

# ATMOSPHERIC BORDERS

## Australian Critical Border Studies – October 2023 Virtual Symposium

**Dates:** 4th, 5th and 6th October 2023 (Wednesday-Friday, Brisbane AEST time)

**Format:** Online via Zoom

**Program Version:** 03 October 2023

Registration via **Eventbrite**:

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/atmospheric-borders-virtual-symposium-tickets-680582339097?aff=oddtcreator>

**Zoom details:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83808292243?pwd=TkdXRDN0Vzk2a01PU01QM0tmNDJhZz09>

Meeting ID: 838 0829 2243

Passcode: **hsmvxZH80-**

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## Introduction: Atmospheric Borders

What kinds of atmospheres do borders produce? What kinds of borders do atmospheres produce? Recent scholarship on borders has focused on abstract and conceptual implications of bordering practices and explored notions such as thresholds, tensions, im/mobilities, and multispecies concerns. Discussions have demonstrated the affective power of borders by focusing on how their inherent violence produces bodily affects. Recent work on posthuman and more-than-human borders has also shown how bodies entangle one another on the border (Pallister-Wilkins, 2022; Ozguc & Burridge, 2023; Youatt, 2020). And scholarship on biosecurity alerts us to the many scales at which borders operate, which are often invisible and outside of the human frame of attention (e.g. Barry, 2021; Liu & Bennett 2020). Despite such emphasis on mobility of borders, their affective power and more-than-human entanglements, how such violence is produced through economic and political atmospheres remains unanswered. In this symposium we seek to contribute to ongoing debates on borders through interrogating the notion of the atmospheric.

While the notion of “atmospheres” is widely used in literature on ‘affect’ (Anderson, 2009), border atmospherics (Dijstelbloem & Walters, 2021) and the bordering processes that political atmospheres are implicated in have received less attention (Closs Stephens, 2022). There are, however, numerous examples revealing such atmospherics. The border industrial complex, for example, relies on political atmospheres of crisis that propel an ongoing upholding of state-sanctioned or offshored bordering practices, that reach beyond the eyes of the general public. Then there is the nationalism that seeps through public debate, or the radicalisation that sweeps people away, which manifest as political atmospheres.

There are also ecological forms of bordering that have atmospheric qualities. In conjunction with the slow violence of climate change, borders are taking shape in unexpected environmental affects. 2022 was another year of unprecedented weather and climate events, as disasters divided communities in cities and regions around the world. The devastating floods in Pakistan saw millions of people displaced, as watery borders isolated and segmented off the landscape. Similar widespread flooding across the continent of Australia saw bordering enter public discourse again, as communities were “cut off” by temporary borders on an immense, continental scale. The recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria caused large scale displacement and forced migration, again raising questions about how geologic borders take shape, and questions around whether politics and planning take responsibility for such devastation. These are only a few examples of how social, political, economic, and ecological atmospheres are produced through bordering processes and practices while revealing the ways in which borders maintain such slippery, ephemeral presence around the world.

In this symposium we seek conversations about atmospheric borders to think more deeply about when bordering occurs due to atmospheric conditions in widely varied social, political and ecological contexts. How is research in contemporary border studies grappling with the multifaceted and extreme kinds of atmospheric events that manifest borders in such “unprecedented” ways? How do everyday political atmospheres contribute to bordering processes? What do atmospheric borders teach us about more-than-human borders? How can the conceptualisation of atmospheric borders contribute to ongoing conceptual and empirical debates in critical border studies?

## References

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### **Organised by:**

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*For the Australian Critical Border Studies Network*

<https://acbsworking.group/>

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## Time zone converter

The table below converts the time of the Conference Program (AEST, UTC+10) to the participants' local time on 04-06 October 2023. Please double-check for accuracy.

\*Day-1 Same day

AEST Time [UTC+10] (row) → Local time (column) ↓		8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM
Phoenix, AZ, USA	UTC-7	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM
Mexico City, Mexico	UTC-5	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM
Louisville, KY, USA	UTC-4	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM
Santiago, Chile	UTC-4	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM
Waterloo, Canada	UTC-4	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM
Newcastle, England	UTC+1	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
Belfast, Northern Ireland	UTC+1	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
London, England	UTC+1	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
Exeter, England	UTC+1	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
Cambridge, England	UTC+1	11:00 PM	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM
Utrecht, Netherlands	UTC+2	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
Münster, Germany	UTC+2	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
Wageningen, Netherlands	UTC+2	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
Hamburg, Germany	UTC +2	12:00 AM	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM
Thessaloniki, Greece	UTC+3	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
Oulu, Finland	UTC+3	1:00 AM	2:00 AM	3:00 AM	4:00 AM	5:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM
New Delhi, India	UTC+5:30	3:30 AM	4:30 AM	5:30 AM	6:30 AM	7:30 AM	8:30 AM	9:30 AM	10:30 AM	11:30 AM	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	2:30 PM	3:30 PM	4:30 PM
Hong Kong	UTC+8	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
Singapore	UTC +8	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM
Brisbane, Australia	UTC+10	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM
Canberra, Australia	UTC+11	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM
Melbourne, Australia	UTC+11	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM
Sydney, Australia	UTC+11	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM

## Conference Program

NOTE: Times in AEST UTC+10 (Brisbane time)

Register via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/atmospheric-borders-virtual-symposium-tickets-680582339097?aff=oddtcreator>

## WEDNESDAY, 04 Oct 2023

Time AEST (UTC+10)	Content	Presenter time (estimated)
<b>2:00pm-2:15pm</b>	<b>Opening</b> by Australian Critical Border Studies Convenors	---
<b>2:15pm-3:30pm</b>	<b>Panel 1 (Day 1)</b> Chair: Ari Jerrems	---
2:15pm	<i>Xiaofeng Liu</i> Bordered atmosphere: Cattle smuggling boom and suppression at the borders of China and Southeast Asia	12:15pm (Hong Kong, UTC+8)
2:35pm	<i>Angela Smith</i> Air's Infrastructural and Elemental Power at the Border	3:35pm (Sydney, UTC+11)
2:55pm	<i>Emily House</i> Making a Case for Sonic Methodologies	2:55pm (Brisbane, UTC+10)
3:15pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---
BREAK (3:30pm – 4pm AEST)		
<b>4:00pm-6:00pm</b>	<b>Panel 2 (Day 1)</b> Chair: Andrew Burrige	---
4:00pm	<i>Gary Slater</i> Interrogating Planetary Boundaries: Planetary Systems Ecology and Political/Ecological Borders	8:00am (Münster, Germany, UTC+2)
4:20pm	<i>Bas Spierings</i> The 'unwanted tourist' phenomenon and the atmospheric politics of selecting, spreading and scapegoating	8:20am (Utrecht, Netherlands, UTC+2)
4:40pm	<i>Eman Alasah</i> Colonial Borderlines and Spatial Liminalities in Post-Oslo Palestinian Narratives	7:40am (Newcastle, UK, UTC+1)
5:00pm	<i>Ingrid Boas, Carol Farbotko, Taukiei Kitara, Delf Rothe</i> Digital Tuvalu: State sovereignty in a warmer world	9:00am (Wageningen,

		Netherlands, UTC+2)
5:20pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---

## THURSDAY, 05 Oct 2023

Time AEST (UTC+10)	Content	Presenter time (estimated)
<b>2:00pm-4:00pm</b>	<b>Panel 1 (Day 2)</b> Chair: Umut Ozguc	---
2:00pm	<b>Welcome to Day 2 (ACBS convenors)</b> , followed by  <i>Suzan Ilcan</i> Migratory Journeys, Migrant Politics, and Mediating Atmospheric Bordering	12:00am (midnight Wed-Thu) (Waterloo, Canada, UTC-4)
2:40pm	<i>Zacharias Valiantzas, Panos Hatziprokopiou</i> Living on the edge: transcending atmospheric borders through urban commoning practices in Thessaloniki port	7:40am (Thessaloniki, Greece, UTC+3)
3:00pm	<i>Sonja Pietiläinen, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola</i> Atmospheric bordering through the language on nature: the anti-immigration discourse of the Finnish radical right	8:00am (Oulu, Finland, UTC+3)
3:20pm	<i>Charalampos Tsavdaroglou, Panos Hatziprokopiou</i> Decolonising urban atmospheres. Migrants' commoning solidarities in Thessaloniki	8:20am (Thessaloniki, Greece, UTC+3)
3:40pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---
BREAK (4pm – 5pm AEST)		
<b>5:00pm-6:30pm</b>	<b>Panel 2 (Day 2)</b> Chair: Kaya Barry	---
5:00pm	<i>Madhurima Majumder, Ingrid Boas</i> Tracing colonial roots of present-day climate (im) mobilities in Bengal borderland	9:00am (Wageningen, Netherlands, UTC+2)
5:20pm	<i>Madelaine A. Joyce</i> Sensing the sky's edge: Atmospheric insights into the Korean Demilitarised Zone	8:20am (London, UK, UTC+1)

5:40pm	<i>David Kendall</i> Other Lines: Visualising shifting horizons and atmospheric pollution through the photographic lens of mobile SMART phones and time-based thermal imaging technology	8:40am (London, UK, UTC+1)
6:00pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---
BREAK (06.30pm – 7pm AEST)		
<b>7:00pm-8:20pm</b>	<b>Panel 3 (Day 2)</b> Chair: Kaya Barry	---
7:00pm	<i>Emma Marshall</i> 'Walking around in invisible chains': Everyday experiences of risk, immigration control and the coercive state	10:00am (Exeter, UK, UTC+1)
7:20pm	<i>Woodren Brade</i> Technologies of the Immigration Bail Hearing: Incarceration and Deportation through Everyday Law	10:20am (London, UK, UTC+1)
7:40pm	<i>Mohan Li, Lisheng Weng, Peter Adey</i> The Quarantine Window: atmospheres and anguish in the COVID-19 borderlands	10:40am (London, UK, UTC+1)
8:00pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---

## FRIDAY, 06 Oct 2023

Time AEST (UTC+10)	Content	Presenter time (estimated)
<b>8:00am-09:30am</b>	<b>Panel 1 (Day 3)</b> Chair: Umut Ozguc	---
8:00am	<i>Margath (Maggie) Walker</i> Discordant Atmospheres on the US's many borders	6:00pm (-1d) (Louisville, USA, UTC-4)
8:20am	<i>Paola Jirón Martínez, Ricardo Jiménez Palacios</i> Bordering as a method. Constructing territories through mobility practices in Chile	6:20pm (-1d) (Santiago, Chile, UTC-4)
8:40am	<i>Juan Carlos Skewes, Gabriel Espinoza Rivera</i> Chilean central Andes dwellers and the reorganization of the State limits	6:40pm (-1d) (Santiago, Chile, UTC-4)
9:00am	Roundtable, Q&A	---

BREAK (09.30am – 10.30am AEST)		
<b>10:30am-11:30am</b>	<b>Panel 2 (Day 3)</b> Chair: Kaya Barry	---
10:30am	<i>Taylor Miller</i> Seeing Optics Valley: A counter-mapping of Tucson's border-security-industrial complex	5:30pm (-1d) (Arizona, USA, UTC-7)
10:50am	<i>Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz</i> Tijuana's Little Haiti: The Other Border	7:50pm (-1d) (Mexico City, Mexico, UTC-5)
11:10am	Roundtable, Q&A	
BREAK (11.30am – 1pm AEST)		
<b>1:00pm-3:00pm</b>	<b>Panel 3 (Day 3)</b> Chair: Andrew BurrIDGE	---
1:00pm	<i>Beryl Pong</i> Volumetric Immediations: Humanitarian Drone Documentaries of Forced Migration	11:00am (Singapore, UTC+8)
1:20pm	<i>George Burdon</i> The affective biopolitics of attention: digital media and the psychotechnologies of bordering	2:20pm (Canberra, Australia, UTC+11)
1:40pm	<i>Samantha O'Donnell, Alexandra Ridgway, Ana Borges Jelinic</i> Hazardous Conditions: Partner Visa Holders and the Affective Atmosphere of Waiting	2:40pm (Melbourne, UTC+11)
2:00pm	<i>Benjamin Lucca Iaquinto, Lachlan Barber, Po Sheung Yu</i> Grounding mobility: Protest atmospheres at Hong Kong International Airport	12:00pm (Hong Kong, UTC+8)
2:20pm	Roundtable, Q&A	---
<b>3:00pm-3:15pm</b>	<b>Closing and final remarks</b> by Australian Critical Border Studies Convenors	---



## Papers and abstracts

WEDNESDAY, 04 Oct 2023

### PANEL 1

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*Xiaofeng Liu*

#### **Bordered atmosphere: Cattle smuggling boom and suppression at the borders of China and Southeast Asia**

**Abstract:** The agency of non-human beings such as animals is subject to debate in border studies. This paper the concept of atmospheric borders through the lens of the body of non-human beings, particularly in relation to cattle smuggling. It asks how cattle are acted upon emotionally and materially by various human actors across the borders of southwestern China and Southeast Asia, notably Myanmar and Laos. Drawing upon analysis of fieldwork interviews and archival materials, this paper reveals, on the two sides of the borders, how the reverence toward cattle catalyzes the process of cross-border smuggling, and how the atmosphere of anticrime enhances bordering processes in order to suppress smuggling. It is argued that business groups and government entities utilize, shape, or enhance bordered atmospheres to serve different informal and formal economic and political goals and interests by creating social networks, establishing reporting mechanisms, and building infrastructure. This paper contributes to the understanding of non-human factors and more-than-human atmospheres in bordering processes and practices.

*Angela Smith*

#### **Air's Infrastructural and Elemental Power at the Border**

**Abstract:** Aerial assets—from crewed aircraft through to drones—have played an increasingly important role over the Mediterranean border in the period following the 2015-16 so-called migration “crisis”. Since 2017, border contestations over rescue have taken to the skies, with a range of European state actors using aerial surveillance to facilitate forced returns to Libya by the Libyan Coast Guard. During the same period, civil society actors have launched civilian aerial reconnaissance missions to challenge the state’s monopoly over the skies. The surveillance flight paths of European aircraft—both state and civil—have marked the contours of a three-dimensional space of control and contestation that has redefined “search and rescue”. These civilian-state contestations over the aerial border are, however, just one aspect of a politicised struggle for air and movement across the Mediterranean. Contextualising aviation within the element of air itself, I argue, provides for a ‘political materialism’ of the border, and reveals the effects of wind, water, and air upon different circulations at the border. Such aerial struggles are located within what I call an elemental border geography whereby the elements of air and water are foundational to the governance of life and death at the border. Understanding the border as an elemental geography allows us to connect the infrastructural power of different forms of border-crossing vehicles, with notions of territory beyond the terrestrial (to include sea and air), and to consider these in relation to human (and more-than-human) movement and circulation at the border. An elemental political

geography of the border aims to connect mobility and borders with the elemental nature of the world—its waters, earth, atmospheres, winds—in all their turbulent force.

*Emily House*

### **Making a Case for Sonic Methodologies**

**Abstract:** Sound exists everywhere, and for most, it engulfs us every day; yet its atmospheric and often ephemeral condition has meant it has largely escaped the grasp of research within the social sciences. Following this observation, the purpose of this article is to investigate the conceptual and empirical possibilities of sound within the discipline of international relations. Drawing on novel methods of non-lexemic podcast analysis, the paper is centred around listening to the intimacies of the human voice - such as breath, timbre, and pitch - that come with describing the lived experience of Temporary Protection Visa's in Australia. Resonances of the border compound in the ear of the listener and draw the analysis away from the immediacies of the border spectacle, and towards its enduring effects. The paper argues that through a shift towards such sound-based research methods, we can countenance an omnipresent-yet-invisibilised affective violence that is implicit to Australia's border regime. Not only does sonic data disrupt ideas of legitimate research methods within the social sciences, but it also offers new opportunities for witnessing and analysing issues concerning the international on an intimate and human scale.

*Gary Slater*

### **Interrogating Planetary Boundaries: Planetary Systems Ecology and Political/Ecological Borders**

**Abstract:** Developed by Will Steffen, Johan Rockström and colleagues, planetary boundaries is a framework in planetary systems ecology to assess human interactions with nonhuman biological and climatic systems and identify ecological thresholds whose crossing portends irreversible cataclysm. In contributing to the rapidly growing literature on the Anthropocene, planetary boundaries discourse is predicated on an assumption that environmental and political imaginaries are profoundly imbricated. Despite its prominent invocation of “boundaries,” however, the planetary boundaries framework lacks sufficient clarity concerning the relationship between boundaries and borders, which detracts from its capacity to account for how borders emerge within concrete social, political and ecological atmospheres. The proposed paper interrogates planetary boundaries in light of this oversight. Its core argument is that political borders and planetary boundaries exhibit a link that, while notable linguistically—including the fact that “border” and “boundary” stem from a common etymological root—is not merely linguistic. A key claim is that, like “border,” the “boundary” in planetary boundaries functions as both a metaphor and a metonymy. As a metaphor, “border” signifies a type of structured relationship, specifically that of an intelligible contrast or epistemological device, which can be applied across domains and linked to dynamics of here/there, us/them, or before/after. As a metonymy, “border” can signify a range of concrete, real-world cases, generating insights on the kinds of atmospheres that borders produce. Integrated in this way, planetary boundaries can be shown to contribute to inquiries into the dynamics of cross-border migration, violence, and the human relationship with nonhuman nature within planetary systems.

*Bas Spierings*

### **The ‘unwanted tourist’ phenomenon and the atmospheric politics of selecting, spreading and scapegoating**

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to bring tourism and migration studies in dialogue with each other. The aim is to develop a better understanding of the ‘unwanted tourist’ phenomenon by drawing on migration studies discussing the ‘unwanted migrant’. Urban tourists and their impact on cities have long been welcomed, for economic reasons in particular, but have also received a great deal of social and cultural criticism. Increasingly, urban tourists are considered problematic, less welcome and even unwanted because they are being pinpointed as responsible for a variety of negative effects on the liveability of cities. Their unwantedness may even culminate in rising tensions between ‘residents’ and ‘tourists’ and often includes references to an ‘invasion’ of tourists and a crisis of ‘overtourism’. A variety of policy measures are also being implemented and experimented with to mitigate negative effects of urban tourism on cities and discourage specific kinds of tourism. This paper identifies and discusses three interrelated policy aspects – i.e. the atmospheric politics of selecting, spreading and scapegoating – along which we can conceptually merge and mirror

‘unwanted migrants and tourists’, contributing to a research agenda on the bordering, ordering and othering of ‘unwanted travelers’.

*Eman Alasah*

### **Colonial Borderlines and Spatial Liminalities in Post-Oslo Palestinian Narratives**

**Abstract:** From Mourid Barghouti's narratives of unrelenting border crossings, to Suad Amiry's illegal endeavors of checkpoint passages, to Raja Shehadeh's accounts of strolls in the increasingly vanishing landscape of the Palestinian Territories, the ambiguity and colonality of liminal spaces appear to be a central concern in contemporary Palestinian life narratives. As accounts of mundane life under occupation, the autobiographical texts of Barghouti, Amiry, and Shehadeh, all written after the Oslo peace accords in 1993, centralize spatial liminalities as the frontlines where narratives of loss, exile, subjugation, but also of resilience are lived and articulated. Through textual and contextual analysis of the primary texts, I seek to argue that liminal spaces such as checkpoints, border crossings, settlements, barriers, among others, function as emblems of colonial infrastructure at which colonial, but also anticolonial dynamics materialize.

Beside their ostensible function as embodiments of the asymmetrical power dynamic, these liminal spaces operate as 'open wounds', to borrow Gloria Anzaldua's term, where past trauma of forced displacement is continuously triggered, recalled, and relived. As liminal spaces, they serve as contact zones where ethnic and colonial confrontations take place, not particularly in the constructive and prolific way proposed by Homi Bhabha but rather antagonistically due to the militarized and hierarchal substructure. Consequently, these spaces are permeated by acts of violence, often taking the shape of what Achille Mbembe terms as necropolitical aggression. In the field of Palestinian studies, Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian's conceptualization of the 'occupation of the senses' proves to be useful in examining these spatialities as sensory stimuli and reminders of colonial hierarchy. Finally, spaces of liminality antithetically offer a platform for anti-colonial resistance; they are spaces where power is confronted, challenged, and negotiated, and where indigenous agency is realized if only passively.

*Ingrid Boas, Carol Farbotko, Taukiei Kitara, Delf Rothe*

### **Digital Tuvalu: State sovereignty in a warmer world**

**Abstract:** At COP27 of the Climate Convention, the government of the island state Tuvalu gave a virtual speech that made many aware of the far-reaching societal implications of global warming. It virtually launched its concept of “Digital Tuvalu” – a vision of a digital state with the potential of challenging the notion of territorial state sovereignty that for long has structured our world order. The concept of the digital state is part of Tuvalu's wider Future Now program which has a blended strategy of maintaining and secure land, sea territory, and borders, combined with a worst scenario strategy of building its state online. Through the combination of physical and digital adaptation, the Tuvalu government seeks to preserve state sovereignty, language, knowledge and culture, and to enable both material and virtual ways for citizen-state and cultural exchange. The digital adaptation ensures that if material

adaptation fails, the state and culture of Tuvalu will not be lost. In this paper, we take the example of Digital Tuvalu as a paradigmatic case to discuss how international norms of statehood and sovereignty are transformed under conditions of the Anthropocene. We study how various Tuvaluan actors are actively contesting traditional views of a 'legitimate' state through a quest to remain a digital nation-state, even if land territory becomes uninhabitable. The paper shows how the Tuvalu state is not on the margin of international relations, but central to redefining the politics of climate change as one being about questions of sovereignty, citizenship, and the future of the international order in a world of dramatic transformations.

**THURSDAY, 05 Oct 2023**

## **PANEL 1**

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*Suzan Ilcan*

### **Migratory Journeys, Migrant Politics, and Mediating Atmospheric Bordering**

**Abstract:** There are over 100 million forcibly displaced people worldwide due to major conflict, persecution, and human rights violations. While many displaced people experience interminable vulnerability, protracted containment, and systemic inequalities during their migratory journeys to seek protection and safety, these journeys also involve the less examined experiences of socio-political atmospheric bordering. Using the context of large-scale human displacement related to the Syrian civil war as a basis for empirical analysis, the paper draws on a selection of fifty-five interviews with formerly displaced Syrians now living in Canada and highlights their recollections of their journeys from Syria to nearby 'host' states and elsewhere. It brings attention to their encounters with securitized and violent borders, to hostile environments, to the obstructions that prevented them from taking legal routes to access protection, and to how they came to know and mediate the border through fear, listening, and anticipating socio-political dynamics. In examining such mediations in strategies of migrant politics at border crossings, as well as in the broader context of restrictive migration practices to control human movements, the paper attends to the ways in which sensory and material affects are part of socio-political atmospheric bordering. The analysis draws on critical migration and border studies and on studies on the affective, sensory, and intimate to highlight the relations among migratory journeys, migrant politics, and atmospheric bordering. It shows how atmospheric bordering is an important site of critical inquiry that entails more than governing and site-specific practices, permits new insights into migrant politics and affect, and has implications for understanding future borders.

*Zacharias Valiantzas, Panos Hatziprokopiou*

### **Living on the edge: transcending atmospheric borders through urban commoning practices in Thessaloniki port**

**Abstract:** Our contribution focuses on the intersections of migrant inhabitation and urban ambience, based on the theoretical framework set by contemporary critical urban theory and radical geography. The notion of urban ambience concerns the

aesthetic experiences, sensory perceptions, and social practices grounded to the urban terrain. Embarking from critical approaches towards neoliberal perspectives of urban ambience (e.g. city branding, gentrification, touristification), it approaches migrants' socio-spatial urban everydayness in the city of Thessaloniki. By looking at migration-related questions through a lens emphasizing the dynamic and transformative potential of the presence and practices of migrant and newcomers' communities, an alternative (counter-neoliberal) approach is proposed with respect to their lived-experience and urban ambience they create. Based on the practices that the actors (commoners) of urban commons enact on the urban field, the aim of our study is to explore and highlight a new communal ambience emerging in the city's neighbourhoods: an affective ambience of community, care and solidarity unfolding both in the local and in the wider metropolitan field, highlighting the possibilities of another lived atmosphere in the public sphere of the city. This paper explores the aforementioned issues through an empirical case study based on qualitative and ethnographic methods on the first pier of Thessaloniki's port. At this extreme threshold point of the city, our study illuminates instances of space appropriation through practices of urban commoning by "subjects of otherness" in the time-spaces of everyday life. Our research sheds light on how such practices surpass the atmospheric walls of the city and collectively create a new lived urban ambience, allowing "subjects of otherness" to transcend multiple intersecting physical, social and atmospheric borders.

*Sonja Pietiläinen, Eeva-Kaisa Prokkola*

### **Atmospheric bordering through the language on nature: the anti-immigration discourse of the Finnish radical right**

**Abstract:** During the last decades, researchers have paid critical attention to the proliferation of border walls and the re-articulation of the state sovereignty, citizenship, and national belonging as the globally surging radical right has transformed regional and national politics. This presentation discusses the socio-spatial discourses and affective rhetoric of the radical right with a focus on the Finns Party, a well-established radical right party in Finland. The populist politics of the party is founded on the claim that unwanted immigration threatens the state and the existence of a nation that is imagined as ethnically and racially homogenous. They argue for strict border control for preventing this imagined threat to happen. Inspired by the theorization of 'racism without race' by Etienne Balibar (1991) and 'affective atmospheres of nationalism' by Angharad Closs Stephens (2016), our presentation will look at the radical right's anti-immigration discourses and rhetoric to consider in what ways the language of nature is used to (re)produce atmospheric borders and racialisation of 'the other'. The examination departs from an understanding that the radical right's neo-racism, in other words racism that is framed through cultural and naturalistic arguments, uses partially different semiotic and affective methods to communicate the racial message. The presentation will discuss at least four intertwined ways through which racialization and atmospheric bordering occurs in the context of Finns Party language on nature: 1) Employing de-humanising metaphors of migrants. 2) Presenting migrants in terms of littering and uncontrolled masses threatening the "fragile nature" of the "fatherland". 3) Drawing on ideas of nation-state specific "carrying capacity". 4) Defining 'Finnishness' in an exclusive way by using the language on nature and by referring to ethnic human-nature relationships.

The presentation shows that the Finns Party practices anti-environmental politics and obscures climate action, and their language on nature function as a method of affective bordering and racialization. For the right wing, borders are naturalized and territorialized, and bordering is practiced basing on certain racialized characteristics. The radical right in Finland naturalizes the outer borders of a territorial state and claims for one true nation, 'homeland' defined by national myths and historical blood dimensions. The naturalization of borders and differences are a way to redraw social, ethnic and affective boundaries within a society and also to justify the unequal distribution of wealth and power within a state and globally. The materials on which the examination is based consists of policy documents and in-depth interviews of twenty-four politicians and party activists of the Finns Party in 2022.

*Charalampos Tsavdaroglou, Panos Hatziprokopiou*

### **Decolonising urban atmospheres. Migrants' commoning solidarities in Thessaloniki**

**Abstract:** The literature exploring aspects of NGO activities and state immigration policies often approaches migrants as vulnerable subjects deprived of agency and passive recipients of services provided top-down. The fact that the newcomers themselves claim their right to the city and enact commoning practices which produce new urban atmospheres has received little attention. This paper examines urban atmospheric borders in relation to migrants' presence, perceptions and collective practices. Until now, urban atmospheres and migrants' emplacement, have not been jointly examined. The paper fills this gap by examining the solidarity commoning practices of newcomers which destabilize urban borders, decolonizing national urban atmospheres in the case of Thessaloniki. At the early 20th century, Thessaloniki was an important multi-ethnic and multi-religious urban center of the Ottoman Empire; most of the city's inhabitants were Jews, Muslims comprised an important share and the Greek Orthodox population was limited to less than a quarter. In the context of the Balkan wars, however, the Greek army occupied the city and annexed it to the Greek state; making the city Greek thereafter, involved the national homogenization of its population, which may be seen as a violent process of colonization that sought to eradicate the socio-spatial materialities as well as the memories and symbolic traces of non-Greek inhabitants. In the first half of the 20th century Muslim and Slavic population were displaced, while during the Nazi occupation the city's Jewish community was exterminated. In post-war times, due to its proximity to Eastern Bloc communist countries, the city turned into a highly militarized, closed and phobic city. Despite transformations since late 20th century, nationalist revival, religious closedness, introversion and provincialism remain inscribed on the space of the city and conflate with contemporary bordering processes and neoliberal urban restructuring. Nevertheless, in the last few decades following the fall of the Berlin Wall, migrants from the Balkan countries and the USSR have settled in the city, while in the past few years, the city has become a key node for thousands of newcomers from the Middle East, South Asia and Africa who seek to reach European countries. Newcomers encounter a city which largely brands itself as eternally Greek and Orthodox, and a state machinery determined to enforce national borders within the urban space. In navigating this space, newcomers are thus faced with different kinds of invisible borders, part of which relate to urban atmospheres whereby "other" (to national normativity) bodies do not fit. Such

atmospheric borders emerge in places perceived by migrants as dangerous and hostile, where they feel uncomfortable, unsafe, or threatened, e.g. due to racist attacks, police checks, work exploitation, etc. This paper embarks from the question of how established urban atmospheres are experienced, felt and perceived by newly arrived migrants. Based on urban ethnography, it particularly focuses on instances in which migrants break through invisible borders in the city by engaging in collective practices, relations and uses of space that create threshold or liminal atmospheres which may transform and reshape dominant ones. In doing so, newcomers destabilize urban atmospheric borders therefore contributing to the decolonization of the nationalized city.

## PANEL 2

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*Madhurima Majumder, Ingrid Boas*

### **Tracing colonial roots of present-day climate (im) mobilities in Bengal borderland**

**Abstract:** A large section of the international border between Bangladesh and West Bengal runs through the Sundarbans. It is an active delta with a complex network of river islands. Here the very contours of land and water are in flux. Moving has been the way of life for those who live in this ecologically sensitive area. However, in the recent past extreme climate events, increasing border militarization, and bad policies and projects have exacerbated the communities' vulnerabilities. Several competing ideas exist regarding how to best protect the land, water, and people. Taking these present debates as the point of departure, this paper aims to trace some of these contestations back to the colonial inception of the delta and its borders. Here, I argue that the Sundarbans and how its inhabitants relate to it are not just produced by the fluvial action of the rivers that flow through the delta but by the colonial history of attempting to "tame" the rivers and producing tax-generating, productive "land". European ideas of mapping 'productive' land and 'disruptive' water is inadvertently behind the precarities faced by the inhabitants of Sundarbans today. The paper will reflect on some of the early colonial debates on land settlement, land tenures, borders, setting up of waterways and railways for commerce. The intention here is to better understand the debates that underpin climate (im)mobilities by reflecting on how colonial history had a bearing on it.



*Madelaine A. Joyce*

### **Sensing the sky's edge: Atmospheric insights into the Korean Demilitarised Zone**

**Abstract:** The Korean Demilitarised Zone's (DMZ) status as the world's most hermetically sealed border inevitably creates a set of methodological difficulties to those researching it: How does one go about investigating a space which, through its restrictions and inaccessibility, eschews and refuses traditional methods of enquiry? In this proposed contribution, I draw upon my ongoing doctoral research which continues to grapple with these challenges, advocating for alternative and creative methods of sensing and feeling borders within the context of political geography. Utilising my own experiments in the production of radio-generated weather data at the Korean DMZ together with (auto)ethnographic perceptions, I posit that the meteorological atmosphere becomes a medium through which we can sense and understand borders, both conceptually and empirically. Exploring the interplay between the atmosphere and the inter-Korean border, I consider how borders become extended vertically into the skies above them, alongside the implications of traversing these airy territories, particularly via the mobilities of more-than-human entities. Simultaneously, I reflect upon the ways that the affective atmospheres of the shifting political climate of the region are in turn projected into and onto the layers of the aether, in ways that continues to shape the ways that the border is secured. In doing so, I hope to demonstrate that novel and creative "atmospheric methods", not only provide us with a means of overcoming difficulties around access to border spaces, but more importantly afford us new insights into the human and more-than-human entanglements which occur within and through bordering atmospheres.

*David Kendall*

### **Other Lines: Visualising shifting horizons and atmospheric pollution through the photographic lens of mobile SMART phones and time-based thermal imaging technology**

**Abstract:** In the twenty-first century, air pollution is an expanding visual and technological phenomenon that undoubtedly affects how we invariably see and perceive 'climate change' in urban and rural landscapes. The creative project, 'Other Lines', considers how to visualise air pollutants and particulates generated from industrial sites at ground level within the Earth's atmospheric boundary layer. Technological developments in digital image-making and the circulation of images in virtual and terrestrial environments open up alternative opportunities to communicate and see beyond demarcated thresholds between these settings. Consequently, how I engage creatively with virtual and physical landscapes is embodied in this specific project. Through the lens of mobile SMART phones and thermal imaging technology, the digital artworks in this project attentively examine Henri Lefebvre's philosophical concepts of 'differentiated time.' My experimental approaches to visualising environmental conditions in selected industrial sites in Ellesmere Port, United Kingdom, offer site-responsive opportunities to instantly produce photographic and time-based visual interpretations of hidden or inconspicuous renderings of climate patterns and unstable atmospheres. Exploratory sites of poor air quality typically include roads, local waterways, established factories, industrial plants and fuel production installations. Furthermore, spatial engagement and active movement

along the Wirral Peninsula informed by lived experiences, perceptual imaginations and phenomenological discourse is integral to this productive process. As a published result, my timebased visual research experiments contemplate how thermal imaging reveals the unseen and the seen industrial air emissions in Merseyside, United Kingdom.

## PANEL 3

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*Emma Marshall*

### **‘Walking around in invisible chains’: Everyday experiences of risk, immigration control and the coercive state**

**Abstract:** Since the introduction of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 in England and Wales more than a decade ago, the legislation designed to implement austerity by reducing costs and directing legal aid towards those ‘most in need’ has been subject to sustained criticism by academics, practitioners and charities. This paper explores how the removal of immigration legal aid in Britain has contributed to lived experiences of risk for people who are subject to immigration control, due to the inaccessibility of affordable and good quality of legal advice. From research examining access to immigration advice in England, I draw on the narrative accounts of two people living with insecure immigration status. The paper uses these narratives to explore the affective politics of border control, particularly how border regimes become felt as a coercive force in everyday life through the perceived and actual risks that individuals must navigate. The two stories provide the basis for an expanded conceptualisation of risk that accounts for how it is experienced as a mode of governance, and particularly the ways in which risk is transferred from the burden of the state onto individuals. I argue that risk is not only relevant in thinking about the management of borders from a governmental perspective, it is also an essential concept for understanding how individuals experience borders in their everyday lives.

*Woodren Brade*

### **Technologies of the Immigration Bail Hearing: Incarceration and Deportation through Everyday Law**

**Abstract:** I spent two years studying for a masters at the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths University, affiliated with the human rights research agency Forensic Architecture. This work came out of that masters that I finished in 2021. My research that was ongoing for two years, involved an intensive legal ethnography on the immigration bail hearing in the UK. The research investigates how the technologies used through immigration bail hearings expedite the system of incarceration and deportation, examining the wider infrastructures circulating around the law that are also operating in the production of legal decision making. Although bail is overlooked as a legal event, its weight to the individual implicated, is vast, bail can be seen as a pivot which reorganises the wider trajectory of harm. This research pays attention to the multitude of factors that become important in the experience of someone facing bail which the law deems inconsequential. Highlighting these

moments in order to put focus on the significance of the insignificance of bail. The main body of the work is a thesis titled 'Technologies of the Immigration Bail Hearing: Incarceration and Deportation through Everyday Law'. I conceptualise the bail hearing as a pivot to further incarceration, deportation and possible death. It is situated in the wider timeline of individual trajectories that are precarious, fragmented and cyclical, where the bail hearing often becomes the moment of reset. The need for recognition creates a reality where individuals facing the immigration system 'find themselves legally re-buffed again and again' (El-Enany). Immigration time is not linear time, El-Enany quotes Sarah Keenan when talking about the racialised body in immigration time, explaining how borders attachment to racialised people means they carry with them a 'a space of disproportionate vulnerability to violence and premature death' (Keenan). The technological structure of the bail hearing becomes key, the work looks at the border as something that becomes sensorial - a violent technological sense where the courtroom is collapsed to a phone line that discriminates and excludes. The phone line becomes the border. My practice was also informed as well by drawing and sound pieces which record the acoustic nature of the law.

*Mohan Li, Lisheng Weng, Peter Adey*

### **The Quarantine Window: atmospheres and anguish in the COVID-19 borderlands**

**Abstract:** In March in 2020 — a week after the World Health Organisation (WHO) officially announced the emergency status of the COVID-19 Pandemic - the Chinese government imposed a self-paid, 14-day, mandatory hotel quarantine on Chinese citizens returning to China. In this paper we draw on the experiences of Chinese travelers some of whom became lost in quarantine. We zero in on the role of the window as it was experienced in extended stays in quarantine hotels in China by passengers returning on repatriation flights. Of course the window in some ways negates the apparent depth or volume atmospheres might seem to connote. Windows might seem precisely to deny atmospheres: the window as merely a surface. And yet, the window is also a separation of spaces by an often transparent or translucent material. It achieves a kind of bordering – sometimes from bad atmospheres - as much as it frames perspectives, intensifying focus, and providing (somewhat paradoxically) a visual and virtual depth to a field of vision (Friedberg 2006). The window is also highly permeable. Sounds and sights can travel through it. It can be obscured by dust and dirt too. And if it is opened, windows can let air and light through them. We explore, then, that there is a depth and atmosphere to the quarantine window, even an orientation and anchoring. We consider the mediation of border atmospheres through the window as it permitted the extensions/expansions of the medico-political border through COVID-19 security controls and constraints. The quarantine hotel window made possible asymmetric social relations as it permitted an outside world to be visioned and yearned for. And it offered hope, sometimes in the form of exhilaration and invigorating fresh air to waft out the boredom of waiting, but also the presence of a previous guest.

**FRIDAY, 06 Oct 2023**

*Margath (Maggie) Walker*

### **Discordant Atmospheres on the US's many borders**

**Abstract:** Attention to the political landscape connecting the United States, Mexico and Central America has returned with glaring intensity, highlighting the visibly geostrategic elements of bordering practice. Scholars have focused on how state power materializes at multiple scales while at the same time being attentive to the contestable and mutable nature of myriad agentic forces. This paper operates similarly by considering prospects for a frictional and at times ambiguous spatial politics. The aim is to extend the notion of discord as an “atmosphere” through which to consider securitization, mobility, and migration. Discordance- replete with disagreement, cacophony, and complementarity- seeks to capture multiplicity, contradiction, irreconcilability, and incongruity. Epistemologically, discordance acknowledges the generative potential of indeterminacy while also turning our focus to factors and textures that we might otherwise lose when we focus on big dominant systems. In particular, the focus is on the contradictory aspects of the border industrial complex and the slow movement of the migrant caravans traveling from Central America. In relation to the former, I highlight aspects of its embodied, fragmented constitution along with its dearth of industrial complexity. In the case of the migrant caravan, I emphasize how walking as modality can undiscipline institutional arrangements and problematize migratory logics. These examples suggest that dissonance is constitutive of the political, further contributing to theorizations of border atmospheres.

*Paola Jirón Martínez, Ricardo Jiménez Palacios*

### **Bordering as a method. Constructing territories through mobility practices in Chile**

**Abstract:** Border studies have a long history and have evolved in complexity over the years, including a shift from fixed and closed barriers to permeable and mobiles ways of thinking bordering territories. This shift has involved transforming our way of understanding the difficulty of putting limits or parameters on the way human and non-human mobile practices that construct territories take place, that is, it involves thinking beyond frontiers. In this context, bordering can be seen as a dynamic, changing and in constant motion way of being, in the sense that notions about the delimitation of borders are often in dispute and in constant transformation. The way borders are set up as well as crossed or trespassed generate various impacts including difference, and often conflict and inequality, and these impacts are often linked to power relations. The complexity borders require new ways of observing and interacting with and through them, hence new methods can greatly contribute to this endeavour. Based on three specific bordering research experiences, this paper will propose bordering as a method to observe the way borders create new territories in Chile today. These experiences involve urban borders in Santiago de Chile, the human bodies traveling through borders in northern Chile, and the bordering trajectories of objects that move through transnational borders between Chile and Peru. Bordering as a method involves observing the interrelation between bodies, spaces, objects, the others, strategies, and the atmospheres their bordering

practices create. A better understanding of the territories created in the bordering process is the aim of such methodological enquiries.

*Juan Carlos Skewes, Gabriel Espinoza Rivera*

### **Chilean central Andes dwellers and the reorganization of the State limits**

**Abstract:** Global change has stressed and endangered the life and livelihoods of mountain dwellers in Central Chile, encompassing animals and humans. From the Aconcagua valley to the Queuco basin, water and grassland scarcity as a result of a mega drought (Garreaud et al., 2020), outdated state aid, and the unlikely state translation of people's necessities end up wearing out both the trust in the State's performance and the thickness of its poorly boundaries. The Chilean Mountain has always been a complicated and slippery terrain to cast State territory upon: a zone of fugitives, bandits, and others not willing to be swallowed by its grammar. Moreover, the translation of nationality and the sense of belonging have always had another point of reference different from the State one. Currently, Global Change and neoliberal policies are enhancing pastures scarcity, while State aid is incapable of covering people's necessities. The latter does not translate into a withdrawal of the State presence but rather into a renegotiation of its governance and border's stability. Numerous muleteers and ranchers engage in cross-border relationships with their Argentinian counterparts. However, their everyday life barely frames their relationship as cross-border, but the State's gaze still tries to pin down these interactions as such. Opposite to zones of conflict or those affected by violent socio-environmental disasters such as flooding, landslides, or fires (although these areas not exempt from these), problems hindering State governance, and reshaping the relationships up in the mountain are driven by at least three elements:

the voluminous and complicated geography of the mountain, producing unattainable governance upon people, objects, cattle, and terrain.

the meager livelihoods provided by the State borders such that the extension of people's mobility and reach cannot be pinned down to a national border only.

Finally, the myriad identities and historical relationships constantly negotiating the State border, end up producing the borders as something that might, or might not, be recognized as relevant for people's lives depending on the context.

We explore the entanglement between Global Change, leading to an unprecedented drought threatening people's livelihoods, along with a weakened State presence, is reorganizing the State limits. In Mitchell's (1999) or Bourdieu's (2012) ideas, the State deploys itself by means of visual, territorial, human, and non-human cues: it is a hovering entity but also an embodied effect. However, the State is always something that ends, in the very limits of its power. Moreover, taking into consideration Jansen's (2018) idea of state production from below, the regulatory sense of the border might or might not be enacted by people in liminal State zones. The latter addresses issues of the State as something embodied (Thelen et al., 2017), that is eventually crafting ways of relatedness and dispositions to reproduce itself, or not. In our analysis, we particularly explore the relationship between civil mountain dwellers and State workers, infrastructures, and provisions (either material, pecuniary, or as services). We plan to answer the complex reframing of State borders by addressing questions such as: How is the art of being ungoverned a matter of tactical engagements, endurance, and belonging? How do relationships with the State

depend on its correspondence with people's ideas and the performance of its role? What has been the role of Global Change, and its experienced consequences such as drought, in reshaping the relationship with the State and its border in mountain areas of Central Chile? State governance regarding the ongoingness of complex geographies such as mountain borders, or airspace, can never be stable (Harris, 2020; LaFlamme, 2020). However, instability has always been a kernel element of State governmentality (Foucault, 2014). Thus, considering actions, State imaginaries, and contextual disposition towards the State, as well as our local ethnographic nuggets, we hope to shed light that will be useful to other contexts.

## PANEL 2

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*Taylor Miller*

### **Seeing Optics Valley: A counter-mapping of Tucson's border-security-industrial complex**

**Abstract:** Beyond the ignominious US/Mexico wall so frequently associated with the Sonoran Desert borderlands, attunement to the cutting/carving/splicing of the desert is integral to experiencing the border-security-industrial complex so heinously entrenched in the landscape. I utilize psychogeographic and arts-based interrogations to bear witness to and document the so-called Defense Industry's hand in the occupation and transformation of Tucson, Arizona. In particular, the University of Arizona Tech Park, as well as the swath of land near the Tucson International Airport. Here, the amply-boosted "Airport Employment Zone" surrounding the Tucson International Airport/Davis Monthan Air Force base includes Raytheon Missile Systems, Bombardier, and Universal Avionics (Elbit Systems, Ltd.); pumping millions into the Tucson economy, billions into the state. Sometimes dubbed "Optics Valley" for the high concentration of optics companies that export surveillance, laser diodes and related equipment worldwide, Tucson is rapidly growing as a laboratory for violence, for war. For borders here, everywhere. In my neighborhood close by, the endless scratching and scraping of earthmovers. Unrelenting robbery of Tohono O'odham lands.

I explore the ways in which these corporations – the materiality of their buildings' presences, Research & Development, and logistical operations – whose products and services are exported globally to prolong war, military occupation of land/peoples, and expedite environmental degradation as elemental to the border-security-industrial complex – impact the area, as well as the greater Tucson community. Colonial claims of terra nullius might likely be the bedrock of this palimpsest of capitalist expansion and extraction, and I wish to focus not only on the history of these sites, but also how security imperialism weaves militarization into banal spaces of this city – thus connecting our everyday lives with networks of global surveillance, weaponry, and other forms of intervention and incarceration.

*Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz*

### **Tijuana's Little Haiti: The Other Border**

**Abstract:** In April 2023, I stayed in Tijuana for a few days before crossing to San Diego. I wanted to visit the settlement called "Little Haiti" because, in 2021, I wrote a paper about it and wanted to corroborate what I was proposing using "the disavowed community" Jean Luc Nancy's category that I deconstruct and apply as part of as the Epistemological Model of Boundaries. Therefore, I asked a taxi driver (as I did in several other borders) to take me to where the settlement should be: the "Cañon de Alacrán," as it appears on Google Maps. The visit to Little Haiti differed from what I expected because this settlement is so precarious that it is complicated to apply the category I was considering. I left Tijuana disappointed, thinking I had to rewrite my paper without knowing how. I crossed to San Diego, where I participated in a border congress in which I presented the new category I am developing for the Epistemological Model of Boundaries: Ecological Boundary. When I read the "Atmospheric Border" convocation and precisely the question that you do, "How do everyday political atmospheres contribute to bordering processes?" I reconnected with that other border, Little Haiti. Therefore, I would like to present as part of the ecological boundary the other border: the one that is no longer outside the country but inside; the one that is no longer the wall with the United States or Guatemala, the one that is the demarcation of the border cities themselves, cities that were abandoned by the governments that let the urban march grow on the land: the other border is ecological suicide or as Jacques Derrida said: an autoimmune practice.

### PANEL 3

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*Beryl Pong*

#### **Volumetric Immediations: Humanitarian Drone Documentaries of Forced Migration**

**Abstract:** In critical drone studies, drones have been conceived of as atmospheric technologies that render the Westphalian border fluid and contingent, that do the work of 'ordering without bordering' (Agius 2017), creating invisible aerial security apparatuses at various global 'peripheries' (Akhter 2017). Drones do this in part through the work of 'vertical mediation' (Parks 2018), a materializing practice that exceeds the device and the screen, affecting the human and more-than-human worlds across the spectrum from the air to the ground. This paper combines work on drone mediation with work on filmic 'immediation', defined by Pooja Rangan (2017) as the documentary ethos through which precarious subjects are presented as the 'other' through 'the seemingly inclusive gesture of inviting them to perform their humanity' on screen. Focusing on the use of drones in humanitarian documentary filmmaking at sites of conflicted and conflicting drone use—the borders, variously conceived, where migrants are delayed, contained, or rendered immobile—I ask how drone aesthetics are impacting the visibility of forced migration. Documentary filmmaking with drones make humanitarian events legible to distant publics, but they also engage in immediations that are immanent to the history of 'racialization from above' (Feldman 2011) undergirding the aerial view. With Morgan Knibbe's *Those Who Feel the Fire Burning* (2014) and Ai Weiwei's *Human Flow* (2017) as my case studies, this paper examines how the films negotiate these tensions through the concept of 'volumetric' immediations (Jackman and Squire 2021): how drone

videography enables engagements with three-dimensional atmospheric space with complex heights and depths, one that can create spaces of relationality and encounter between the seer and the seen beyond the top-down aerial view.

*George Burdon*

### **The affective biopolitics of attention: digital media and the psychotechnologies of bordering**

**Abstract:** This paper analyses how contemporary digital media environments produce and sustain forms of attention that condition how users perceive events of violent bordering. It takes as its starting point Bernard Stiegler's argument that the intensified claims to our attention wrought by digital media are producing a generalised collapse of capacities for critical attention to the crises that characterise the contemporary world. Stiegler refers here to the rise a culture of affective disinvestment characterised by what he terms "I-don't-give-a-damn-ism". Placing such an argument within the context of media coverage of border violence, the paper dwells on Stiegler's provocation that a form of attention is also a form of care, and so draws out a means for understanding how digital media technologies act to inform particular systems care of care and importantly their limits – in this case suggesting that digital media technologies, despite allowing users a deeper than ever exposure to the events of border struggles, nonetheless condition an atmosphere of indifference in the face of border violence. At the same time, however, the paper stays close to the possibility that digital technologies can also be used to create new regimes of attention in ways that exceed the catastrophic collapse of care that Stiegler describes. By turning to a recent activist art project that seeks to divert attention toward the lives of those held in immigration detention, the paper therefore probes the limits of Stiegler's argument and highlights the role of innovative and experimental uses of digital media technologies in the critique and contestation of border violence.

*Samantha O'Donnell, Alexandra Ridgway, Ana Borges Jelinic*

### **Hazardous Conditions: Partner Visa Holders and the Affective Atmosphere of Waiting**

**Abstract:** Women who migrate by partner visa to Australia experience a bordered and affective atmosphere of waiting on their legal journey towards permanent residency. These migrant women first wait for an initial decision to receive a temporary partner visa, which provides them with the right to live and work in Australia, but their experience of waiting does not end here. The entitlements they receive as partner visa holders are only temporary, as they are also required to complete a two-year probationary period before they can apply to remain in Australia long term. Exceptions to the rule are few, and also involve prolonged waiting for a resolution. In this paper, we explore waiting at the border as an affective atmosphere that impacts female partner visa holders' experiences of life in Australia. Drawing on findings from in depth interviews with migrant women seeking permanency through partner visa processes, we examine the many ways in which they are forced by the migration system to wait and the way this leads them to feel the border in their everyday lives. We also explore the harm waiting causes these women, especially when their intimate partnership is unravelling. By unpacking the emotions specifically



associated with the harmful experiences of prolonged waiting, we argue that waiting creates hazardous conditions for the maintenance of their personal wellbeing. Waiting produces a particular affective atmosphere for these migrant women or “feeling border”, which is emotionally suffocating, generating feelings of fear, anxiety and uncertainty. We find that by engaging waiting as an analytical framework we can better understand gendered experiences within the migration system and expand the theoretical connections between emotions, borders and temporality.

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### **Grounding mobility: Protest atmospheres at Hong Kong International Airport**

**Abstract:** Protest immobilities have political potential because of the affective atmospheres they produce. In 2019, the Hong Kong protest movement targeted Hong Kong International Airport in a series of sit-ins resulting in a two-day shutdown and cancellation of more than 1,000 flights. This talk is based on participant observation and interviews with thirty-two people—aviation workers, tourists, expatriates, and demonstrators—who were present at one or more of the sit-ins, and it uses a perspective informed by work on affective atmospheres and social movements in geography. We demonstrate the political potential of four forms of embodied mobility—arrival, friction, waiting, and departing from the airport on foot. Arriving to unexpected scenes produced micropolitical change among passengers, as the fatigue of air travel heightened the emotional impact of the sit-ins. Frictions were politically generative because they forced passengers to slow down and notice the assembly. Waiting produced solidarities between different factions of the protest movement and generated animosity from previously apathetic passengers who were stuck. Walking was an anxious ordeal for those forced to depart the airport on foot after public transport was suspended. The talk shows how demonstrators can resist, alter, and transmit affective atmospheres through the grounding of aeromobilities.