green hedge that has

been let to grow to eye level in order to prevent contact between the outside and the inside. These seemingly small interventions are expressions of bordering-as-practice.

Taking inspiration from the experience of coronavirus lockdown, the second example is concerned with the ways in which we negotiate boundaries within the most private of spaces: home. I draw here on my personal experience of learning to carve out space and time for work during the day whilst looking after two small children – always conscious of my position of relative privilege. My current place of work is a sofa in one of the two bedrooms of a two-storey terraced house. With the children running about and the kitchen in use for the preparation of meals most of the time, the open plan kitchen/living room do not lend themselves to work, albeit offering a comfortable dining table. My partner works on the sofa in the mornings whilst I take calls or write with the computer on my lap in the afternoons. The door to this bedroom cannot be fully closed, so the space is vulnerable to the ‘invasion’ by other members of the household at all times. Trial-and-error over the course of a few days led us to settle on the convention of fixing an old blanket between the door and a wardrobe to act like a screen – an extra layer of protection against unwanted visits.

A query among friends and colleagues on social media revealed that many find themselves working under similar conditions. One, for example, had used her conservatory (or ‘Florida room’ in the US) as a storage space prior to the lockdown and converted this to an ‘office space’ for herself in response to the closure of her institution (Figure 3, top left). The conservatory is mostly separated from the rest of the living spaces although there is no door. The room is divided between a reading nook (Figure 3, top right) and space for her writing/working desk (Figure 3, bottom). She shares the reading nook with her son for an hour of ‘family reading time’ per day. To create a starting boundary

for work time, she lights a candle when she sits down to work at her computer and blows it out when done for the day, thus creating a temporal boundary between work and family time.

Figure 3: Conservatory-turned-office-space. Source: Melissa Garr (2020)

These examples demonstrate how bordering is inscribed in our everyday. As noted in the introduction, we are currently acutely aware of our own bordering practice as we adjust to life under the new rules imposed on us by the coronavirus pandemic. We learn to shield from contact with others, including the members of our family, as we attempt to protect ourselves, our spaces and our time, to (re-)structure presumably fixed categories of private and public, leisure and work. Beliefs, values and norms are driving individual boundary- and border-making. Such individual actions are compounded into the social practice of bordering at the scale of architecture and the city, which in

turn underpins the assumption that borders are no longer located between nation states (if that was ever the case), but unfold very much within our cities and even homes (Sassen 2013, De Genova 2015). In order to understand them, we need to study bordering-as-practice.

Conclusions

Border studies has traditionally engaged with the borders between nation states. Whilst there have been significant advances over the past decades, allowing us to understand borders as complex sociospatial entities, I argue that borders are embedded in the everyday and that therefore they should be studied across scales – and particularly at the scale of the human – using a practice-theoretical framework. Such a framework offers possibilities to dissolve the classic structure-agency dilemma in border studies and focuses on bordering as the unit of analysis.

Bordering-as-practice can be studied through the domains of materials, meanings and competences and their dynamic relationships. To implement such an approach, we need to draw on the pragmatic analysis of borders-as-things in order to understand the stuff of which they are made; on the social sciences and humanities to examine the meanings associated with borders as expressions of categorisation; and on the manifold ways to study the cognitive processes of learning and knowing how to create, maintain and dismantle borders. Only then can we begin to understand how the relationships between the elements located within these domains change over time as they are linked with wider human and environmental systems. Borders are part of bordering processes across all scales. It may well be that we need to study bordering-as-practice at the human scale in order to draw conclusions about borders at other scales of sociospatial organisation.

Finally, the current COVID-19 pandemic brings to the fore the primordial nature of bordering-as-practice. It raises many questions about the fundamental organisational principles in our lives as individuals, society and, ultimately, species. In closing, I therefore wish to call for a greater consideration of 'nature' and ecological systems in border studies. Humans and their actions are inherently linked with the environment. Human-environment interactions should, particularly in times of climate emergency, form part of any analytical framework concerned with borders, boundaries and borderlands. The notion of bordering-as-practice can serve as a suitable starting point for the extended reading of the human/non-human interface.

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