

Reimagining Borderscapes

From Ríopolitics to Ríoscares; Conceptualizing a Future Mexican-American Border



Acknowledgements

Thank you Christoph and Dr. Koukal for your guidance and for teaching me so much during this thesis process, especially considering the whole year was done virtually!

*A special thank you to Mom, Dad,
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Table of Contents

01

Introduction

04-11

02

Analysis of Borders

12-37

03

Analysis of San Luis

38-69

04

Ríopolitics to Ríoscares

70-97

05

Conclusion

98-121

Chapter 01

Introduction



Abstract	Thesis Statement	Methods and Scope	Author's Experience of Borders
Pages 5	Pages 6-7	Pages 8-9	Pages 10-11

"it is much safer to be feared than loved because ...love is preserved by the link of obligation which, owing to the baseness of men, is broken at every opportunity for their advantage; but fear preserves you by a dread of punishment which never fails." —Niccolò Machiavelli (Machiavelli, 1532).

"On that day, mankind received a grim reminder. We lived in fear of the Titans and were disgraced to live in these cages we called walls."
—Eren Yeager (From Isayama, 2012).



Abstract: This thesis argues that the Mexican-American Border is defined by two essential structures: the physical barriers along the border and the influx of people trying to cross the border, and that re-imagining the liminal spaces along the border can transform the border into a place of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality. This argument is developed in three parts. First, the thesis analyzes borders by introducing a number of border philosophies including viapolitics, transborderism, and liminality. These philosophies are in turn used to develop a concept of riopolitics which orients us to understand the Mexican-American border as a conflict between the border's physical barriers and the people trying to cross through them. Second, the thesis zooms in to the San Luis Borderscape to analyze how the people there experience the border and how the liminal spaces animate the border. Third, the thesis re-

imagines the liminal spaces in San Luis to be strategic sites of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality, culminating in various final products called rioscapes.

The above image [01.01] is an image of the San Ysidro-Tijuana Land Port of Entry. The image is cropped and flipped to produce a kaleidoscope-like effect. This image was part of an early exploration in how to re-imagine borderscapes. Cropping and flipping became a common method of exploration in future explorations in this book.



Thesis Statement

Left: [01.02]
Location of San Luis
Map
Author's Work
(2021)

The Mexican-American Border is defined by two essential structures: the physical barriers along the border and the influx of people trying to across the border (Ríopolitics). Re-imagining the liminal spaces along the border can transform the border into a place of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality (Ríosapes).

Background: Border conflicts and mass migrations around the world have inspired philosophers and scholars to investigate the nature of borders. These border philosophies are useful in showing how people experience borders, but they are not universal in that they cannot be applied the same way to every border. This thesis synthesizes several border theories and folds them into a new concept: ríopolitics.

Implications: Ríopolitics is defined as the geopolitical scenario shaped by the viapolitics and liminality of the Mexican-American border, the physical barriers along the Mexican-American border (e.g., Río Grande, Río Colorado) and the influx of people who cross the border (e.g. *un río de gente*). Conceptualizing the Mexican-American border under this umbrella term allows us to analyze “present-day” ríopolitics and then prescribe what a future ríopolitics will be. This thesis argues that liminal border spaces can be a place to re-imagine the border as a scene, or -scape, of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality.

Methods: This thesis first begins by asking what are borders? Four types of borders are then identified: gated communities, firewalls, political borders, and the global border. Further investigations reveal that borders are experienced by daily travelers, migrants, and through international trade, at land ports of entry. The concepts discussed above constitute how these travelers experience borders.

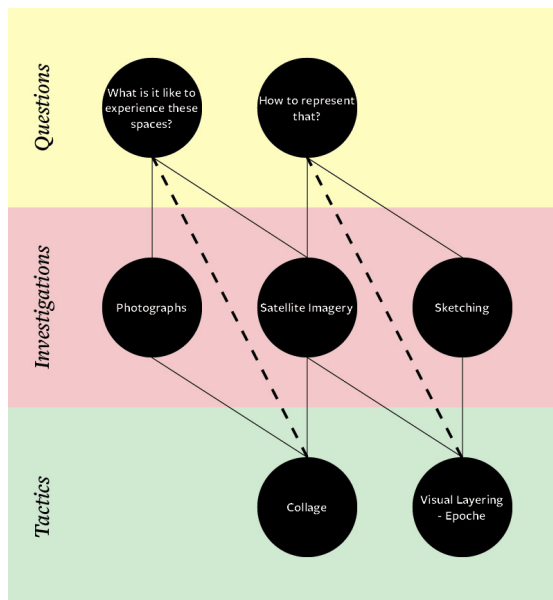
This thesis is set in the San Luis borderscape, a cross-border city consisting of San Luis AZ and San Luis Rio Colorado SO. This setting was chosen since more well-known border crossings such as San Ysidro CA and El Paso TX are already very popular places of investigation. Therefore, the setting of San Luis gives this thesis a better opportunity of providing a unique contribution to the field of border scholarship. After preliminary research about the facts and people of San Luis was done, in-depth research of the liminal spaces was performed. Eidetic operations revealed the nature of the liminal spaces and how those natures reflected the border concepts mentioned earlier.

Finally, the thesis concludes by using the same methods used to perform the eidetic operations, but instead re-imagines the border in new ways. The results hopefully provoke viewers into challenging any previously held views or biases relating to borders.

This thesis generally studies the architecture of border infrastructure, border systems, and border communities primarily on the Mexican-American and Canadian-American border. The research began by looking at the architectural typology of a “Land Port of Entry,” and then expanded to cross-border metropolitan areas and borderscapes. Later, the research expanded into the philosophies of viapolitics and liminality to understand how the politics of migration influences the architecture around borders. Additional philosophies such as phantasmagoria were explored as the thesis production continued.

The scope of this investigation has been looking at the liminal and viapolitical elements that shape what borders in America look like. This thesis concentrates primarily on the geopolitical scenario in America rather than introducing too many other scenarios worldwide, though initial investigations did include other borders worldwide such as the Israeli-Palestinian Border (Al-lon, 1976), the Sino-Indian Border (Mandhana, 2020), and borders in Africa (Calvo, 2020; Touval, 1966).

Overall, this book seeks to understand why the conditions of border infrastructure are not working at the human scale (waiting times, the suffering of refugees as evidence of failing border infrastructure) and identify how these failures can be addressed. The evidence that has been gathered includes the philosophical concepts related to mi-



gration (viapolitics) and borders (liminality), along with case studies at various border cities such as San Luis AZ and Hidalgo TX. In these case studies, all of the different aspects of that border are considered.

Mapping out land ports of entry around the U.S. was a helpful investigation that looked at where people cross the border and if the borders they did cross were in good condition. Zooming into these borders and looking at how viapolitics and liminality were shaping how these land ports of entry was helpful. Finally, sketching out the different ways that liminality can be defined was helpful in my own understanding.

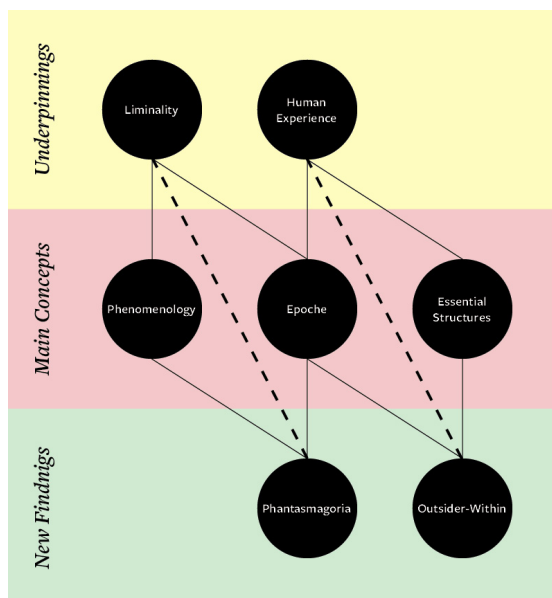
Above: [01.03]

Tactics
Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

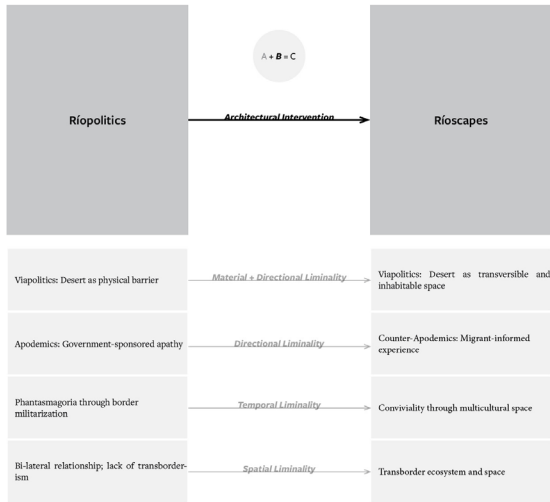
Below: [01.04]

Underpinnings
Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

An important underpinning of this thesis is that borders are experienced by people crossing them. Thus, crossing borders is a human experience. One particular way of studying the human experience of something is through phenomenology. Phenomenology challenges us to view an object through its essence—in other words, what that object essentially is. The primary way of trying to find an object's essence is through a methodology called the epoché, which strips away or changes various aspects of an object to reveal its essential structures. Strip too much away or change something too important to the object and its meaning falls apart. This thesis uses various methods of visual epoché to reveal the essential structures of the Mexican-American Border, particularly in the San Luis Borderscape. Some of the new findings consist of new concepts like border phantasmagoria and riopolitics—a theory unique to this book.



Reimagining Borderscapes



This book begins by synthesizing various border theories that exist in the field of border scholarship. These include viapolitics, apodemics, counter-apodemics, phantasmagoria, counter-phantasmagoria, conviviality, transborderism, and liminality. After introducing those concepts, this book introduces the concept of *riopolitics*. *Riopolitics* argues that the Mexican-American border is animated by the physical barriers along the border and the influx of people trying to cross the border. The thesis then zooms into a specific part of the Mexican-American border—the San Luis Borderscape, made up of San Luis, Arizona and San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora. Researching the people and the liminal spaces there illustrates what *riopolitics* looks like in real life. Finally, the book concludes by re-imagining the liminal spaces in San Luis as different *rioscapes*—a multicultural alternative to *riopolitics*.

Above: [01.05]

Argument

Diagram

Author's Work

(2021)

Below: [01.06]

San Luis Experiential

Collage

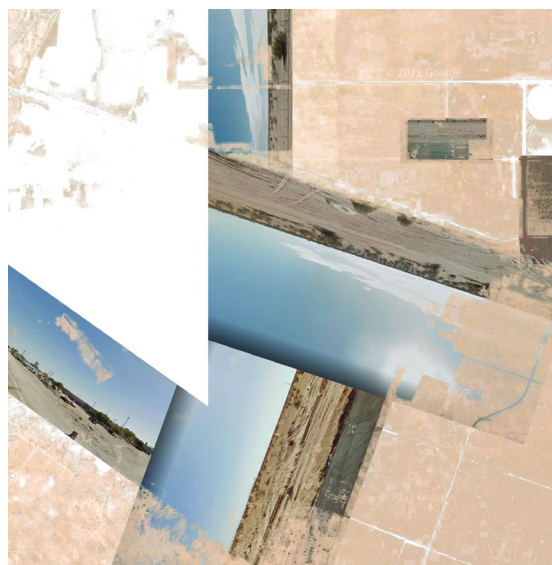
Author's Work

(2021)

One example of a phenomenological investigation into the city of San Luis is the image below which uses layering techniques to create a sort of visual epoché by stripping away different parts of a satellite image of San Luis AZ and see what essential structures remained, if any. The goal of this was to address a comment from Benchmark II where a juror asked about the experience of being in one of the liminal spaces I defined.

Overall, I was attempting to recreate the experiences that I have felt in my own investigations of the city while trying to go beyond merely sharing street view images and photographs that others have taken. One way I did this was by collaging different images of the liminal spaces and aligning them to a plan view of the city where only those spaces are visible. What became of the collages was a sort of phantasmagoria where one can imagine these places in a dreamlike state.

The topic of this thesis was ultimately chosen because of the implications and relevance that an in-depth exploration of borders would have. As will be discussed in chapter 2, the world is full of borders at many different locations and many different scales. The information and methods in this thesis can guide future border scholars and designers at understanding the meaning of various borders. The methods introduced in chapter 3 in isolating and then analyzing liminal spaces with eidetic operations can be used in other places as well. While the concept of *riopolitics* is specific to the Mexican-American Border, future work can use the same method of phenomenological word construction to apply to any border or place.



My Own Experience of Borders

In my own lived experience, borderscapes have taken on many different forms. As a result, the lived experience of the land ports of entry within those borderscapes are likewise different. The first land port of entry that I think about is the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel. This is a land border crossing between two stable countries with very normal relations. As a result, the land port of entry is stable. What stands out about the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel is that it is engulfed by city context. From the Detroit side, one turns from Jefferson, the main East to West thoroughfare in Downtown Detroit into a short driveway that takes cars down a spiral into the tunnel. The tunnel itself is compact and dark. You have no sense of neither the river, nor the beginning and end of the tunnel once inside. On the other side, you come out in Downtown Windsor so far away from the Detroit River you question whether you were ever underwater. Even though the Canadian-American border is obvious in this region—it's a river after all—the land port of entry disappears the border by creating a new liminal space that's disconnected from the river. Crossing this border is about as easy as paying a toll on a U.S. turnpike.

The second land port of entry that I think about is the border between Austria and Slovakia, or lack thereof. The way I experienced the Austrian-Slovakian borderscape is likely the way that most others experienced it: by taking a bus from Vienna to Bratislava (and back), the



capital cities of Austria and Slovakia respectively. Most of the border between the two countries is the Danube River but the highway between Vienna and Bratislava crosses the part of the border that is not the river. When the bus I was traveling on crossed the border, I completely missed it. The border between the two countries is marked by a border station and a cafe—two one-story buildings of no more than a thousand square feet—and a blue sign that is half of a square foot in area. The unostentatious nature of the border is surprising, given its massive implications; this border is the dividing line between Western and Eastern Europe and it was a front line in World War I. Of course, that conflict is over one hundred years old now, and Austria and Slovakia are two countries in the European Union and Schengen Area; they now have open borders. However, the difference between the two countries is immediately noticeable when driving into the city of Bratislava.

The language, food, architecture, prices, and feel all change radically from that of Vienna. Arriving to Bratislava from Vienna has the feel of crossing a border into a radically different country, but the difference isn't experienced at the land port of entry. Instead, the lack of a port of entry delegated the experiential change to when I was thrust into the other country's capital city.

Finally, the third experience of a land port of entry that comes to mind is the system of checks between Paris and London along the French-British border. Like the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, this border has a physical separation, and like the Austrian-Slovakian border, I traveled this border via bus. Britain and France currently have a stable but testy relationship. My experience was even rockier than normal since I was traveling during the Brexit crisis. Before we even left France, we were subject to a customs check. I had no idea where this check was exactly because it was

Above: [01.07]
Detroit-Windsor Tunnel
Photograph
(2006)

Retrieved From
Wikimedia Commons

Below: [01.08]
Detroit River
Photograph
Author's Work
(2021)



Reimagining Borderscapes



an overnight bus travel. The check was routine, asking for no more than a passport and a ticket check. Later, the bus stopped again for a second customs check. This check was much more intense. They asked for passports, dates of arrival and departure from the U.K., proof of those dates through airline tickets, hotel reservation confirmations, receipts of those hotel bookings, and information of anyone we planned on meeting in the U.K. The man in front of me in line was detained.

Luckily, I passed. After that, we got on a ferry to cross the English Channel and finally arrived in the U.K. several hours later (I had no idea we would be traveling on a ferry because the bus ticket said it would be going through the Channel). There were additional documentation checks when the ferry reached the U.K.'s mainland. Overall, the journey between Paris and London was eight incredibly stressful

hours. At multiple points along the journey, I had no idea where I was. The nightmarish journey through the British-French borderscape was certainly a metaphor for the nightmarish political scenario of Brexit and its implications for the U.K. and the rest of Europe. It was incredible how accurately the two countries were able to express their geopolitical frustrations at the human scale.

How did these borderscapes engage me? In the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, I was transported away from the border into a new space that muted my senses. In addition to muting the conventional senses, the tunnel erased my “map sense.” It was difficult to know where I was in relation to the river above. This experience was somewhat like my trip from Vienna to Bratislava; I knew I was crossing a border but did not know where the border line was. The similarity continues when thinking about my journey from Paris to London. There were so many bus stops and border checks that I had no idea

where I was most of the time. This reveals an essence of borders: they are not one-dimensional dividing lines but rather are spaces that are inhabited. They are experienced by traveling through them, not across them.

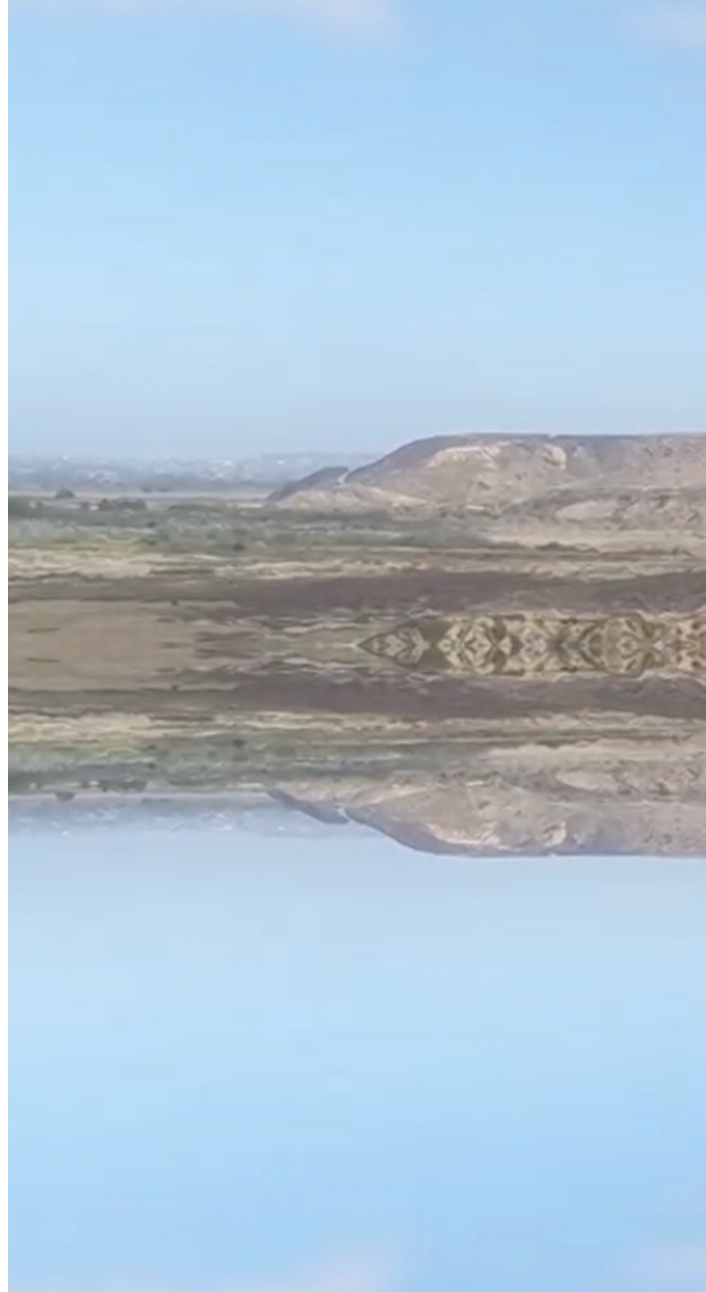
Above: [01.09]
Bridge near
Austria-Slovakia Border
Photograph
Author's Work
(2021)

Below: [01.10]
Calais-Dover Ferry
Photograph
Jiel Beaumadier
(2008)



Chapter 02

Analysis of Borders



What are Borders? Pages 14-15	Where are Borders Experienced? Pages 16-17	Who Experiences Borders? Pages 18-19	How are Borders Experienced? Pages 20-27	Case Studies Pages 28-35	Int'l Laws and Border Architecture Pages 36-37
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"It always gives me pleasure to astonish the young by telling them that before 1914 I traveled from Europe to India and to America without a passport and without ever having seen one." — Stefan Zweig, 2013 (From Tromifov, 2020; Zweig, 2013).

"The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea, the various products of the whole earth, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep" — John Maynard Keynes, 1920 (From Barker et al, 2002).



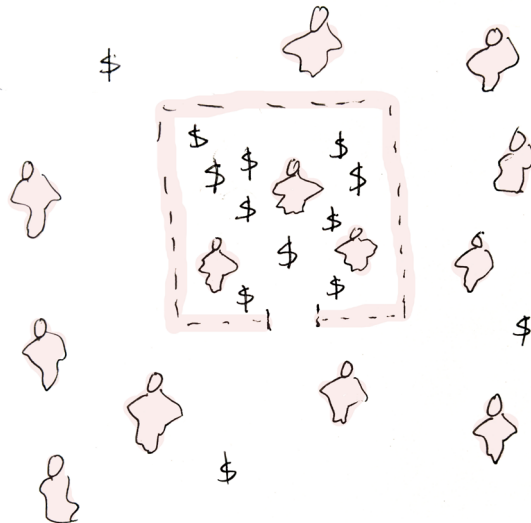
What are borders? Who crosses them? Where and how are they experienced? The first part of this thesis examines borders based on those questions and seeks to analyze their nature. The chapter begins by asking, what are borders? During the research process, four types of borders were discovered: the gated community, the firewall, the political border, and the global border. Then, the thesis asks, where are borders experienced? In general, borders are experienced at land ports of entry. The thesis then seeks to explain how borders are experienced by examining a number of border theories, namely viapolitics, apodemics, counter-apodemics, phantasmagoria, counter-phantasmagoria, conviviality, transborderism, and liminality. After exploring those concepts, this thesis introduces a new concept to specifically apply to the Mexican-American Border: riopolitics.

The above image [02.01] is an image of the border wall along the Mexican-American border near Otay Mesa, California. The image is cropped and flipped to produce a kaleidoscope-like effect. This image was part of an early exploration in how to reimagine borderscapes. Cropping and flipping became a common method of exploration in future explorations in this book.

What are Borders?

02 Analysis of Borders

Research of the fields of political geography, social anthropology, and public culture reveals several types of borders and what they do. This section explores four types of borders: gated communities, firewalls, political borders, and the global border. While borders can be simply defined as the extent to which a nation-state can control or govern (Robinson, 2012), they can also carry a lot more meaning. Borders exist at many different scales, from the city scale to the global scale, and even the abstract. At the urban scale, the concept of borders is used to create ghettos, gated communities, civic institutions and more. When analyzing the character of cities, one element that urban theorists study is the “edge,” defined as something that is “laterally visible for some distance, mark a sharp gradient of area character, and clearly joins two bounded regions” (Lynch, 1984; Szeszulski, 2016). Two examples of edges are medieval city walls and rivers. One problem with the concept of the edge is that it doesn’t consider what is on each side of the edge. Medieval walls act as borders in the same way that gated communities do; they keep the privileged protected from outsiders or “barbarians.” It’s also important to consider that borders don’t only exist in the physical world. New technologies create new spaces like the Internet where borders appear.

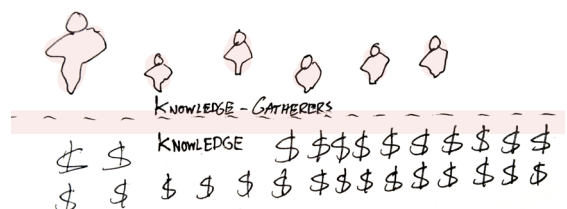


Gated Communities, also called Fortified Enclaves, are “privatized, enclosed, and monitored spaces for residence, consumption, leisure, and work. The fear of violence is one of their main justifications. They appeal to those who are abandoning the traditional public sphere of the streets to the poor, the ‘marginal,’ and the homeless” (Caldeira, 1996). Gated communities appeal to the wealthy and privileged by advertising a degree of status, protection, and security through isolation and protection. Even though they are justified by those means, the existence of gated communities compromises a city’s organization and free-flowing circulation. Gated communities are the first type of border mentioned here because they are the smallest type of border on a social scale; they appeal to the basic human instinct to shut oneself off from the heterogeneity of a city.

Above: [02.02]
Gated Community
Diagram Sketch
Author’s Work
(2021)

Below: [02.03]
Firewall
Diagram Sketch
Author’s Work
(2021)

A **Firewall** “regulates the connection between a PC or local network and the wider network environment. The task of the firewall is to perform a kind of traffic control at the interface between ... the Internet, where there is zero or very low trust, and the internal network of a business or university where there is high trust” (Walters, 2006; See Johnson and Post, 1997). When digital space was created with ARPANET in 1967 and then the World Wide Web in 1991, policymakers and people searched for ways to regulate the information that was on the Internet. A firewall is a basic way in doing that, and is the simplest form of a border in digital space. Firewalls in an abstract sense function much differently than conventional borders in that instead of separating privileged people from marginalized people, they separate people from both information and resources. In a way, the Internet today has become an invisible space filled with fortified enclaves of intranets and protected networks with firewalls acting as the barrier that separates parts of the web. Of course, just as walls and fences can be climbed, firewalls can be breached.

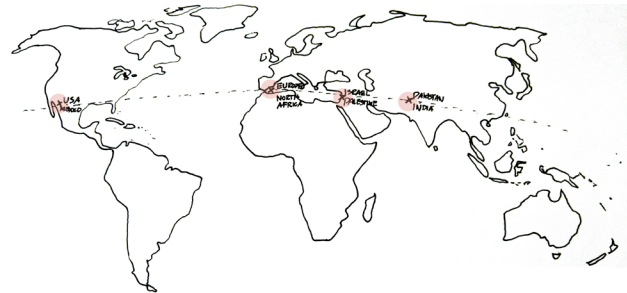


Reimagining Borderscapes

Political Borders are imposed on the world through human agency (Robinson, 2012), even if they are defined by natural features such as rivers or mountain ranges. These borders are what we typically see on a map, atlas, or globe. They define the boundaries of nation-states by denoting the extents of what the governments of those nation-states can and cannot control. Political borders separate more than just nation-states; they separate religions, languages, values, resources, ethnicities, races, and privileges. While drawn as lines on a map, political

Right: [02.04]
Global Border
Diagram Sketch
Author's Work
(2021)

Below: [02.05]
Political Border
Diagram Sketch
Author's Work
(2021)

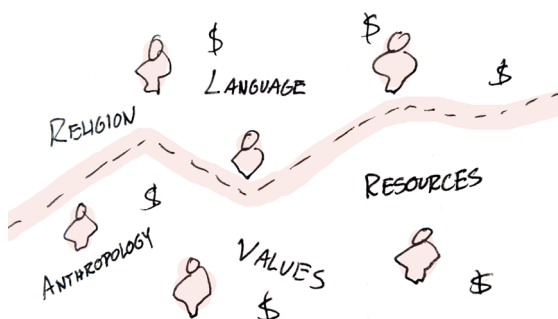


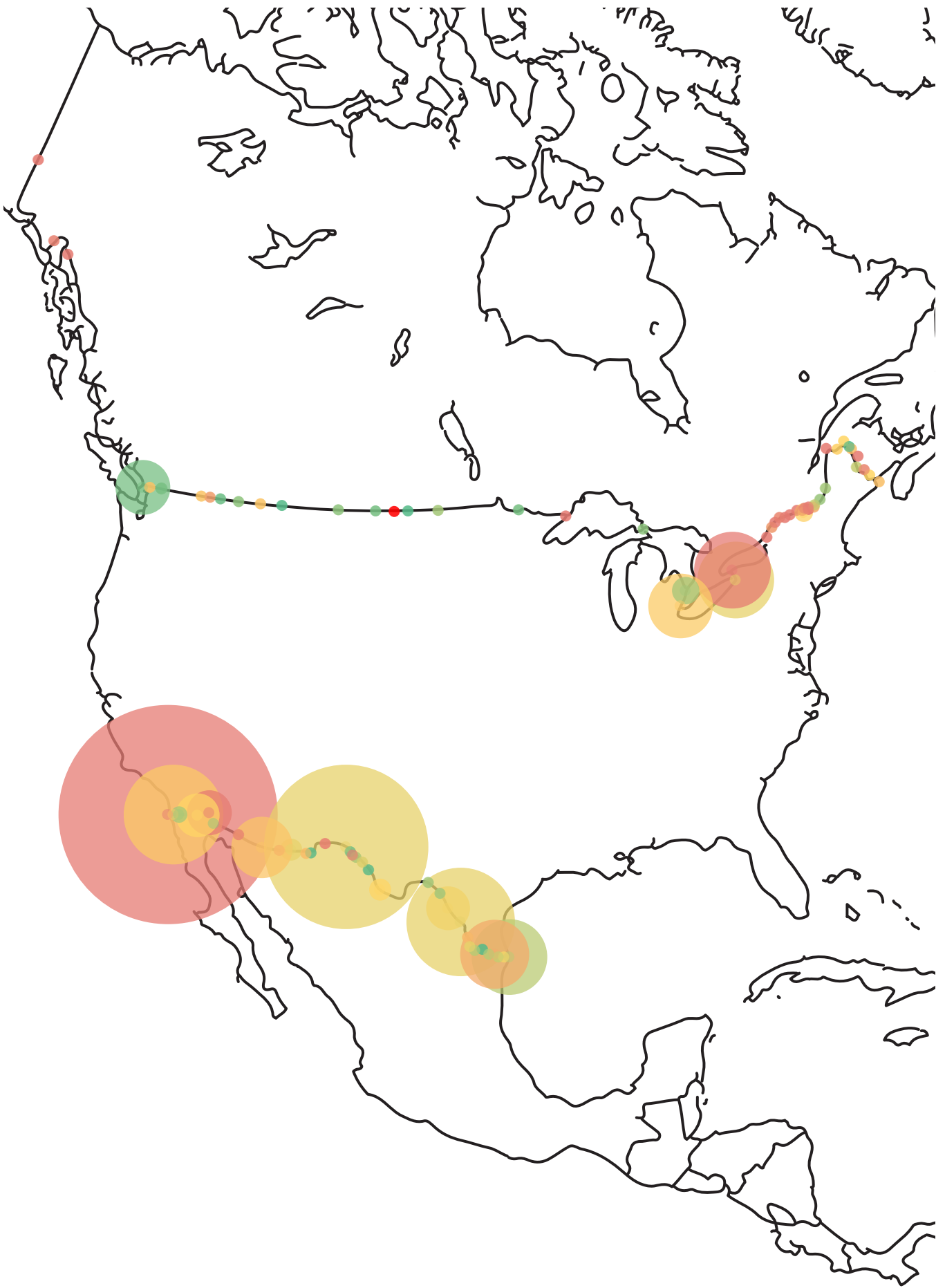
The world's North-South divide characterizes a **Global Border** that separates “developed” countries to the “North” and “developing” countries to the “South,” though this border does not necessarily reflect reality (Therien, 1999). Several active border crises and mass migrations are occurring today along this border (See Cruz, 2019). While this line is not official by any means (Therien actually argues against it), it is certainly striking to see the line formed by the major border crises on the map. The Mexican-American border crisis began with the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, in 1994 (González, 2011). The policies within NAFTA incentivized American corporations to open plants and factories in the Northern border region in Mexico in order to take advantage of more relaxed environmental and workplace safety regulations, as well as lower labor costs. NAFTA also included a steep corn tariff which put many small farmers in Southern Mexico out of business. As a result, many of those farmers traveled North to get jobs at the new plants and factories. Because there were more migrants than jobs available, they resorted to crossing the Mexican-American border to find work.

In addition to causing a new wave of migration, NAFTA created a situation where farming food crops in Southern Mexico was no longer economically viable. Instead, that land started being used for farming drug crops like marijuana. This created many drug cartels and smuggling routes to sell the drugs North to the United States.

Before the undertaking of this thesis, many other border crises were considered. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the soft borders in Europe were challenged (Kostov, 2020; Trofimov, 2020); this compounded an ongoing migration crisis at the border between Europe and North Africa (Calvo, 2020; Dijkstra and Veer, 2019). In addition, active border disputes exist between Israel and Palestine (Allon, 1976) as well as between China, Pakistan, India, and their neighboring Asian countries (Mandhana, 2020). In considering all of these active border situations, the Mexican-American border was chosen for study because of the balance between the social, environmental, and economic issues that occur at the border. As follows, political borders are the type of border considered for future questions in this chapter.

borders in real life are three-dimensional spaces. These spaces can be militarized such as the Maginot Line on the French border with Germany before and at the start of the Second World War. On the other hand, these spaces could be blurred and ambiguous, such as most of the European borderscape today after the advent of the European Union and Schengen Area open border policies.





Where are Borders Experienced?

Left: [02.06]
Land Ports of Entry
Map
Author's Work
(2021)
Made Possible By:
Gambler, 2019

A *Land Port of Entry*, also known as a border station or LPOE, is the facility that provides controlled entry into or departure from the United States for persons or materials. It houses agencies responsible for the enforcement of laws pertaining to border crossing. (Gambler, 2019) (Conway, 2017) (OSCE, 2012). Put simply, land ports of entry are where we experience borders. There are 167 LPOE in the United States on the Canadian-American and Mexican-American borders. The General Services Administration, or GSA, has several ongoing construction or modernization projects at major LPOE, most of which are contracts worth over \$100,000,000. The problems that these design projects attempt to solve are increased traffic flows, new inspection technologies, and new facilities for Customs and Border Protection (Gambler, 2019).

The definition of land port of entry along with the list of problems laid out in project briefs are not only very technical, but they are solely from the perspective of the state, lacking any degree of human perspective aside from the humans that wear uniforms. Analyzing the essence of border crossings and land ports of entry through a phenomenological lens would reveal a perspective of lived human experience and facilitate a better understanding of how design can improve how land ports of entry factor into the human experience. To capture the phenomenon of land ports of entry, this research

will analyze the concepts of viapolitics, apodemics, counter-apodemics, liminality, altermobility, de-territorialization, and megaregions to understand what land ports of entry and borders mean.

Land ports of entry have existed in the realm of politics for a long time and as a result, the human experience at these land ports of entries has not been considered. Removing LPOE from the concern of the state and into the concern of the human experience will allow them to become a problem that can be addressed. In addition, designing for the human experience rather than the state will actually be fulfilling the needs of the real user group of land ports of entry: the people that pass through them as tourists, traders, and migrants.

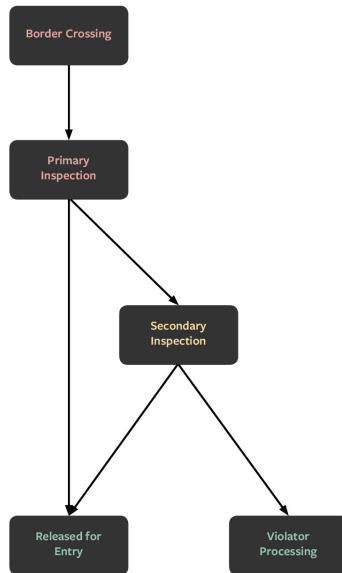
Who Experiences Borders?

02 Analysis of Borders

In terms of the research on how people experience borders, the modes of experience can be divided into four main categories, tourism, international trade, migration, and cross-border metropolitan areas.

Tourist crossings involve temporary travel, either for pleasure or business, that crosses a border. These visits could involve extended travel to see places of interest or day-travel to run errands in a neighboring border city. Many people travel from American border communities to Mexican border cities to shop at markets or visit friends and neighbors (Hou, 2013; See Hepperman and Oehler, 2009). Tourists experience land ports of entry as a beginning and ending of a journey, not as a destination. How does one design a leg of a journey? In Europe, within the Schengen Area, most border checks have been removed so that travelers can travel freer and quicker between countries. For the most part this has worked, as removing border checks and stoppages has supported Europe's tourism industry and boosted overall GDP for countries in the Schengen Agreement (OSCE and UNECE, 2012). Countries that do not have open border agreements such as the United States and Canada seek to have it both ways—they desire the free and open travel that occurs in the Schengen Area but also want the security capability that comes with a secure border. One design consideration that can achieve that goal is pre-clearance. Pre-clearance is a process

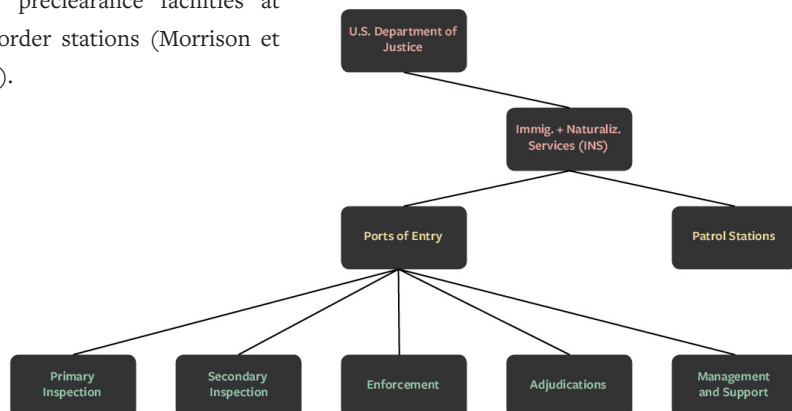
where travelers are inspected or screened before they arrive in their destination country (CBP, 2020). Normally, travelers must stop at land ports of entry to be inspected and approved to enter the country. This of course slows down the journey and can sometimes be a significant hindrance when traffic volumes are high. Heavy traffic levels and heightened security presences create a negative experience for travelers (Correa-Cabrera and Garrett, 2014). Given the long-term benefits of pre-clearance, many corporations and government officials are pushing for pre-clearance facilities at most border stations (Morrison et al, 2018).



Above: [02.07] Tourist Inspection Diagram Author's Work (2021)

Below: [02.08] Customs Hierarchy Diagram Author's Work (2021)

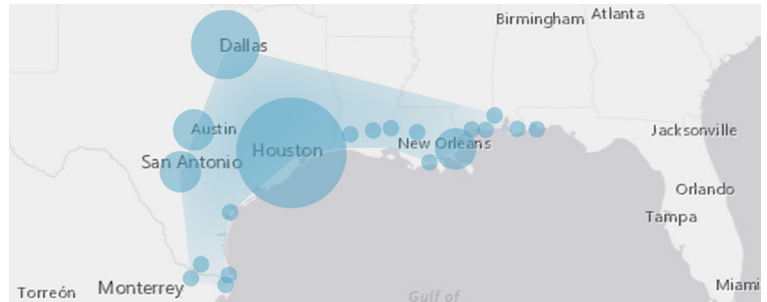
Refugees are people “owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, ... unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or ... unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 1951). Currently, there is a large migration of refugees from Mexico and Central America to the United States (Castellano, 2021; Jordan et al, 2018; González, 2011; Grandin, 2019; Woodhouse, 2019) as well as a large migration of refugees from Syria and North Africa to Europe (Calvo, 2020; Dijstelbloem and Veer, 2019). Despite the protections afforded to refugees by the United Nations, In the United States, Migrant Protection Protocols force migrants who wish to seek asylum to stay in Mexico before they can have their asylum case heard. While these protocols are scrutinized legally, the COVID-19 pandemic has given the United States leeway in enforcing these protocols, specifically Title 42 which gives U.S. institutions like CBP broad authority during medical emergencies (Pennolino 2020).



Reimagining Borderscapes

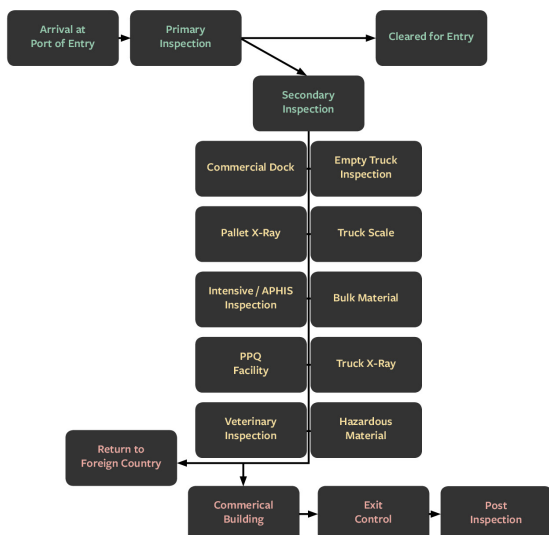
International Trade is the exchange of capital, goods, and services across international borders. International trade in services broadly consists of commercial services, investment income, and government services (Appleyard, Field Jr. 2014). Many borders, such as the Canadian-American border, have over a billion dollars of trade cross the border each year (Gambler 2019). After the enactment of the North American Free Trade Agreement, international trade between the U.S., Canada and Mexico has soared, however, most of that trade has been between multinational corporations or U.S. corporations shipping materials back and forth across the border (González, 2011).

Right: [02.09]
 Texas Gulf Megaregion
 Map
 Author's Work
 (2021)
 Below: [02.10]
 Cargo Inspection
 Diagram
 Author's Work
 (2021)
 Made Possible by:
 Conway, 2017



Cross-Border Metropolitan Regions, also called CBMRs, are political constructions based on cross-border agreements which consider the existence of national borders as a resource for increasing interactions at the local level and the embeddedness of the metropolitan centers (Chilla et al, 2010). Several megaregions cross borders, such as what is commonly referred to as the Great Lakes Megaregion, consisting off Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Kalamazoo, Lansing, Detroit, Toronto, Buffalo, Ottawa and Montreal. There is a lot of travel that occurs between these cities and these travelers are weaving together an urban fabric that crosses borders. When a megaregion crosses a border, it becomes a Cross-Border Metropolitan Region. The Great Lakes Megaregion is a good example of a megaregion that spans the Canadian-American border, along with the Pacific Northwest Megaregion consisting of Seattle and Vancouver.

In some cross-border metropolitan regions, it is impossible to walk across the border, such as the Canadian-American border between Windsor and Detroit. In three border crossings—the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel, the Ambassador Bridge, and the proposed Gordie Howe International Bridge—pedestrian crossing is impossible. This inhibits the experience of the city and the meaning of the cross-border metropolitan region. A design consideration to let pedestrians cross the border would be to add a pedestrian lane to the bridge or tunnel or to construct a new bridge or tunnel specifically for pedestrians. A pedestrian-only means of crossing the border between Detroit and Windsor would not only increase the sense of the region, it would also allow travelers to experience the Detroit River from outside a vehicle, thereby altering their phenomenological experience of the border as something to view, not just cross. These kinds of borders are much more common along the Mexican-American border. For example, the Hidalgo-Reinosa border crossing features two pedestrian bridges and a facility dedicated to processing pedestrian traffic (Richardson and Pagán, 2016).



How do we Experience Borders?

02 Analysis of Borders

As said earlier, we experience borders by crossing them. This section asks, how do we cross borders and how do we experience borders as we cross them. To answer these questions, this thesis uses theories from border scholars such as William Walters. The first three theories discussed here are viapolitics, apodemics, and counter-apodemics. These theories were most helpful in aiding this thesis's research because they don't reduce a border crossing just to what happens at a land port of entry. Rather, the process of crossing a border is journey with a start and a destination. The concept of viapolitics considers border crossing from the perspective of the vehicle, not just the migrant (Walters, 2005; See Teunissen, 2020). This perspective is valuable because it takes into account whether one is traveling by bus, by foot, by car, by boat, or by airplane—all of which have a different phenomenology of border crossing. Viapolitics can also be thought of as a conflict or negotiation between two other theories explained in this section—apodemics and counter-apodemics. These theories, which are further defined and outlined on the next page, see migration and border crossing from the perspectives of the state or sovereign (apodemics) and from the perspective of the migrant (counter-apodemics). They both explore information and information-gathering as an essential structure to migration and traveling across borders.



Viapolitics is a term that was derived from a phenomenological exploration of migration. It combines two essential structures of migration: via and politics to form an independent concept. *Via* is the Latin word for route, road or way. It also is a word that describes one's means or modes of transportation. For instance, I can say that I traveled from London to Paris *via* bus, or I can say I flew from London to Toronto *via* Halifax. Politics is generally understood as a system of governance run by people. Put simply, viapolitics can be understood as the politics of routes, roads, and means of transportation that can make visible how materialities actively influence mobility and migration (Walters 2015). Borders, borderscapes, and land ports of entry are a few of the many different materialities considered in the concept of viapolitics, in particular when modes of transportation can be considered borders themselves. Take an airplane, for example. When

flying internationally on a commercial airline, one does not experience the border between the departing country and arriving country in the conventional way. For instance, when flying from New York to Mexico City, one doesn't experience the "border wall" that's characterized the Mexican-American border for decades. Rather, one experiences the border at the customs check at the Mexico City airport.

The concept of viapolitics is important to the field of border scholarship because as Walters says, all migrations involve journeys and those journeys are more often than not mediated by complex infrastructures, authorities and norms of transportation (2015). At borders, those complex infrastructures are the ports of entry where migrants arrive. More often than not, in the United States, these infrastructures are not adequate to handle the number of migrants received and do not include facilities specified for asylum seekers (Conahan, 1991; See Woodhouse, 2019). In addition, these facilities do not optimize their facilities based on how migrants travel which is usually by foot or by bus (Stuesse and Coleman 2014).

Above: [02.11]
Viapolitics
Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

Reimagining Borderscapes

Apodemics was the 17th century movement of state-sponsored instruction intended to train the traveler to become a reliable observer who, when dispatched on long journeys to foreign lands in the service of the sovereign, could return with useful intelligence. Apodemics offered instruction on how to travel so as to make the long-distance journey into a machine for knowledge accumulation. (Feuerhahn 2001). In the 17th century, countries like Britain and France and other world powers were colonizing places like Africa, Asia and the Americas but did not have extensive information of these places. Of course, in this time, there were no satellites, so the best way of getting information on these places was through training their tourists with the power to gather information and be able to render it upon return in a way useful for the state. Some examples of apodemics were national leaders encouraging their citizens to buy artwork from other countries and even Benjamin Franklin writing an essay on how to prepare for a sea voyage (Franklin, 1793).

Top-Right: [02.12]

Counter-Apodemics

Diagram

Author's Work

(2021)

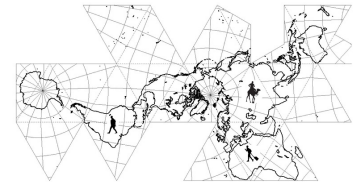
Below: [02.13]

Apodemics Diagram

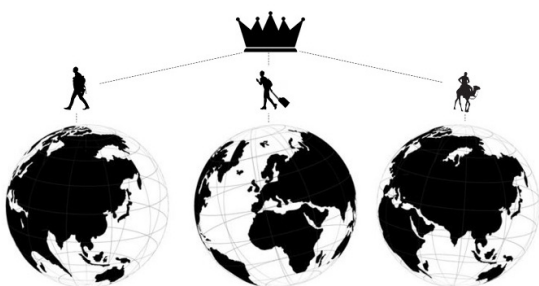
Author's Work

(2021)

Unlike apodemics which is knowledge gained for the sake of the sovereign, *Counter-Apodemics* is a modern take that is animated by the challenge of negotiating or evading migration control and surviving the difficult life of the road. Essentially, counter-apodemics is knowledge gained for the sake of the migrant, not the state (Bridgen and Mainwaring 2014). Counter-apodemics can look like many things. One example is how migrants go shopping before their journey. Authorities in African and Central American countries have been instructed to look out for people, in particular young men, who buy backpacks, biscuits, money clips and other things that one would need for a journey. These authorities then attempt to stop the migrant from going on their journey. Counter-apodemics teaches these would-be travelers to be smart about who shops and where, and how to stagger purchases to avoid tipping off authorities. The notion of “migration routes” that have been published by NGOs or organizations interested in migration is another result of counter-apodemics. The routes are information sets rendered to show migrants which roads and routes are safest for them to take and what land ports of entry are migrant-friendly when they arrive at their destination country.



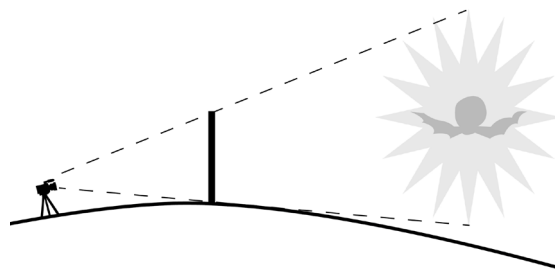
Counter-apodemics and viapolitics are two concepts that in part address the types of vehicles that migrants take across borders. Altermobility is a concept that directly questions what vehicles are crossing the border and why. Altermobility is the matter of improvising other modes of mobility in order to survive; the strategies people use to regain their individual and family mobility—physical, social, spiritual (Stuesse and Coleman 2014). The most common example of altermobility is of those who travel on buses. A wise migrant knows that a bus is subject to many documentation checks. Altermobility is the machine that migrants use to avoid these checks. Maybe for one leg of the journey, a migrant will take a taxi instead of a bus. Maybe the migrant will take trains that get closer to their country of destination but avoid the border and therefore steer clear of documentation checks. These strategies constitute altermobility and are relevant to the exploration of borderscapes because they tell a story of the vehicles that travel in and around borders.



How do we Experience Borders?

02 Analysis of Borders

One definition of *Phantasmagoria* is an assembly of specters (Andreotti and Lahiji, 2018) or ghosts. Phantasmagoria shows began in the early days of camera technology. Étienne-Gaspard Robert would put on shows where he would use lanterns and projectors to portray small images or figurines as large demons and monsters dancing around a theatre to scare audiences. Phantasmagoria first began to be used as a critique when Walter Benjamin used the term to criticize the World Exhibition in Paris in 1939. His critique was inspired by the concept of commodity fetishism first developed by Marx. Adorno developed the definition of phantasmagoria to mean the occultation of production by means of the outward appearance of the object (Adorno, 2005). What this means is that by projecting a product's outward appearance in a deceptive way, the producer can hide the true essence of the object. With this definition, one can describe the phantasmagoria of things, such as the phantasmagoria of the commodity (such as with Marxism), the phantasmagoria of the city (Benjamin, 1939), and the phantasmagoria of architecture (Andreotti and Lahiji, 2018). This section examines the phantasmagoria of borders and in particular argues that the producers of borders—for the sake of this thesis being the U.S. Government—use militarization and propaganda to depict the borderlands as scary and dangerous places. Militarization methods such as the construction

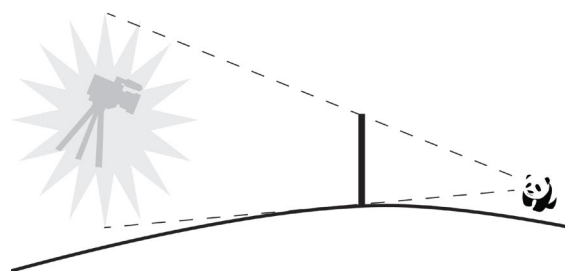


of massive opaque steel walls, tall observation towers, a special police force dedicated to the border (Customs and Border Protection in the United States), and another special police force dedicated to deporting people across borders (Immigration and Customs Enforcement in the United States) all make out the border to be a dangerous place with dangerous people (Grandin, 2019). Meanwhile, propaganda efforts by the U.S. government and right-wing media outlets make out the Mexican-American Border Region to be under siege by drug-trafficking organizations, terrorists, and undocumented immigrants when in reality that is not true (Correa-Cabrera and Garrett, 2014). The diagram in the top-center of this page depicts how the phantasmagoria effort works: it uses militarization and propaganda the same way Robert used lanterns and projections to fool people into believing the border to be a monstrous and demonic place.

Above: [02.14]
Phantasmagoria
Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

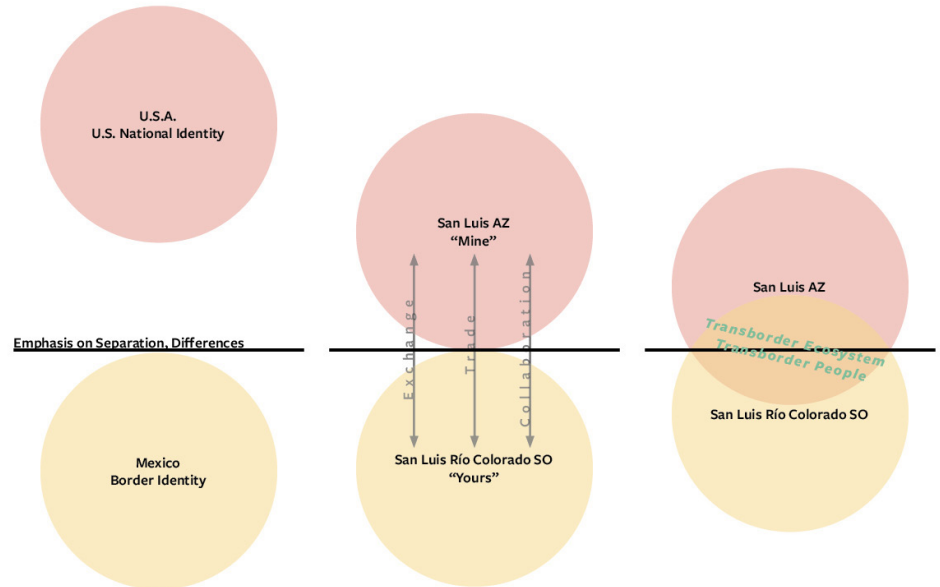
Below: [02.15]
C-Phantasmagoria
Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

If phantasmagoria means the projecting of an object's outward appearance in a deceptive way to hide the true essence of an object, *Counter-Phantasmagoria* would be to rethink that object in a way that honestly captures its essence. This theory of counter-phantasmagoria seeks to minimize the image of the border through the tools of conviviality, which are fostering attentiveness and curiosity, caring for the city and a capacity to put yourself in another's place, worldliness and making connections beyond local confines, developing an aversion to the pleasures of hating, make connections and building home (Back and Sinha, 2016). The future works in this book advocate for policies and architectures of counter-phantasmagoria and conviviality—which combined can be abbreviated as *C-Phantasmagoria* for simplicity's sake. The diagram on this page's bottom-right shows the countered version of the diagram in the top-middle: the border is minimized into something harmless instead of enlarged into something dangerous.



Reimagining Borderscapes

Transborderism is a condition of meaning where borders are considered as spaces instead of lines (Iglesias-Prieto 2012). From that definition it follows that a transborder relationship would be one with people from both nations on each side of the border existing in a multicultural space and ecosystem. The diagram on the top-right of this page illustrates the different relationships that two countries sharing a border might have, particularly the United States and Mexico. The first type of a relationship Iglesias-Prieto calls a non-border border. Recall that borders often separate a privileged group and a marginalized group. With the non-border border, The U.S. associates away from the border due to a perceived negative view of the other side while Mexico relies on the border for the economic benefits. Due to this, The identity of the U.S. city along the border becomes something that has nothing to do with the border while the identity of the city on the Mexican side of the border becomes all about the border. Iglesias-Prieto brings up the example of San Diego CA and Tijuana BC. While Tijuana's identity is associated with the border and the land port of entry, San Diego's identity is associated with the Pacific Ocean, the sunshine, the tourism industry and the proximity to the greater Los Angeles area. The second type of border relationship described by Iglesias-Prieto is the Bi-National or Bi-Lateral border. In this type of border, both nation-states come together to engage in exchanges, international trade, and collaboration,



but not much else. While this fosters an alliance perhaps, it does not foster the sort of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality that Iglesias-Prieto imagines for the transborder concept. The North American Free Trade Agreement is a good example of how the Mexican-American border relationship is bi-national or bi-lateral. While NAFTA created many new cross-border relationships, most of them were corporate relationships. In addition, NAFTA did nothing to erase the divide between American privilege and Mexican marginalization. Instead, NAFTA reinforced that divide by allowing American corporations to exploit Mexican labor (González, 2011). Furthermore, the wave of immigration sparked by NAFTA triggered a disproportionate nationalist and xenophobic response in the United States (Yakushko, 2009; Lee, 2019; See Hale et al, 2011). The third type of border relationship illustrated by Iglesias-Prieto is the transborder relationship. In describing her

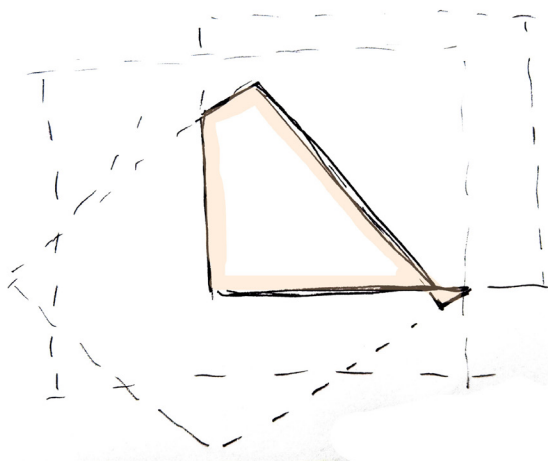
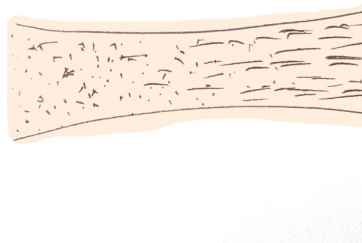
Above: [02.16]
Transborderism
Diagram
Iglesias-Prieto
(2012)

life and career, Iglesias-Prieto says she lives in a transborder existence (Iglesias-Prieto, 2012). The reality for many people living in border cities and border communities is that they must travel across the border every day for work, school, or daily errands. In San Luis Río Colorado SO, over ten-thousand migrant laborers cross the border into San Luis AZ to work in the fields of Southern Arizona (Hepperman and Oehler, 2009). The story of one of those migrant laborers is detailed later in the book. While transborder people exist in large numbers on the Mexican-American border, there is a lack of transborder infrastructure, architecture, and policies, except for water rights (McCarthy, 2011). The fourth chapter of this book imagines what transborder architecture may look like.

How do we Experience Borders?

02 Analysis of Borders

Liminality is defined as in-between space; being in both and neither; porosity and resistance; spatial and temporal (Sennett, 2012) (See Szeszulski, 2018). There are many ways of thinking of liminality; this research has described six types of liminality, seen on this page and the next. The first way of thinking about liminality is **Material Liminality**. In a material with a transition, there is a liminal period where it is neither one material or the other; intact or broken. Consider a metal bar that has been welded. The left side of the bar is steel and the right side of the bar is aluminum. Given that information about the metal bar, what material is the center? Is it both steel and aluminum? Is it neither steel or aluminum? Is it an entirely new material? Another example related to the part of the Mexican-American border that this thesis analyzes is the issue of “green space” in places like Southern Arizona or the Sonora Desert where grass does not naturally grow. Are the parks that are watered and maintained in that region still part of the desert, even though they have grass and flowers?



Spatial Liminality occurs where it is unclear if spaces overlap, if one space is inside the other space, or if one space is in between two other spaces. A common occurrence of spatial liminality occurs when a river is acting as a border between two nation-states and there are islands within the river. Who do those islands belong to? This happens in several locations along the Saint Lawrence River on the Canadian-American Border (Coolidge, 2015). When viewing these islands on a map, it is impossible to tell which country’s sovereignty it is actually under. For example, Cornwall Island belongs to Canada whereas Barnhart Island right next to it belongs to the United States. Some spatially liminal spaces can be overlapping as well. Consider an enclosed patio attached to a house. Is it inside or outside? With a liminal lens, an enclosed patio appears to overlap the border between inside and outside thereby acting as both.

On this Page: [02.17-19]
Liminality Diagrams
Spatial (Above)
Juxt. (Below-Right)
Material (Below-Left)
Diagram Sketches
Author’s Work
(2021)

Juxtapositional Liminality occurs when two things next to each other exist without a contextual warning. The diagram on the bottom right of this page shows flat land juxtaposed with a random hill without any contextual warning. Putting two things near each other that contrast each other in color, size, shape, or something else can draw people’s attention quite easily. This happens often at borders because many borders are set on geometric constraints rather than at natural features. Because of this, governments construct the barriers themselves and what happens is a constructed barrier will appear out of no where in space. This happens in many places along the Mexican-American border where walls are constructed in the middle of a flat desert or in the middle of a wildlife habitat. Also, sometimes one side of the border will dedicate a certain land use that conflicts with the land use on the other side of the border. What occurs there is a juxtaposition of residential and commercial land use.



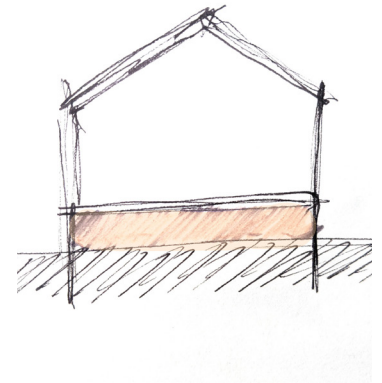
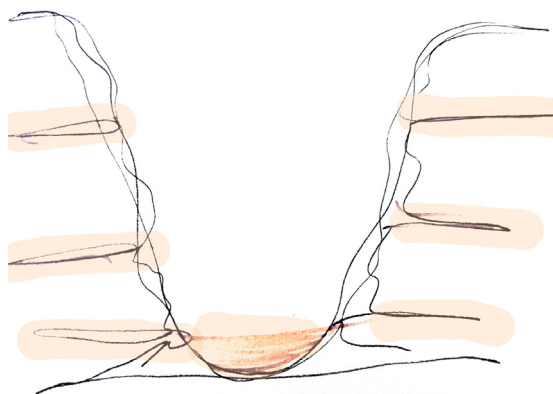
Reimagining Borderscapes



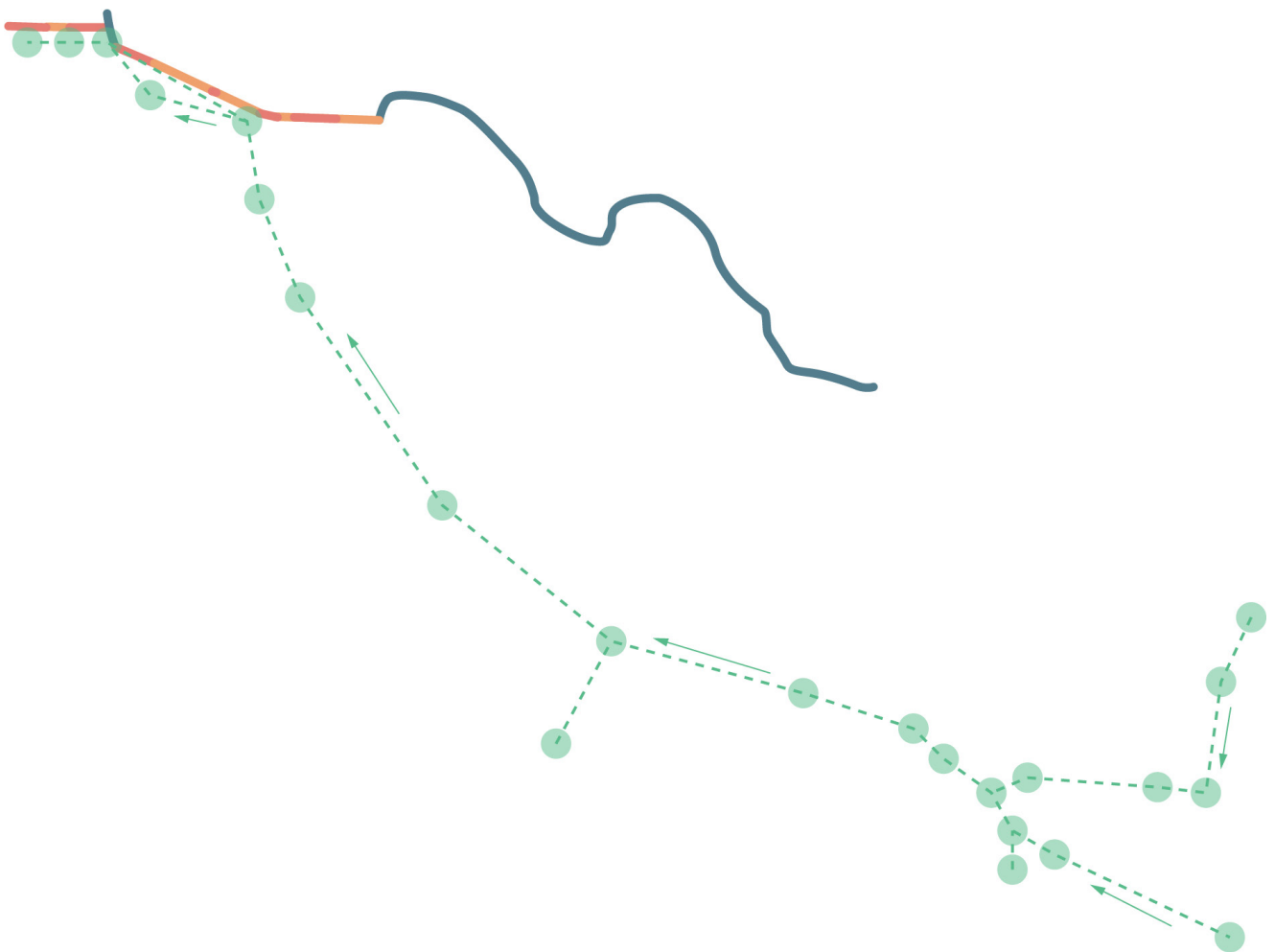
Directional Liminality occurs when there is ambiguity when given multiple choices in direction. In medieval road systems and city organizations, streets grew out from the city center organically not based on any grid. What occurred was an experience of randomness and unknowing when traveling down a street or alley. City planners reacted against that after 1870 by implementing organized city grids with wider streets and way-finding signs. Even so, there is still quite a bit of ambiguity in an organized traffic system. At land ports of entry, traffic flow is often split into multiple lanes and passenger vehicles are given a choice of which lane to go down. Some of these lanes are dedicated to certain traveler programs like the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI). But for new travelers who don't know about fast-pass programs, they may not understand what SENTRI means.

On this Page: [02.20-22]
Liminality Diagrams
Directional (Above)
Temporal (Below)
Grav. (Above Right)
Diagram Sketches
Author's Work
(2021)

Temporal Liminality occurs when what exists in the present is informed or being influenced by forces of the past. In defining the temporal aspect of liminality, Szeszulski says the “temporal element of liminality, as it applies to a physical manifestation, can imply how the physical form continues to change and develop over time. Additionally, it can elude to the programmatic function of the space, and how the activities that occur there continue to change as the needs of the communities utilizing the space change over time” (2016). One way of envisioning temporal liminality is through the canyon. Looking down into a canyon, at some point in time, water level was in a different place than it is now and that is having an effect on what is visible in the present. While the water is in one place, the layers of rock indicate that the water level was in many different places in the past. One can then use that evidence to imagine a new space in another point in time.



Gravitational Liminality occurs when there is space between the ground and the object. This kind of liminality is similar to spatial liminality in that it addresses a sort of in-between space. The key difference, however, is the looming gravitational force of the object hovering over the liminal space. Gravitational liminality has a structural quality in that it asks if the liminal space is in danger of being crushed by the force of gravity and the weight of the above object. Interestingly, the border wall along the Mexican-American Border has places of gravitational liminality where the structure of the wall itself is used as a fourth wall to make-shift camps of asylum seekers or even houses in shantytowns (Rael, 2017). In addition, some drug traffickers have created new gravitational liminalities by digging tunnels underneath the border wall (Gum, 2018).



How Is the Mexican-American Border Experienced?

Left: [02.23]

Riopolitics

Map

Author's Work

(2021)

The theories and concepts listed in the previous pages do a good job in generalizing how people migrate and how people experience borders. But to properly apply those theories in an attempt to make a situation at a border better, it is vital to understand the nature of a particular border. Since this thesis is placed at the Mexican-American border, a new term must be used to theorize the nature of the Mexican-American border specifically.

With a phenomenological lens, the Mexican-American border has three essential structures: the physical barriers that are along the border, such as the rivers that constitute the border between Texas and Mexico (The Río Grande) and Southwest Arizona from Mexico (the Colorado River) and also the walls and fences that have been built on the border (the image to the left shows in red where walls are and shows in orange where fences are). Another essence of the Mexican-American border is the influx of people who migrate to the border seeking asylum. The third essential structure is the conflict between the people migrating to the border and the physical barriers at the border. To fold those three essential structures into one, this thesis introduces the concept of *Riopolitics*.

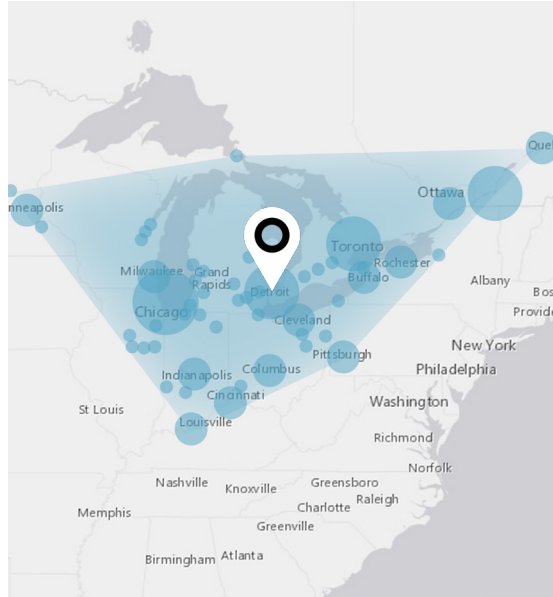
Río is the Spanish word for “river,” e.g. Río Grande or Río Colorado. It is also used to describe a large influx of people, e.g. *un río de gente* (Gran Diccionario de la Lengua Española, 2016). Both ways of using the word

capture two essences of the Mexican-American border: the physical barriers separating the countries and the large influx of immigrants trying to cross them.

Given that definition, and thinking of politics as the conflict and negotiation between two or more things, *Riopolitics* is defined as the geopolitical scenario shaped by the geopolitics and liminality of the Mexican-American border, the physical barriers along the Mexican-American border (e.g., Río Grande, Río Colorado) and the influx of people who cross the border (*un río de gente*). Conceptualizing the Mexican-American border under this umbrella term allows us to analyze “present-day” riopolitics and then prescribe what a future riopolitics will be. This thesis argues that liminal border spaces can be a place to re-imagine the border as a scene, or -scape, of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality.

Case Study: Detroit MI - Windsor ON

Detroit, Michigan is a large city in the Great Lakes region of the United States along the Canadian-American border. Across the Detroit River is Windsor, Ontario, a smaller city. My case study of Detroit MI revealed the radical contrast between passenger traffic through the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel linking Detroit's and Windsor's downtowns and the Ambassador Bridge which processes commercial traffic west of the city center. The proposed Gordie Howe Bridge reveals a viapolitical conflict of whether international bridges should be privately controlled, like the privately-owned Ambassador Bridge, or state-controlled. Zug Island, the site of a now defunct U.S. Steel Factory, presents a liminal space alongside the proposed Gordie Howe Bridge location.



The Detroit-Windsor Metropolitan Region is a part of the Great Lakes Megaregion (Lang and Dhavale, 2016) seen in the top-center of this page. The Great Lakes megaregion is generally transitioning away from manufacturing sectors like automobiles and steel production into other economies. The region's assets include the environmental resources and amenities of the Great Lakes and a strong research and cultural tradition tied to its leading public universities (RPA, 2006). The border that splits the United States from Canada is defined by many different bodies of water, including Lake Superior, Lake Huron, the St. Clair River, Lake St. Clair, the Detroit River, Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario, and the St. Lawrence River (Coolidge, 2015). In these bodies of water, there are many islands that straddle the border or confuse the border line, such as Cornwall Island or the Thousand Islands (*ibid*).

Above: [02.24]
Location of Detroit
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

Bottom Right: [02.25]
Personal Vehicle Traffic
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

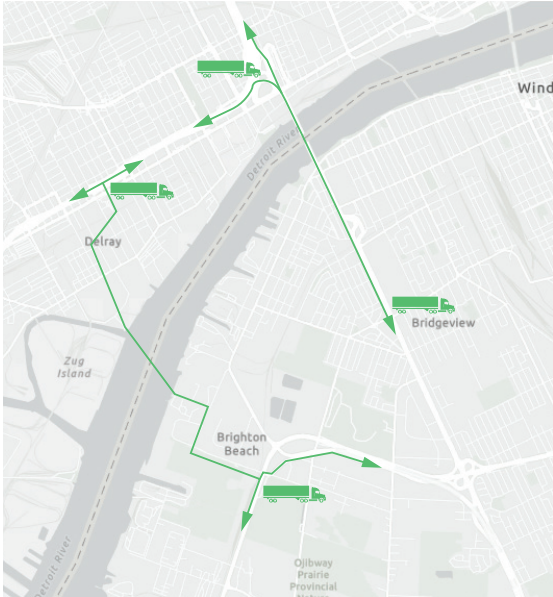
Bottom Left: [02.26]
Ambassador Bridge and
a fragment of Windsor
Photograph
Angela Anderson-Cobb
(2008)
Retrieved from Flickr

02 Analysis of Borders

Of the two existing border crossings in Detroit (the Gordie Howe International Bridge is not completed as of the writing of this book), there are no opportunities to cross as a pedestrian. In other words, one must be in a passenger vehicle to cross the border between Detroit and Windsor. The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel links Downtown Detroit to Downtown Windsor. The tunnel itself is small and can feel dark and claustrophobic. On the eastern ends of the city, the Ambassador Bridge handles both personally-owned vehicles and commercial vehicles. For this reason, delays tend to be more likely on the bridge than on the tunnel (CBP, 2020). In 2020, both the Ambassador Bridge and the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel processed 1,416,888 passenger vehicles, the thirteenth most of all U.S. land ports of entry and the most of any Canadian-American border crossing (BTS, 2020). The Detroit-Windsor Tunnel is in "fair" condition, while the Ambassador Bridge is in "good" condition (Gambler, 2019).



Reimagining Borderscapes



In addition to the Ambassador Bridge, the Gordie Howe International Bridge will also process commercial traffic upon completion. In 2017, the Ambassador Bridge facilitated \$107 billion in international trade. This was the second most of all border crossings in the United States (Behind Laredo-Nuevo Laredo) and the most of any Canadian-American border crossing. The Ambassador Bridge accounted for approximately one seventh of the United States' international trade in 2017. In addition to the Port Huron-Sarnia border crossing north of Detroit and Windsor, \$161 billion of trade passed between Michigan and Ontario (not including Sault Sainte-Marie). In total, 1,353,296 trucks crossed the Ambassador Bridge in 2020, also second-most among land ports of entry and most among Canadian-American ports of entry.

Top Left: [02.27]
Detroit-Windsor Trade
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

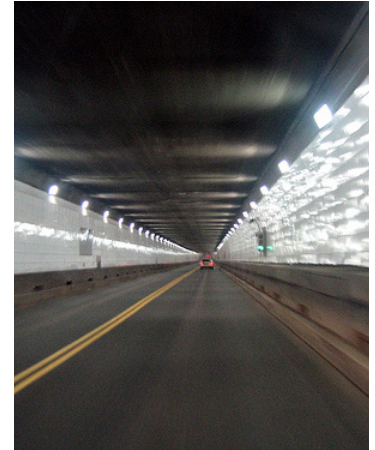
Top Right: [01.07]
Detroit-Windsor Tunnel
Photograph
(2006)

Retrieved From
Wikimedia Commons

Bottom: [02.28]
Gordie Howe Int'l Bridge
Construction
Photograph
Jeff Yoders | ENR
(2020)

Retrieved from ENR

The nature of the proposed Gordie Howe International Bridge is a question of viapolitics. Recall that the definition of viapolitics is the politics of who controls roads, routes, and the means of transportation. The Ambassador Bridge is controlled by a local business magnate and billionaire, Matthew Maroun. In 2012, Maroun failed to comply with an order to co-operate with the State of Michigan's Department of Transportation, resulting in him getting jailed (Helms and Gallagher, 2012). This led to the debate, who should control the Detroit-Windsor border crossing? A private owner and billionaire, or the government? The Gordie Howe International Bridge will be fully funded by the Canadian government and controlled by both the Canadian and United States governments. Some renderings indicate that it will be possible to walk along or ride a bike across the Gordie Howe International Bridge, however, that ultimately seems unlikely.



What stands out about the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel is that it is engulfed by city context. From the Detroit side, one turns from Jefferson, the main East to West thoroughfare in Downtown Detroit into a short driveway that takes cars down a spiral into the tunnel. The tunnel itself is compact and dark. One has no sense of neither the river, nor the beginning and end of the tunnel once inside. On the other side, travelers come out in Downtown Windsor so far away from the Detroit River one might question whether they were ever underwater. Even though the Canadian-American border is obvious in this region—it's a river after all—the land port of entry disappears the border by creating a new liminal space that's disconnected from the river. Crossing this border is about as easy as paying a toll on a U.S. turnpike.





Case Study: Lewiston NY - Queenston ON

Left: [02.29]
*Lewiston-Queenston
Bridge from Niagara
Gorge*
Photograph
Marc A. Wilson
(2015)

Retrieved from
Wikimedia Commons

Top Right: [02.30]
Lewiston
Casual Traffic
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

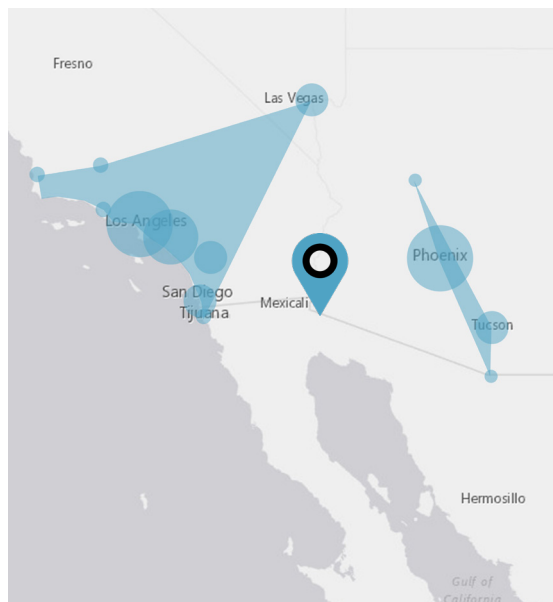
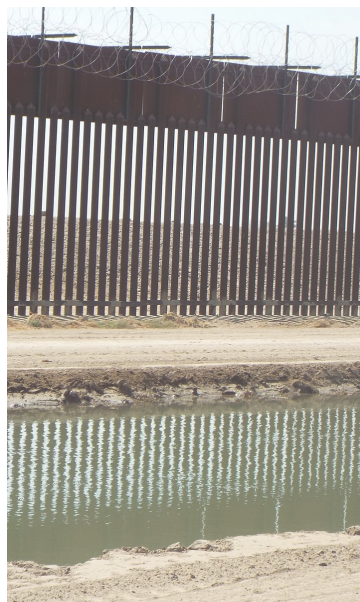
Bottom Right: [02.31]
Lewiston
Commercial Traffic
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge north of Niagara Falls is a land port of entry that facilitates both passenger vehicles and commercial traffic. As such, the infrastructure is highly stressed trying to accommodate both while also creating a juxtapositionally liminal condition where tourists and cargo are processed in the same facility. The location of the bridge is strategic in that it links the greater Toronto area with the U.S.'s East Coast cities such as Boston and New York City. The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge is one of three bridges that span the Niagara River. The other two bridges, the Whirlpool Bridge and the Rainbow Bridge, are in Niagara Falls proper, and do not process commercial traffic. Thus, the Lewiston-Queenston Bridge is the only bridge spanning the Niagara River that processes commercial traffic. The Lewiston-Queenston Bridge is in “critical” condition (Gambler, 2019) and as such is set to be modernized in the near future. In 2020, the bridge facilitated 945,411 passenger vehicles and 835,361 trucks (BTS, 2020).



Case Study: San Luis AZ - San Luis Río Colorado SO

San Luis AZ shares two land ports of entry with its sister city across the border—San Luis Río Colorado SO. The first land port of entry, built in 1930, links the two downtowns and experiences a lot of pedestrian and passenger vehicle traffic. It also facilitated commercial traffic until 2012, when a special commercial port of entry was constructed to the east of the original port of entry. The cities are surrounded by desertscape and undeveloped land. The two cities are separated by two border walls. Along the Mexican side of the border wall, a makeshift camp of refugees awaits to have their asylum claims heard. This location, the San Luis Borderscape, was chosen as the site to continue my investigation because it facilitated all four modes of experience (tourists, international trade, refugees, and cross-border metropolitan areas) while also processing pedestrians, passenger vehicles, and commercial traffic.



San Luis is not part of a cross-border metropolitan region itself, but it is positioned between two CBMRs: the Southern California Megaregion to the West and the Arizona Sun Corridor to the East. Each Megaregion is about a three-and-a-half hour drive from San Luis. The Southern California Megaregion has some of the largest seaports in the nation and is rapidly building infrastructure to support its logistics and trade-based economy (RPA, 2006). The Arizona Sun Corridor is approximately the size of Indiana and is expected to double in population by 2040 (*ibid*). Water conservation and desert landscaping are two major concerns that the megaregion shares with the San Luis borderscape. Both megaregions incorporate Mexican cities—Tijuana BC in the Southern California Megaregion and Nogales SO in the Arizona Sun Corridor. San Luis Río Colorado, however, has a similar population to Nogales at around 200,000 people.

Above: [02.32]

Location of San Luis

ArcGIS Map

Author's Work

(2021)

Bottom Right: [02.33]

Commercial Traffic

ArcGIS Map

Author's Work

(2021)

Bottom Left: [02.34]

San Luis, Arizona-

Border Wall

Photograph

Tony Santiago

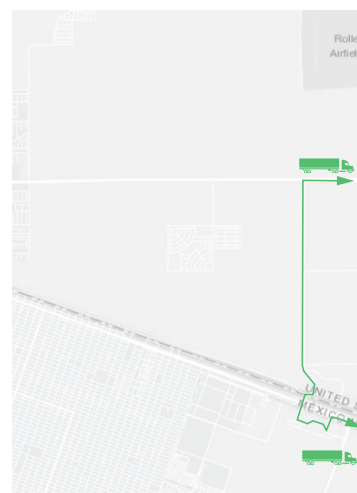
(2020)

Retrieved from

Wikimedia Commons

02 Analysis of Borders

In 2009, a second port of entry was opened on the far east side of San Luis that was to specifically handle commercial traffic. This port of entry is referred to as the San Luis II port of entry. According to a congressional audit in 2019, the San Luis II port of entry is in “good” condition (Gambler, 2019). Interestingly, the San Luis II has an agricultural lab in the main facility (*ibid*). When the San Luis II port of entry opened, the commercial services that relied on it stayed in the city center to the west. This created a new liminal condition—commercial trucks have their own port of entry, but they have to double back towards the city center to get commercial services like commercial fueling, warehousing, cooling, and mechanical assistance. Mexican trucks do not have to follow the same environmental standards as American trucks (González, 2011), so the City of San Luis likely enjoyed having the exhaust and pollution removed from the city center, but because the commercial services are still there, the pollution remains.



Reimagining Borderscapes



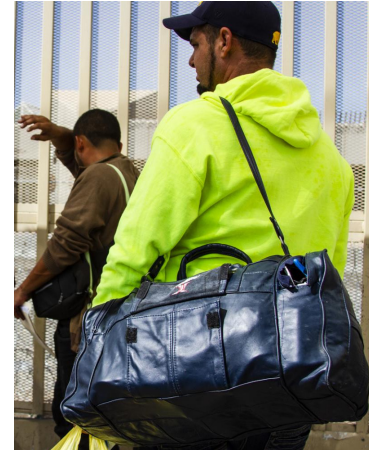
San Luis is positioned along several migration routes. Nearby the American city is a regional detention center. Outside the port of entry, a camp of migrants waits to have their asylum claims heard. These makeshift camps do not have toilets or running water and the people living in them are subject to kidnappings, extortion and murder. They are kept in Mexico due to two U.S. policies: Migrant Protection Protocols and Title 42 (Pennolino 2020). Migrants come to San Luis from many places—the most common of which is Chiapas (Arizona Public Media, 2020), an impoverished state in the South of Mexico (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2020). Migrants also come from Cuba, Central America, and even some African countries like Cameroon and Uganda (Woodhouse, 2019).

Top Left: [02.35]
Western Migrant Route
 ArcGIS Map
 Author's Work
 (2021)

Top Right: [02.36]
Migrants wait near Wall
 Photograph
 (Woodhouse, 2019)

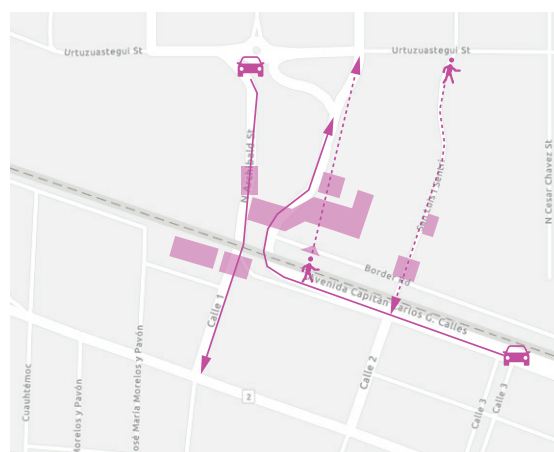
Bottom Center: [02.37]
San Luis Casual Traffic
 ArcGIS Map
 Author's Work
 (2021)

The average wait time for passengers at the San Luis port of entry is 149 minutes. Peak times can exceed 190 minutes (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2020). For comparison, the average waiting time at the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit is between 0 and 5 minutes (*ibid*). In 2019, 7,599,509 pedestrians and passengers in personal vehicles crossed the border in San Luis, the 11th highest of any American land port of entry (Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2019). Much of the traffic is residents of one city visiting the other city for shopping or visiting markets (City of San Luis, 2020), as well as migrant laborers from Mexico traveling to work in fields in Southern Arizona (Hepperman and Oehler, 2009). Most of the migrant laborers cross the border early in the morning, as early as 2:00 AM, and there is usually over 10,000 laborers crossing the border daily (*ibid*). On the west side of the land port of entry, Main Street in San Luis runs into a roundabout and becomes the entry lanes into San Luis Río Colorado. Next to it, vehicular traffic runs the other way. The cars lining up to



enter into the United States back up several miles at peak times. In 2009, a new land port of entry opened up East of the two cities to specifically handle commercial traffic, however, the waiting times for passenger vehicles are still extreme. The commercial port of entry is known as San Luis II while the original port of entry is known as San Luis I. In the center of the San Luis I port of entry, pedestrians are facilitated. The pedestrian facility handles migrant laborers at dawn and casual travelers during the daytime. The migrant laborers return through the land port of entry at approximately 6:00 PM.

In the 2020 Federal Budget approved by Congress, there were funds allocated to the renovation and modernization of the San Luis I port of entry. Construction has been delayed, however. The San Luis I port of Entry is in “critical” condition (Gambler, 2019). The modernization plans will be looked at in a later chapter.





Case Study: Hidalgo TX - Reinosa TA

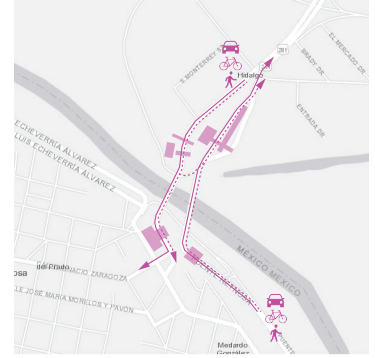
Left: [02.38]
Memorial to Migrants
Photograph
(Meyer and Isacson,
2014)

Retrieved from WOLA

Top Right: [02.39]
Hidalgo
Casual Traffic
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

Bottom Right: [02.40]
Eastern Migrant Map
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

The land port of entry between Hidalgo TX and Reinosa TA consists of two bridges that facilitate pedestrian traffic as well as passenger vehicles. These bridges are among the worst in the country in terms of waiting times, usually exceeding over two hours (U.S. Customs and Border Protection 2020). Several merchants pay a small toll to get on the passenger bridges and sell things to those waiting in line to be processed. In this way, the inefficiency of the border crossing has created a micro-economy of merchants whose livelihoods are dependent on the presence of people waiting on the bridge. Next to the bridges is a wildlife preserve controlled by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Interestingly, there is a path in this area that aligns to a road in Reinosa on the other side of the Rio Grande, indicating a past bridge once existed that linked the two routes. The Hidalgo-Reinosa border crossing facilitated 2,506,225 vehicles and 1,335,534 pedestrians in 2020—the 8th and 9th most in the United States, respectively (BTS, 2020).



The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees was a response to the mass migrations that took place during and after the second world war. The convention's goals were to define what a refugee is and guarantee certain protections to refugees. The purpose of clarifying the definition and status of refugees was also to clarify Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. That statement conflicts with what a lot of U.S. politicians and government officials have said, most notably former ICE director Thomas Homan when he told a House Committee in 2019 that seeking asylum was illegal if the refugees do not go through a port of entry. In that response he cited 8 U.S. Code 13 25 which can be found at the top-center of this page.

Here exists a conflict between 8 U.S.C. § 13 25 and Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—the location of refugees. Article 14 does not specify where refugees must seek asylum but it does specify that they must be able to do so while 8 U.S.C. § 13 25 punishes refugees if they enter the country apart from a port of entry. This paradox, however, is cleared up by Article 31 of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees which can be found on the bottom right of this page.

Given that most asylum-seekers who come to the U.S. do immediate-

Any alien who enters or attempts to enter the United States at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers, ... shall, for the first commission of any such offense, be fined under title 18 or imprisoned not more than 6 months, or both, and, for a subsequent commission of any such offense, be fined under title 18, or imprisoned not more than 2 years, or both.

8 U.S.C. § 13 25

ly give themselves up to law enforcement (Arizona Public Media, 2019), it seems that the U.S.'s systematic detention of asylum-seekers is indeed a violation of international law.

The difference between the international and domestic policy regarding the treatment of refugees in the United States is likely due to infrastructure deficiencies on the Mexican-American border. U.S. land ports of entry are not required to have asylum processing facilities (Gambler, 2019; Conway, 2017). Many refugees coming from Mexico may not know where the land ports of entry are and as a result cross the border where they can and give themselves up to law enforcement (Arizona Public Media, 2019). While this is an inconvenience to Customs and Border Patrol Agents, it is their responsibility to safely transport them and accommodate their request to seek asylum.

Top: [02.41]

8 U.S.C. § 13 25

Bottom: [02.42]

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

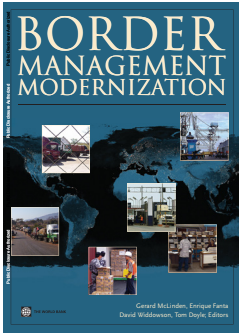
The Kyoto Convention, revised in 1999 (RKC), is an international agreement that provides a set of comprehensive Customs procedures to facilitate legitimate international trade while affecting Customs controls including the protection of Customs revenue and society (Yasui, 2010). Put more simply, the RKC normalized and universalized customs procedures across the globe. The RKC had several objectives, some of which were to achieve full transparency and ease of use for customs controls, standardize and simplify the documents and processes related to declaring goods, simplify entry and exit across borders, implement new technologies, inspire compliance with customs, assess risks and controls, coordinate various border control agencies, and institute new trade partnerships.

The RKC has had many benefits for contracting parties. For one,

The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence.

Article 31 of the U.N.C.S.R

Reimagining Borderscapes



the customs procedures laid out in the RKC are the most efficient in the world. Due to the increased efficiency of those procedures, countries that have acceded the RKC have faster releases and lower trade costs, increased revenues, and higher economic benefits (Yasui, 2010). In addition to the economic benefits, RKC implementation is expected to promote protection of security, society and human health (*ibid*). One example of how the RKC can promote better human health is that by releasing cargo shipments and commercial vehicles quicker, the exhaust and pollution generated from those vehicles has less of a negative impact on neighborhoods near land ports of entry. This would benefit neighborhoods such as Southwest Detroit which experience high levels of pollution generated from commercial activity at the nearby Ambassador Bridge port of entry (Schwartz et al, 2002).

One criticism of the RKC is that it has become the benchmark for customs procedures meaning that any other model of customs or interna-

Left: [02.43]
*Border Management
Modernization*
Book Cover
Drew Fasick
(World Bank, 2004)

Right: [02.44]
*Handbook of Best
Practices at Border
Crossings*
Book Cover
Damir Krizmanic
(OSCE, 2012)

tional trade will be seen as inferior simply because it does not have the “brand power” of the RKC, even if it may be better. This may be a problem in the advent of preclearance technology, which would require a new set of rules regarding customs, cargo inspection, and the design of land port of entry facilities (See Morrison et al, 2018). The RKC, as it stands currently, is unprepared for the introduction of preclearance technology to borders. The RKC, can however, be amended as it has been before and as such can adapt to new technologies with a new convention.

Written by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in 2012, the *Handbook Of Best Practices At Border Crossings* expanded on the recommendations in the World Bank’s handbook to make more concrete design suggestions (despite the name, the United States is a participating state of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe). The main purpose of the OSCE’s handbook is to share best practices related to border crossing design, thereby building off of the World Bank’s handbook written in 2004 on the same subject. The first chapter of the OSCE’s directly cites the procedures laid out in the Revised Kyoto Convention. The handbook goes on to emphasize the importance of cross-border relationships and promote certain practices related to border security and border crossing efficiency. Chapter 6 of the OSCE’s handbook asserts

that “the ideal border crossing point (BCP) should provide for efficient processing of lawful traffic, have facilities for detecting violations, but at the same time offer a good image of the State it is representing” (OSCE, 2012). Chapter 6 presents various design layouts for border crossing stations depending on the size, capacity, and type of transit of the border crossings. The OSCE’s handbook also includes recommended designs for traffic flows, security inspection equipment, cargo inspection equipment, and administrative buildings, as well as providing information on how to do site assessments and project financing.

One criticism of both the OSCE’s handbook and the World Bank’s handbook that preceded it is that they both are clear attempts by larger and wealthier countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, to encourage smaller countries to make it easier for the larger countries to earn more revenue through trade. As a result, the handbooks don’t address other legitimate problems that border crossings face such as the arrival of refugees. While both handbooks provide extensive design advice for commercial processing and customs facilities, refugee and migrant processing facilities are noticeably absent. This undermines the advice in the handbooks anyhow, since in many places, border crossing stations are overwhelmed by migrant traffic and they can’t optimize their efforts to process cargo.

Chapter 03

Analysis of San Luis



The Statistics of

San Luis

Pages 40-41

The People of San Luis

Pages 42-43

The Liminal Spaces of

San Luis

Pages 44-69

"As far as the eye could see, flat, green fields appearing to end at the foot of distant mountains. Mountains, a reminder of what the fields once looked like. Fields saturated with water pulled from its secret storage place beneath the earth's surface. We are called 'the people of the cotton fields' because of the labor our families did. For us there was no reservation, no Housing & Urban Development, no tribal support. We were a people segregated in row houses all lined up along the roads of our labor." — Ofelia Zepeda, 1995 (From Zepeda, 1995).



Throughout the research process, there were many times I was asked why I was placing my thesis in San Luis, AZ, a relatively obscure place on the map. This is because much of the border scholarship used to inspire this thesis looked at the border crossing in San Diego or El Paso (Such as Arias, 2019). Rather than copying or redoing those projects, this thesis looked at the border crossing in San Luis to provide a more unique contribution to the field.

The above image [03.01] is a satellite image of the border line separating San Luis, Arizona from San Luis Río Colorado, Sonora (Retrieved from Google Earth on February 14, 2021). A lot of information about San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO—collectively called the San Luis Borderscape, or more simply just “San Luis” in this chapter—can be found in the case study section in the previous chapter. The first section

of this chapter will expand on the information in the case study. This chapter then introduces some people who live and work in the San Luis Borderscape before finally looking at the liminal conditions that define the nature of San Luis.



The Statistics of San Luis

Left: [03.02]
Physical Isolation
Fictional Signpost
Author's Work
(2021)

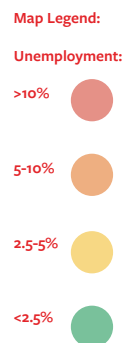
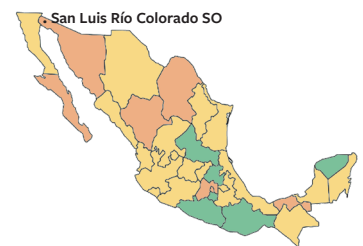
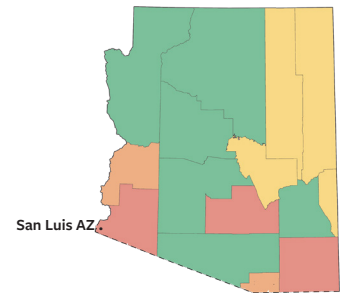
Drivetimes via
ArcGIS
Retrieved:
November 11, 2020

Right: [03.03]
Economic Isolation
Maps
Author's Work
(2021)

The San Luis borderscape is physically isolated. Still, both San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO are positioned between two cross-border metropolitan regions: the Arizona Sun Corridor to the East (encompassing Phoenix, Tucson, and Nogales) and the Southern California Megaregion (encompassing Los Angeles, San Diego, and Tijuana) to the West. Mexicali, the Capital city of Sonora, is at least an hour away from San Luis. Phoenix, the Capital city of Arizona, is at least three hours away, by car.

San Luis AZ is located in Yuma County which suffers from one of the worst unemployment rates in the United States at 18.0% (Koehle and Jeffery 2016). Meanwhile, San Luis Río Colorado SO is located in the Mexican state of Sonora which has an unemployment of 4.0% which is six tenths of a percent higher than Mexico's average (Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social, 2019).

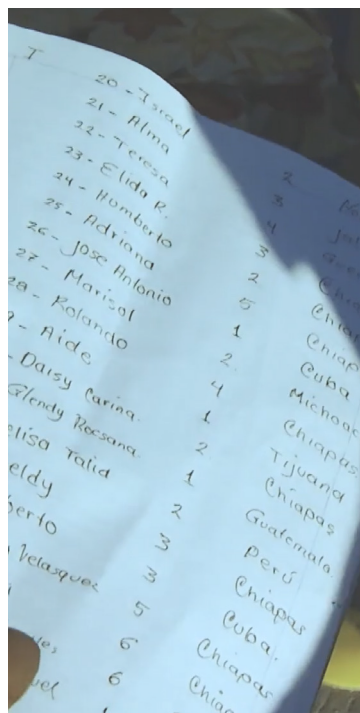
The San Luis Borderscape is also defined by the large amount of refugees who await an asylum hearing to get into the United States, as well as the extreme waiting times for passenger vehicles at the land port of entry which can be up to 190 minutes at peak times (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 2020). More information on migrants and passenger vehicle waiting times can be found in the previous chapter in the original San Luis AZ case study.



The People of San Luis

03 Analysis of San Luis

While I was unable to travel to the San Luis Borderscape myself due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions in place during the researching and writing of this thesis, I was able to learn about the people of San Luis through the many interviews done by Arizona Public Media in the last two years. In 2019, they interviewed Meldy, a migrant from Southern Mexico. She told a story of the conditions that asylum-seekers experience at the border. According to Meldy, migrants use the bathroom at a nearby Coppel, a furniture and electronics store, and must pay five pesos to do so. It's the only running water available to them. The border wall is used as to hang clothes, to hang tents, and to hang tarps. In the case of the San Luis border, the wall changes meaning from a symbol of division to a means of structure and livelihood.



Meldy, a migrant in 2019, was seeking asylum across the border from San Luis AZ. She described the asylum process as such: *“from over there [the other side of the wall] they talk to us. They ask us how many are in line and we tell them how many of us are here and on the list [above]. Then they take whoever is next on the list. They go that way and that’s the last we see of them. Other days, no one gets let in”* (Interview: Meldy. Arizona Public Media 2019). Meldy’s actions are a great example of counter-apodemics. When the U.S. government acted apathetically, she took control of the process and helped many refugees get an asylum hearing. Meldy showed her ledger to Arizona Public Media and it showed that most migrants (at that particular time) were from the Mexican state of Chiapas but also came from places like Cuba and Perú.

After watching the interview with Meldy, I located the ledger again, this time during an interview that took place eight months later. At this point the ledger is in the possession of **Martin**, who helps run the Divine Providence Shelter in San Luis, the largest shelter in the region. It now has over 1,110 names and a wait list of over three months exists. Martin calls the asylum seekers when their opportunities come up. In the meantime, the refugees work and live temporarily on the Mexican side of the border. As migrants await asylum-hearings, they stay in apartments that charge a couple hundred U.S. dollars a month. When someone on the ledger gets their name called, Martin makes sure they have all of their documents and prepares them for their asylum hearing. He is another good example of counter-apodemics in that he shares and gathers knowledge to assist refugees in their migration process (For Martin’s full interview, See Woodhouse, 2019).

Above + Bottom Left: [03.04-05]
 Meldy and her Ledger
 Video Stills
 (From Arizona Public Media, 2019)
 Bottom Right: [03.06]
 Martin
 Photograph
 (From Woodhouse, 2019)



Reimagining Borderscapes



Joel was born in the United States, but has lived in San Luis Río Colorado SO, most of his life. He crosses the border every day to work in the fields of southern Arizona early in the morning along with approximately 10,000 other migrant laborers. “You better believe it’s different here, you wake up 1 o’clock, 2 o’clock in the morning to cross the line and go to work and come back 5, 6, 7 p.m. so tired,” Joel says of his day. He walks down main street to the parking lot of this (now defunct) Del Sol Supermarket (seen in the background of the image above) where a bus will take him to his workplace. The bus will take him back at around 5:00 PM to the parking lot of a (now defunct) Payless Shoesource on Main Street and he will walk back across the border to his home (For Joel’s full interview, See Hepperman and Oehler, 2009).

Top Left: [03.07]

Joel

Photograph

Jesse Shapins
(2009)

Top Right: [03.08]

Migrant Laborers

Photograph

Jesse Shapins
(2009)

Bottom Center: [03.09]

Georgina

Photograph

Jesse Shapins
(2009)

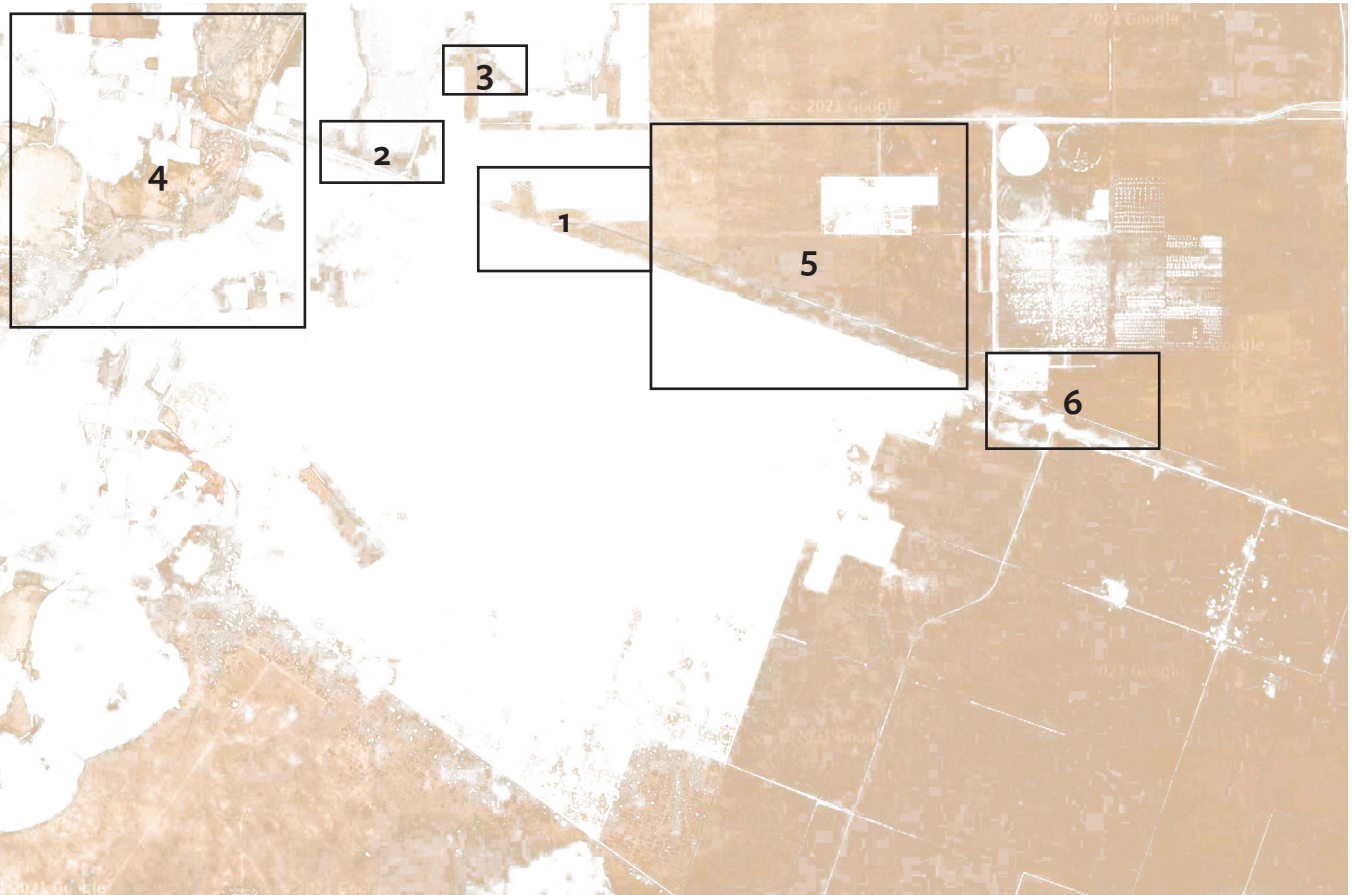
Photos retrieved from
Hepperman and Oehler,
2009.

Georgina sells food to the laborers from her food truck starting at 3 a.m. every morning. “We come here every morning at 3 a.m. to sell food to the guys. Lots of coffee, oatmeal, burritos, and plenty of menudo. Menudo is their favorite,” she says. Menudo is a Mexican soup made from the lining of a cow’s stomach and a broth made from red chili peppers. Georgina used to live in San Luis Río Colorado SO, but in 2001 decided that she was tired of crossing the border every day and moved to San Luis AZ. She still gets up early, though. “It’s like one city here, San Luis, Ariz., and San Luis, Mexico,” she says. Her restaurant, called Panchita’s, also sells oatmeal, coffee, and burritos to the migrant laborers. Panchita is another name for menudo. (For Georgina’s full interview, See Hepperman and Oehler, 2009).



Buses from many different farms pick up the migrant laborers and take them to fields all over Southern Arizona. Each bus has a hitch attached with water coolers Port-O-Lets. Depending on the seasons, there can be hundreds of buses waiting to pick up migrant laborers in the early morning (Hepperman and Oehler, 2009). Undoubtedly, agriculture is the most critical economic industry to Yuma County where San Luis AZ is located. According to a 2013 University of Arizona study, agriculture produces an estimated \$2.5 billion a year into the Yuma economy (Yuma County Chamber of Commerce, 2013). This is due to the rich soil sediments in the Lower Colorado River Basin, modern farming technologies produced in part to the local Universities, the access to migrant laborers, and senior rights to irrigation water; as a result, Yuma County is responsible for 90% of all leafy vegetables grown in the United States, November through March (*ibid*).



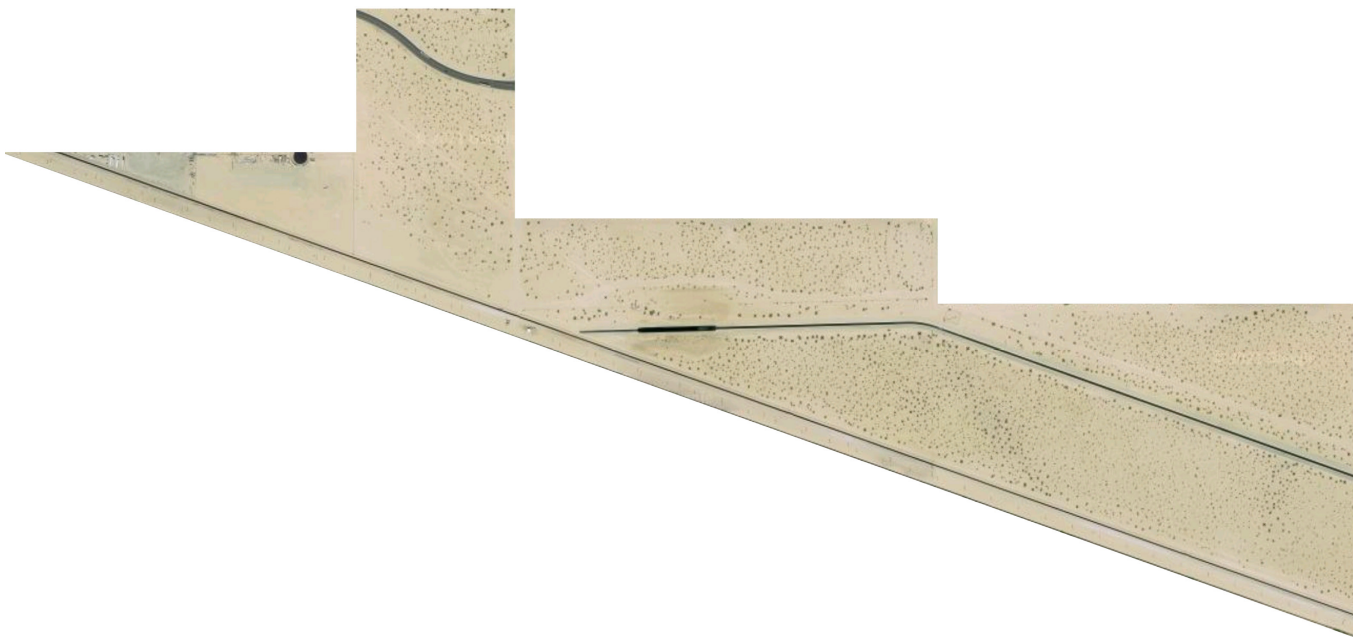


The Liminal Spaces of San Luis

Left: [03.10]
Liminal Spaces
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

Where are the liminal Spaces of the San Luis Borderscape and what is the nature of those liminal spaces? I used the previously mentioned concepts and eidetic mapping to try to answer that question. Then, I zoomed into specific liminal spaces. Noting their attributes and representing them through visual techniques that match with aforementioned philosophies allowed me to form conclusions about the nature of each liminal space. This section explores six liminal spaces first by doing a visual epoché—removing all of the parts of the image that are not liminal. Then, an eidetic exploration is done through imagery to analyze the nature of the liminal space.



Liminal Space 1

Left: [03-11]
Liminal Space 1
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

This strip of land is owned and controlled by the State of Arizona. To the south is two Border Walls separating the U.S. and Mexico. S San Luis Río Colorado SO's commercial city grid terminates at the border wall and is aligned to its orientation. To the North of this liminal space, there is a residential city grid in San Luis AZ in a generic North-South pattern away from the walls.

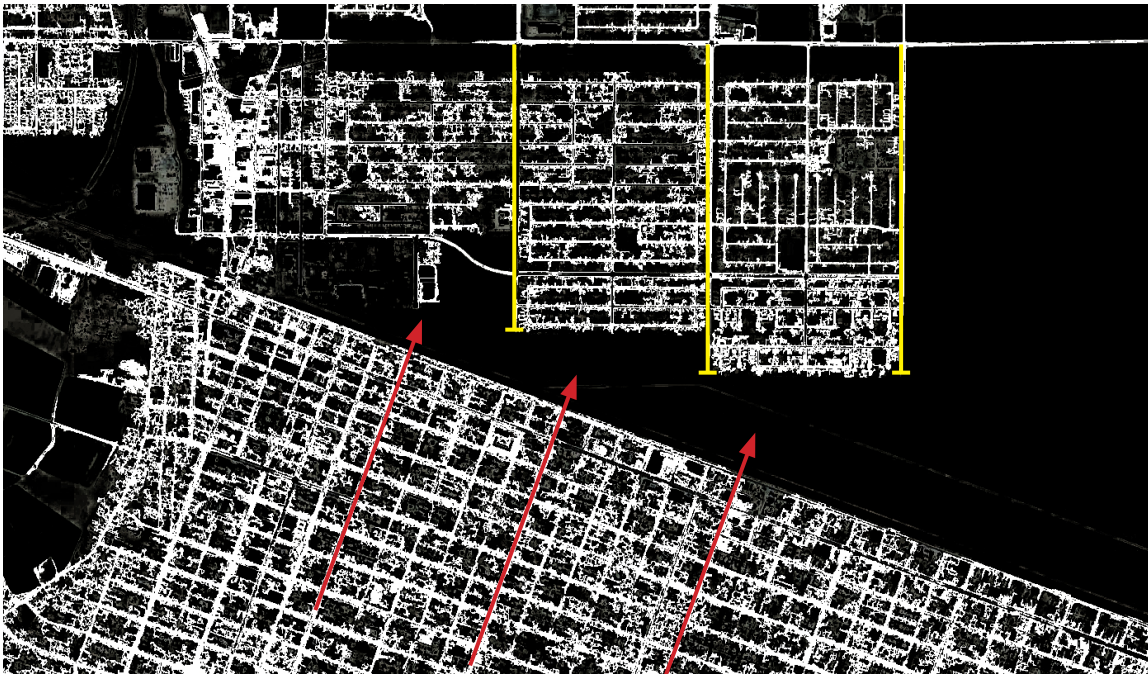
Recall that the border theory of geopolitics makes visible how materialities actively influence mobility and migration (Walters 2015). By changing this liminal space's materiality, it reveals that the U.S. treats this space as a physical barrier like a river. In fact, the liminal space is the exact same width of the Detroit River—the international boundary between the U.S. and Canada.

San Luis Río Colorado SO's city grid is aligned to the border much like Tijuana and other Mexican cities on the border, affirming their identity as a border city. San Luis AZ's city grid is a standard North-South grid away from the city, showing their attempt to separate their identity from the border.



Left: [03.12]
Liminal Space 1
Material Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)



Left: [03.13]
Liminal Space 1
Directional Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)



Liminal Space 2

Left: [03-14]
Liminal Space 2
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)
Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

This strip of land is owned and controlled partly by the State of Arizona and partly by the city of San Luis AZ. It houses two undesirable facilities: the border wall and a water treatment facility. It also houses the old Friendship Park.

San Luis AZ's friendship park used to be a place where Americans and Mexicans could gather together. Now, it is closed and will soon be taken over by CBP operations. CBP has not provided justification showing Friendship Park was ever a danger to the community. Moreover, CBP has not militarized border parks on the Canadian-American border.

Border Parks, Mexico

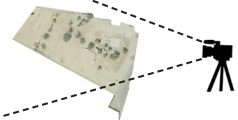


San Luis AZ



San Ysidro CA

Friendship Park 2021



Border Parks, Canada

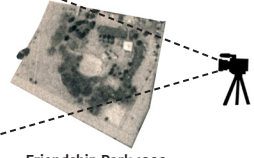


Blaine WA



Port Roberts WA

Friendship Park 1992



Left: [03.15]

Liminal Space 2

Temporal Liminality

Eidetic Diagram

Author's Work

(2021)

Satellite Images:

Google Earth and

Maxar Technologies

Retrieved:

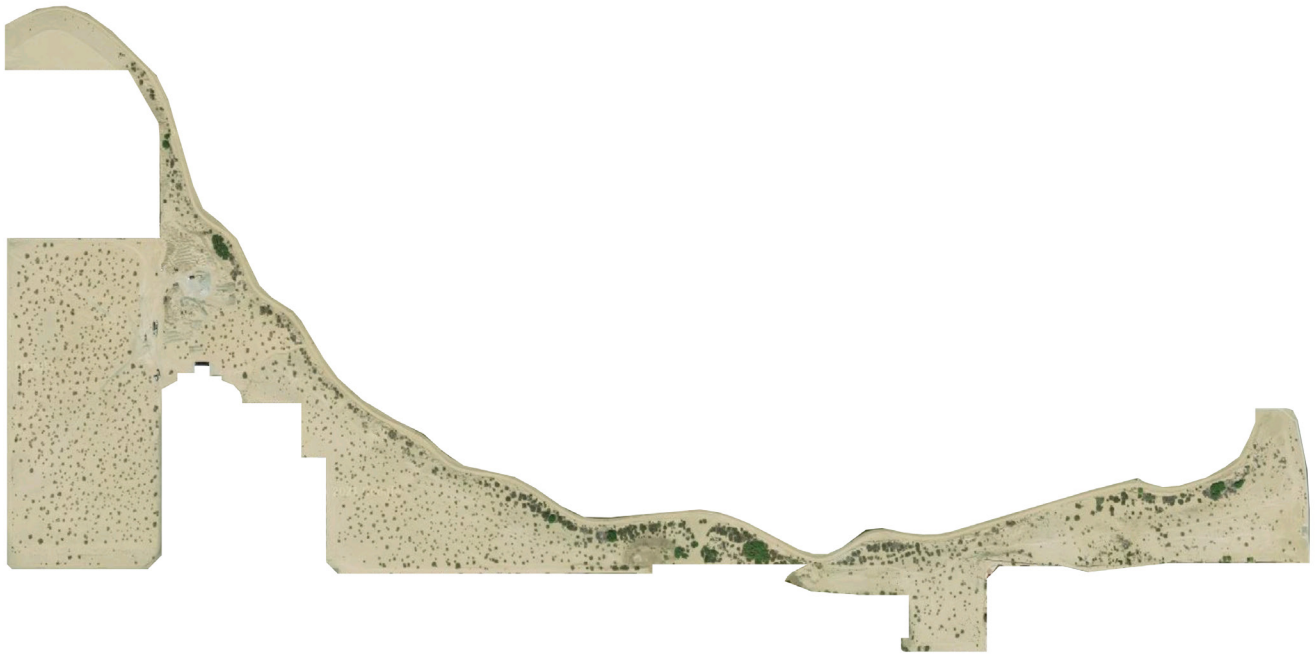
February 15, 2020

Photographs:

Google Street View

Retrieved:

February 15, 2020



Liminal Space 3

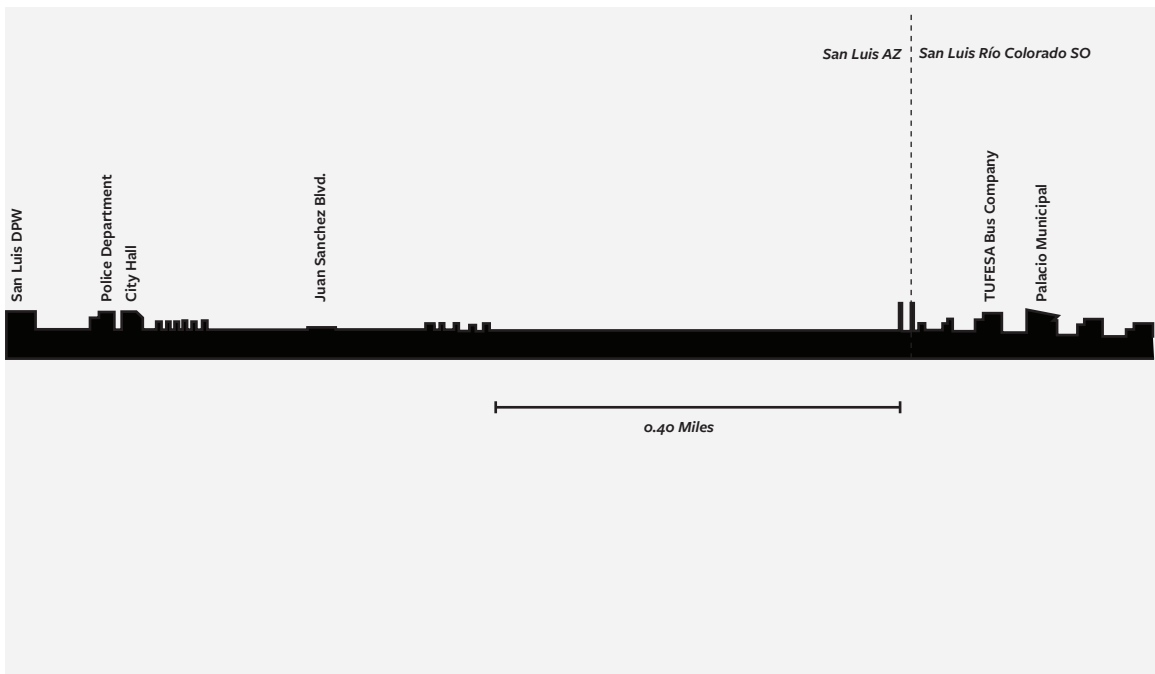
Left: [03.16]
Liminal Space 3
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

This liminal space surrounds several of San Luis AZ's civic buildings such as the City Hall, DPW, Library, County Courthouse, and High School. Some of the land is owned by the State of Arizona and is mentioned in the San Luis General Plan as a place to possibly build a park (San Luis General Plan, 2013).

In addition to the spatial liminality between San Luis AZ's city buildings, there is a big gap between the civic buildings altogether and the border. San Luis AZ set its important civic buildings, like City Hall and DPW, very far away from the border with much empty land in-between. San Luis Río Colorado SO, on the other hand, placed Palacio Municipal and the primary transportation hub right near the border. This further punctuates the disparity of border identity between the two cities.

The five civic buildings in this liminal space—the Department of Public Works, City Hall, Library, Courthouse, and San Luis High School can all comfortably fit into Liminal Space 1. That reality is envisioned in an eidetic image on page 57.



Left: [03.18]
 Liminal Space 3
 Spatial Liminality
 Eidetic Section
 Author's Work
 (2021)



Left: [03-19]
Liminal Space 3
Juxtapos. Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Google Earth
Sattellite Image
(2020)



Liminal Space 4

Left: [03.20]
Liminal Space 6
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

Once a powerful river, the Colorado River crosses the Mexican-American border west of San Luis as a mere trickle. Over-farming in Southern Arizona has reduced the river here to its current state. Water appears in the riverbed on a seasonal basis. When the bed is empty, you can see carvings of the river in the land. Sometimes, people will take quads and race around (Peterson, 2017).

In 1854, the Gadsden Purchase annexed much of Arizona, including San Luis, into the U.S. That purchase set a small part of the Colorado River as the border. Over time, however, the river has changed direction, therefore changing the border (Deeds, 1996) (See Ibarra, 2004).

Currently, there is a conservation effort underway to restore the wetlands biome that used to surround the Colorado River near San Luis. The project, called Hunter's Hole, has a modest goal of restoring several acres of wetlands habitat. The eidetic image on page 61 imagines the whole wetlands restored to what it looked like pre-civilization. The over-farming, however, would never allow this to happen.



Left: [03.21]
Liminal Space 4
Directional Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)



Left: [03.22]
Liminal Space 1
Material Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Google Earth
Satellite Image
(2020)



Liminal Space 5

Left: [03-23]
Liminal Space 5
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

This liminal space is juxtapositional: a random levittown subdivision appears in the middle of the desertscape East of San Luis AZ. This neighborhood is only referred to in official city documents as “L1” (Kadri, 2019). The neighborhood is growing to the south and more neighborhoods like this are expected to adjoin it to the West.

The first eidetic image on the next page shows how the liminality of this neighborhood is expressed by cropping and flipping it throughout the desertscape creating the awkward dream scenario of the developers who built the L1 neighborhood in the first place. This shows that levittown style subdivisions may not be the best way to inhabit the desertscape.

The second eidetic image approaches the space a different way. Changing the desertscape to a forestscape makes this neighborhood look like a village in the Northern United States instead of an awkward disjunctive neighborhood from a nearby city. This shows how the materiality is essential to the liminal condition.



Left: [03.24]

Liminal Space 5

Juxtapos. Liminality

Eidetic Image

Author's Work

(2021)

Made Possible By:

Maxar Technologies

Satellite Image

(2020)



Left: [03.25]
Liminal Space 5
Material Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)



Liminal Space 6

Left: [03.26]
Liminal Space 6
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

This liminal space is State and Federal land surrounding the San Luis II Port of Entry. This land is controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation due to the presence of flat-tailed horned lizards, an endangered species.

When the San Luis II Port of Entry opened for commercial vehicles in 2013, the commercial services that surround the San Luis I Port of Entry didn't move to the new port. As a result, commercial vehicles must travel all the way around back to where San Luis I is for commercial fuel, warehousing, cooling, etc.

Both San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO are offering incentives to businesses to move industrial facilities to the open land around the San Luis II port of entry. The eidetic image on page 69 imagines the industrial park next to the San Luis I port of entry moved to the San Luis II port of entry and copied along the international road.



Left: [03.27]
Liminal Space 6
Directional Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)



Left: [03.28]
Liminal Space 6
Temporal Liminality
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

Chapter 04

Ríopolitics to Ríoscares



Ríoscape 1
Pages 72-79

Ríoscape 2
Pages 80-85

Ríoscape 3
Pages 86-87

Ríoscape 4
Pages 88-93

Ríoscape 5
Pages 94-97

“From the rain comes a river running wild that we create an empire for you, illuminate, there is a river running wild that will create an empire for you; an empire for two” — Of Monsters and Men (Þórhallsson et al, 2015).



Earlier, I defined *Riopolitics* as the negotiation and conflict of the physical barriers and influx of people trying to cross the Mexican-American border. The third and final part of this thesis re-imagines this conflict and negotiation instead as a scene, or -scape, of multiculturalism and transborder conviviality.

This thesis envisions *rioscapes* as a means of re-imagining borders. *Rioscapes* are created by taking one of the eidetic operations used in the previous chapter of the thesis and using that as a strategy within a liminal space to explore how one of the border theories defined in chapter 2 can be applied to the Mexican-American border.

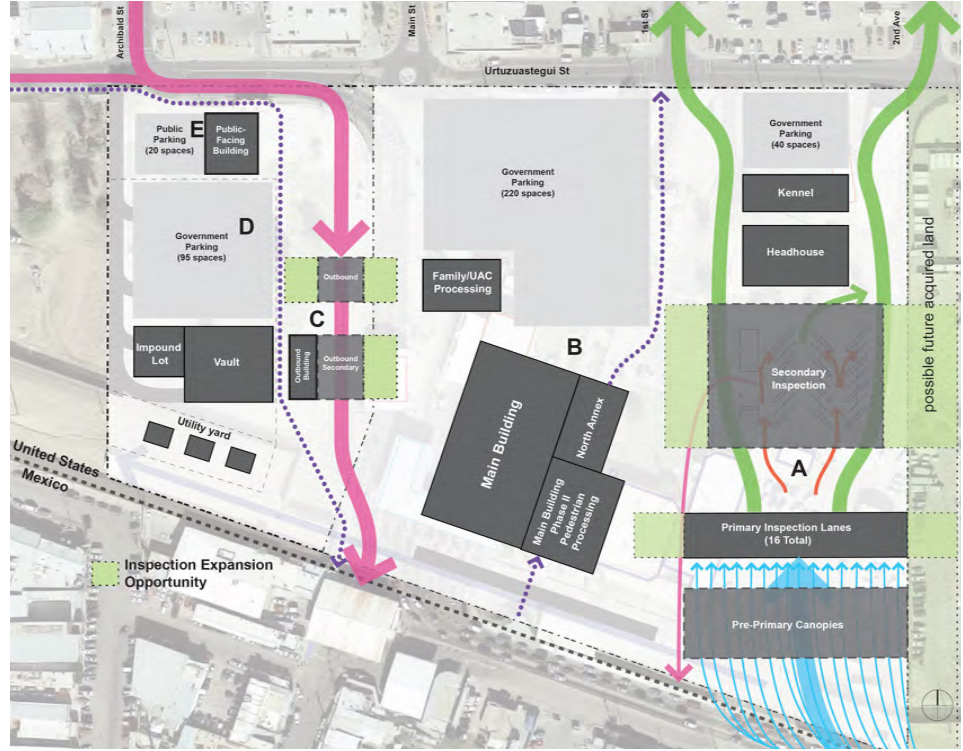
The images and designs portrayed in this section (such as above [04.01]) are not final proposals or proposed actions. Rather, they are evocative renderings and vignettes that challenge the way that people think about what borders are and what borders can be. The various *rioscapes* are radically different, ranging from a design aimed toward one kind of person that crosses borders to a comprehensive new vision that completely changes the border. If the *rioscapes* in this chapter prompt you to think “this could never happen” or “this is unrealistic,” then challenge those thoughts. The revelations that come from challenging how we think about borders are the path to re-imagining them.

Ríoscape 1A: Combined Pedestrian Traffic

04 Ríopolitics to Ríoscares



The first ríoscape imagines the land port of entry pedestrian facilities reorganized to combine those traveling from Mexico to the U.S. with those traveling from the U.S. to Mexico, thereby creating a juxtapositional liminality between them. This setup would address two of Back and Sinha's tools for conviviality: worldliness and making connections beyond local confines,



Left: [04.02-04]
Border Crossers
Cropped and Flipped
Video Stills
Author's Work
(2021)

Top-Center: [04.05]
*Theoretical Overview
of the Proposed
Action at San Luis I
LPOE*
Plan Drawing
(From Kadri, 2019)

and fostering attentiveness and curiosity (2016). This ríoscape was inspired by cropping and flipping images of crowded pedestrian facilities at other land ports of entry like San Ysidro, seen on the left of this page.

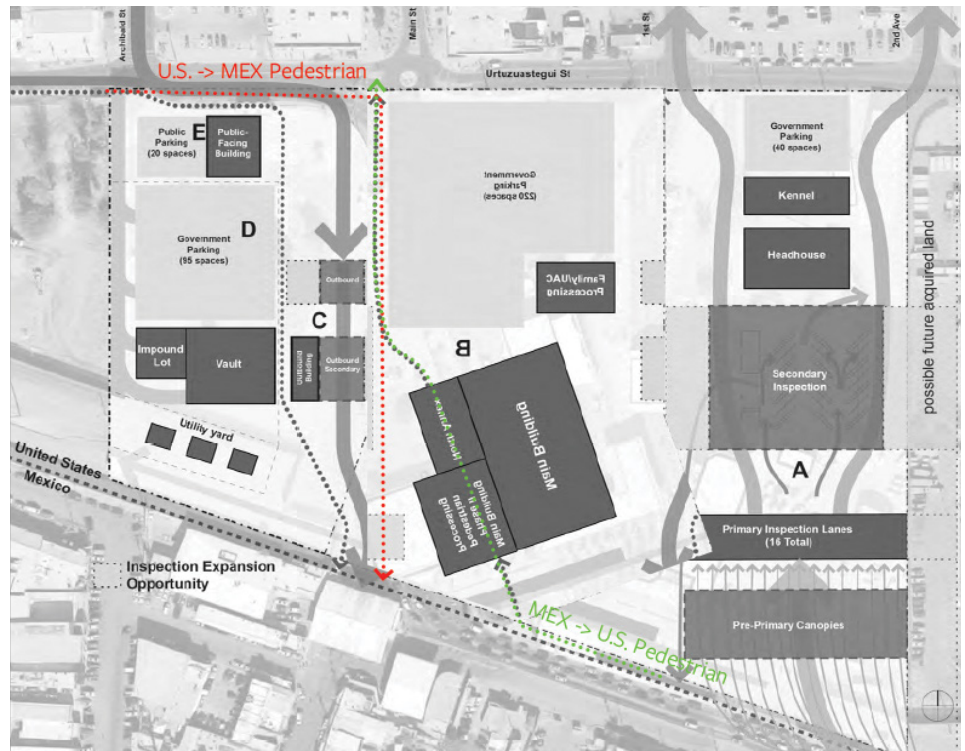
The 2020 budget approved by Congress included funding for modernization to the San Luis I Port of Entry. Above is the GSA's Proposed Action for the site (Kadri, 2019). Its main design justification is the new pedestrian processing facility. Currently, there is no facility solely designated for processing pedestrians. Adding a new pedestrian facility is sure to help pedestrian waiting times. The plan consists of other major decisions as well. For one, the GSA is proposing taking over half of the old Friendship Park, which is part of this book's Liminal Space 2. The

park is replaced by a public building, government parking lot, vault, impound lot, and utility yard. The passenger vehicles traveling from the United States to Mexico are to the right of the old Friendship Park, and then the center portion of the port of entry building would actually be the only thing in San Luis angled to the orientation of the border line instead of the north-south-east-west grid. The Easternmost portion of the land port of entry consists of passenger vehicles traveling from Mexico to the United States. The new plan consists of twice as many

Reimagining Borderscapes

lanes than what currently exists at the land port of entry. Cropping and flipping the central portion of the GSA's Proposed Action as seen to the right combines the pedestrian inbound and outbound traffic as seen in the initial rioscape. Remember, since the buildings are still the same, this rioscape is not changing the project budget or scope. Also remember that cropping and flipping was a method often used in the eidetic images in the last chapter to explore the nature of liminal spaces.

The image to the right shows the result of cropping and flipping the central portion of the GSA's proposed action plan. The result is that the path of the pedestrians traveling from the United States to Mexico stays the same for the most part, but the path of pedestrians traveling from Mexico to the United States is changed completely. Instead of making a hard right turn from the road on the Mexican side (Av. Captain Carlos G. Calles) the pedestrians veer to the right into the pedestrian facilities within the land port of entry. After they are processed in those facilities, their path merges with the pedestrian path going the other direction, creating the combined pedestrian traffic envisioned in the images on the previous page. Since the entire central portion of the land port of entry is flipped, the government parking is reversed and the Family/UAC (Unaccompanied Alien Children) building is moved too. This actually seems more functional. The Family/UAC building being close to the main building but

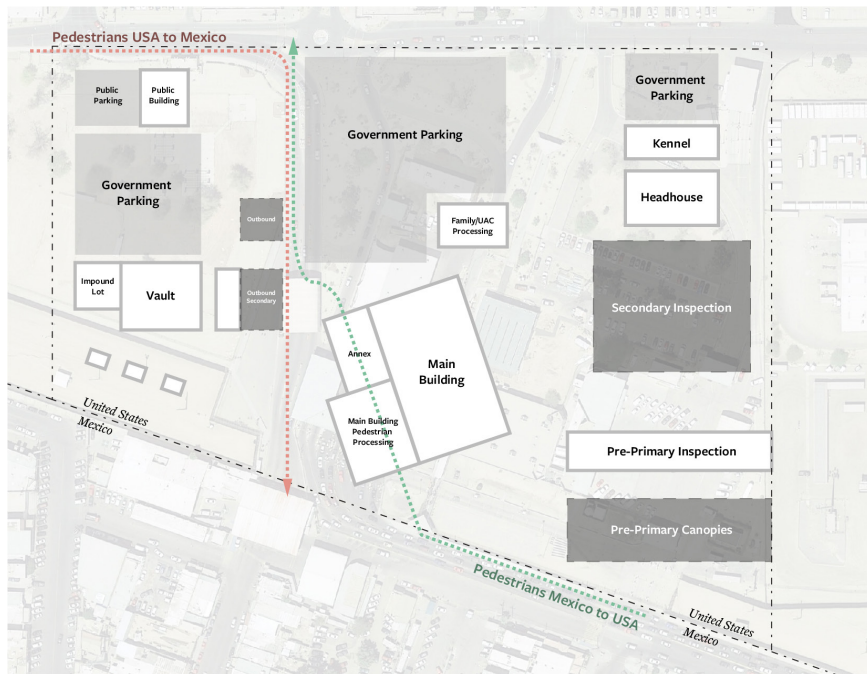


Top: [04.06]
 GSA's Proposed Action
 for San Luis I with
 Flipped Central Portion
 Plan Drawing
 Author's Work
 (2021)

is now isolated from traffic patterns that could be dangerous. The Easternmost part of the plan remains the same—more lanes for passenger vehicles to enter the United States.

One new discovery that comes from the crop and flip action is the new orientation of the main building and pedestrian processing facilities. It seems that all buildings in the San Luis Borderscape are oriented in two ways, either perpendicular or parallel to the border as in San Luis Río Colorado SO or in a North-South-East-West grid as in San Luis AZ. In this rioscape, a completely new orientation is introduced. The new orientation, while not intuitive, works well to draw in the pedestrians from Av. Captain Carlos G. Calles in San Luis Río Colorado SO and then combine their path

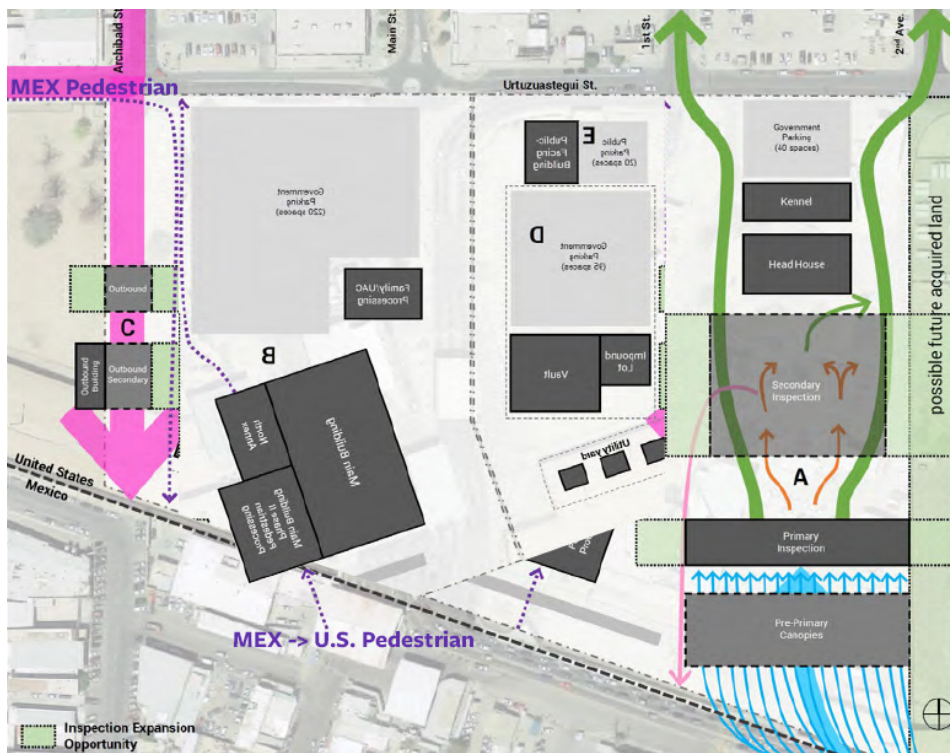
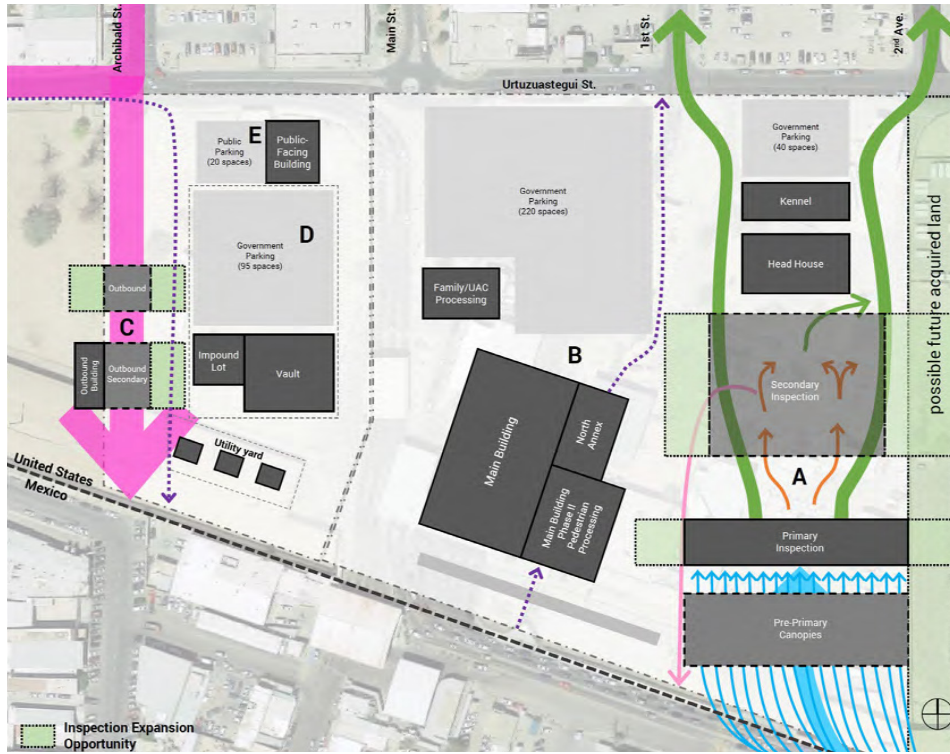
with those coming from San Luis AZ. On the next page, you will see a vignette of what it would be like to be walking down the pedestrian path in this rioscape. By combining the pedestrian routes, the land port of entry transforms from a government aesthetic to a more worldly scene. Remember, rioscapes are not final design proposals nor is this an attempt to reinvent the land port of entry. But notice that a simple gesture, cropping and flipping, can place multiculturalism and conviviality within a government site.



Left: [04.07]
 San Luis I Proposed
 Action Cropped and
 Flipped
 Plan Drawing
 Author's Work
 (2021)



Left: [04.08]
Rioscape 1A
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Ríoscape 1B: Combined Pedestrian Traffic

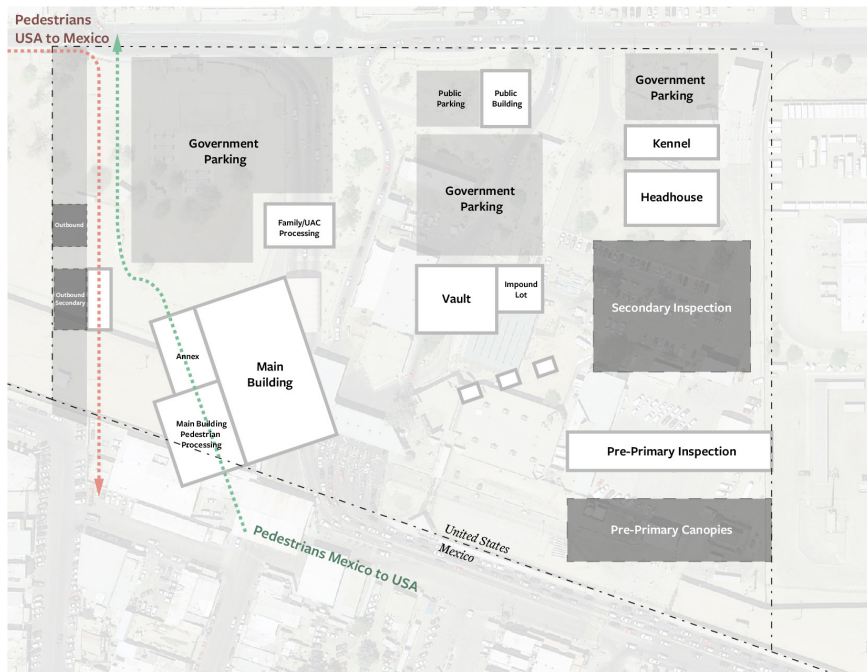
Top Left: [04.09]
*Theoretical Overview
of Alternative 2 at San
Luis I LPOE*
Plan Drawing
(From Kadri, 2019)

Along with the Proposed Action, the GSA presented this Alternate to the public (Kadri, 2019). It has the same concept as the Proposed Action but rearranges some key buildings like the public functions.

Bottom Left: [04.10]
GSA's Alternative 2 for
San Luis I with Flipped
Central Portion
Plan Drawing
Author's Work
(2021)

Cropping and flipping the entire left two thirds of the GSA's Alternate 2 positions the pedestrian inbound and outbound pathways side-by-side. It also puts the main building facility partially in Mexican sovereign territory, which is an occurrence more commonly seen on the Canadian-American border (See Coolidge, 2014).

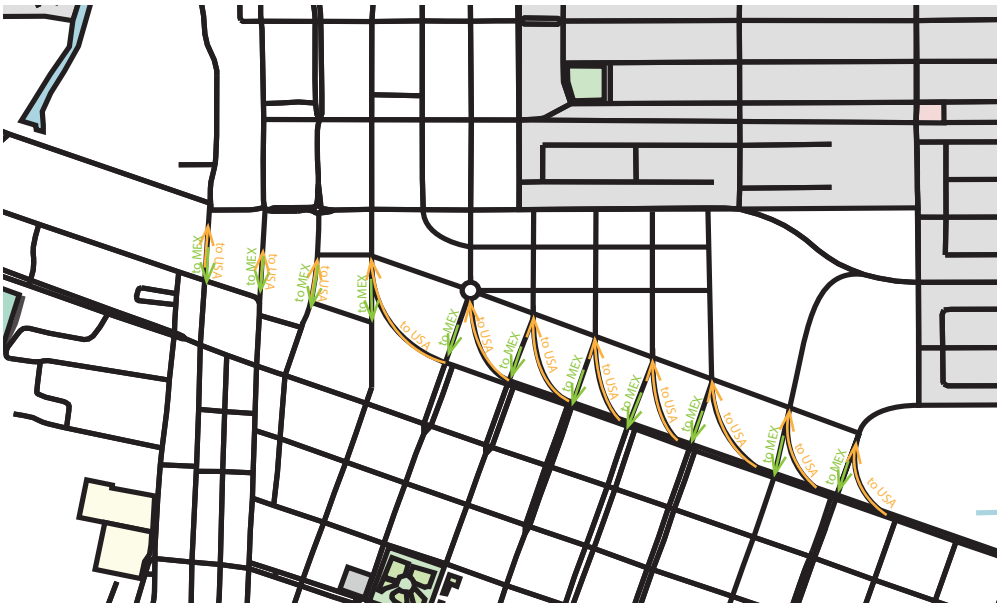
The next page has a cleaned-up plan drawing and a vignette that shows how placing the pedestrian routes next to each other allows the facilitation of interaction between the two lines of people. There are men selling helados, people playing music, and people talking to each other.



Left: [04.11]
 San Luis I Alt 2
 Cropped and Flipped
 Plan Drawing
 Author's Work
 (2021)



Left: [04.12]
Rioscape 1B
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Ríoscape 2: International Townsite

Top Left: [04.13]
San Luis International
Townsite
Manipulated Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Maxar Technologies
Satellite Image
(2020)

Bottom Left: [04.14]
San Luis International
Townsite
Circulation Diagram
Author's Work
(2021)

The second ríoscape imagines the city grids of San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO blending together, visualizing the land port of entry not as a five-lane chokepoint **at** the border, but as a series of downtown streets **along** the border. The new directional liminality would allow tourists and daily crossers to choose their experience, creating a new transborder ecosystem between the two cities' townsites. The new means of border crossing facilitates inbound and outbound traffic as one-way streets within a broader city grid.

Currently, the San Luis AZ downtown is quite small, but also is a very important part of the town (See City of San Luis, 2020). The downtown consists primarily of Main Street and the two adjacent streets on either side. Adding a new downtown context, which is called an international townsite for the sake of this ríoscape, would benefit from having a constituency from both the United States and Mexico. The International Townsite would extend from the old Friendship Park to the San Luis Business Incubator which is also an important function to San Luis AZ (*ibid*). Connecting the business incubator to a downtown context instead of an anachronistic industrial park would benefit the businesses within the incubator.

Some of the buildings and businesses are between the customs checks and the border line of the other country which would make them eligible for duty-free benefits. (McLinden et al, 2010). Duty free shops can take many forms, from floating supermarkets on car ferries to large scale village markets such as the border bazaars in Central Asia (*ibid*; See Kaminski and Mitra, 2012).

The next couple of pages shows how this ríoscape transforms the liminal condition between the two cities. Instead of empty land populated by only a wall, the space becomes animated by consumer activity.



Left: [04.15]
Line of Cars Awaiting
Entry to the U.S. along
Av. Captain Carlos G.
Calles
Google Street View
(2021)

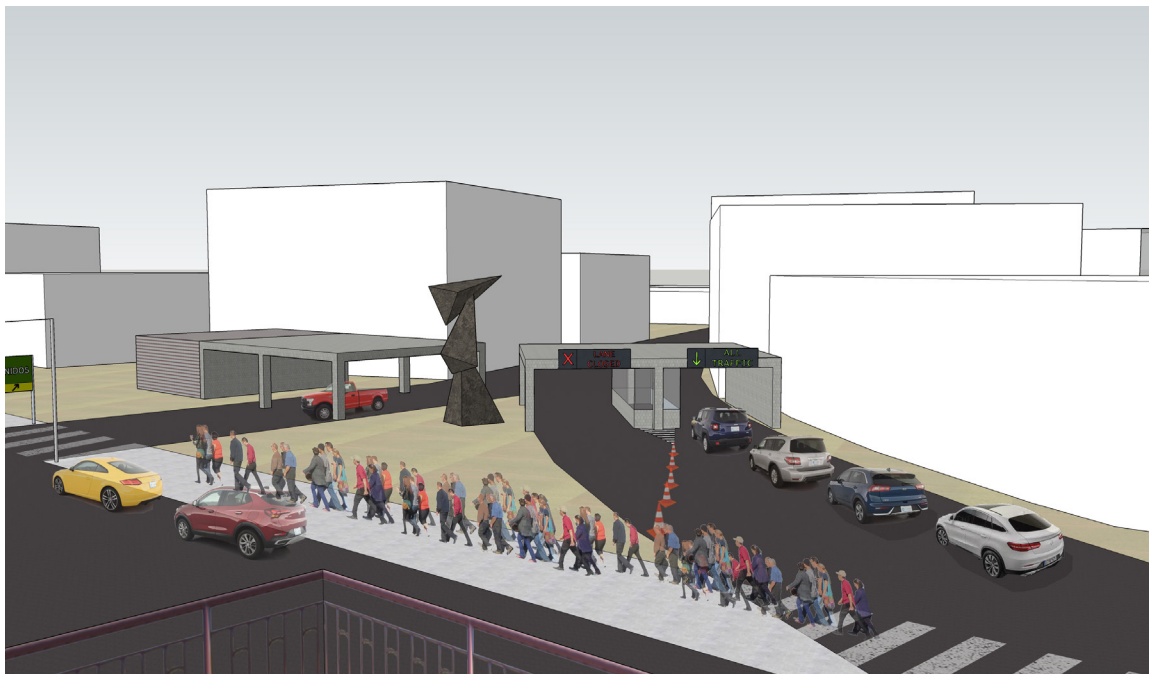
Image Capture:
November, 2019



Left: [04.16]
Rioscape 2
Vignette from Av. Cap-
tain Carlos G. Calles
Author's Work
(2021)



Left: [04.17]
What the Border
Looks Like Currently
Drone Footage
(Weatherbear, 2019)



Left: [04.18]
Rioscape 2
Vignette from a
Second Story View
Author's Work
(2021)

Ríoscape 3: Ledger Wall

04 Ríopolitics to Ríoscares

The *third ríoscape* imagines the ledger that asylum-seekers were using to keep track of the asylum process built into the border wall, giving refugees a facility to take ownership of the process away from the apathy of the U.S. government. This would empower the migrants' ability to partake in counter-apodemics while challenging the materiality of the border wall.

The ledger was a great example of counter-apodemics taking place in the San Luis Borderscape (recall that counter-apodemics is the process of migrants gathering information for the sake of making the migrant journey safer and easier for other migrants). The effort of using the ledger to keep track of asylum seekers started with Meldy, an asylum-seeker in 2019, who described the asylum process as such: “from over there [the other side of the wall] they talk to us. They ask us how many are in line and we tell them how many



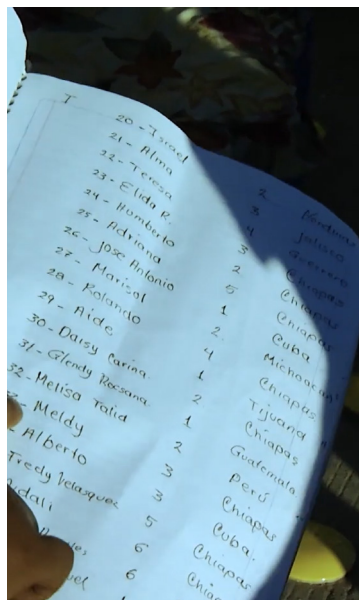
of us are here and on the list [above]. Then they take whoever is next on the list. They go that way and that's the last we see of them. Other days, no one gets let in” (Interview: Meldy. Arizona Public Media 2019). Meldy's actions are a great example of counter-apodemics. When the U.S. government acted apathetically, she took control of the process and helped many refugees get an asylum hearing.

Above: [04.19]
Ledger Wall
Collage
Author's Work
(2021)

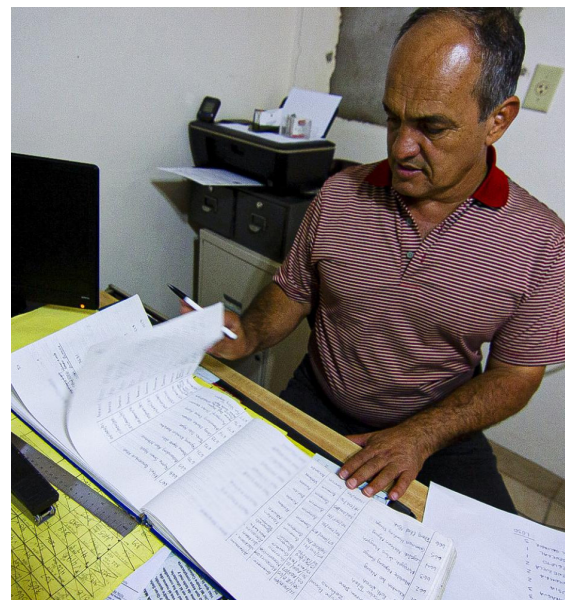
Also on this Page:
[03.05] and [03.06]

The goal of the ledger wall is to give the wall a new meaning, and to change the materiality of the wall from something oppressive into something that is important to the asylum process. The image in the top-center of this page is a collage that shows pages of the ledger cast onto the border wall.

The border wall between San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO has been taken down and reconstructed several times over the years (based on my own analysis from Google Street View Data from 2009 and 2019; Gambler, 2018; Marisco, 2019). Over this time, the materiality of the wall has changed from metal to wood to steel, along with a height change from 15 to 30 feet tall. The steel materiality and new height is meant to deter climbing and scaling over the wall, but is not effective in doing so (Arizona Public Media, 2019; Rael, 2017; Gambler, 2018; Grandin, 2018; Arias, 2019).



Later, the ledger came into the possession of Martin who helps run the Divine Providence Shelter in San Luis, the largest shelter in the region. It now has over 1,110 names and a wait list of over three months exists. Martin calls the asylum seekers when their opportunities come up. In the mean time, the refugees work and live temporarily on the Mexican side of the border (For Martin's full interview, See Woodhouse, 2019). The images in the bottom-left and bottom-right of this page are of the ledger.

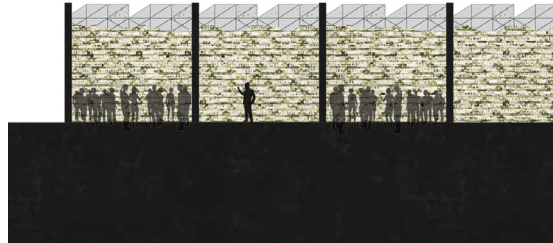
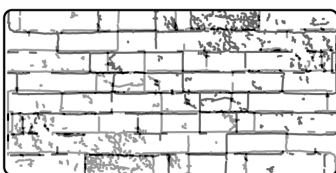


Reimagining Borderscapes

The design of this rioscape takes advantage of the double meaning of “ledger.” The first meaning of “ledger” used in this rioscape refers to the ledger used by Meldy and Martin to keep track of those seeking asylum at the border in San Luis. The second meaning comes from the actual architectural term “ledger wall,” which is a wall or wall feature made from stones of different shapes and sizes. Usually, ledger walls are made from flat stones such as flagstone. The San Luis Borderscape is in the Sonoran Desert which happens to be a great source of naturally occurring gold-colored flag stone. Flagstone is also soft, which allows for the possibility of inscriptions.



+

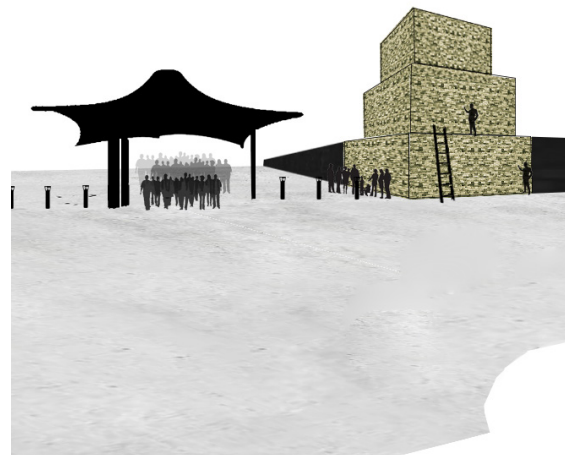


The image above is the first iteration of the ledger wall. In this iteration, the wall is made of the Sonoran flagstone mentioned earlier. As migrants and refugees travel through the Sonoran Desert on their way to San Luis, they can pick up a small flagstone. As they arrive to San Luis, they inscribe their name on the stone and stack it along the border fence. While the top stones would presumably be the last in line, the asylum-seekers would have the ability to determine their own ordering system. An interesting side effect of this rioscape is that if the U.S. Customs process is slow, then the wall will be taller, have more stones, and be more opaque. If the Customs process is quick and efficient, the wall will be shorter and more transparent. In a way, the wall’s status becomes a metaphor for the relations between the U.S. and Mexico.

Above: [4.20]
Rioscape 3A
Elevation Drawing
Author’s Work
(2021)

Below: [04.21]
Rioscape 3B
Vignette
Author’s Work
(2021)

The second iteration of the third rioscape looks less like a wall and more like a ziggurat-shaped tower next to the land port of entry. Instead of replacing the materiality of the wall, it adds to it, and acts as a visual bridge between the wall and the opening of the pedestrian sector of the land port of entry. Instead of adding to the wall when seeking asylum and taking the stone away when the asylum claim is processed, the second iteration encourages asylum-seekers to add a stone to the tower when their asylum claim is processed. The tower becomes a symbol of success that acts an interlocutor between the port of entry and the wall. In addition, the tower becomes an icon in both San Luis AZ and San Luis Río Colorado SO. The more asylum claims that are processed, the taller the tower becomes, and the more of an icon it becomes. In a way, the tower acts as an incentive for the Customs agents to act quickly and efficiently.





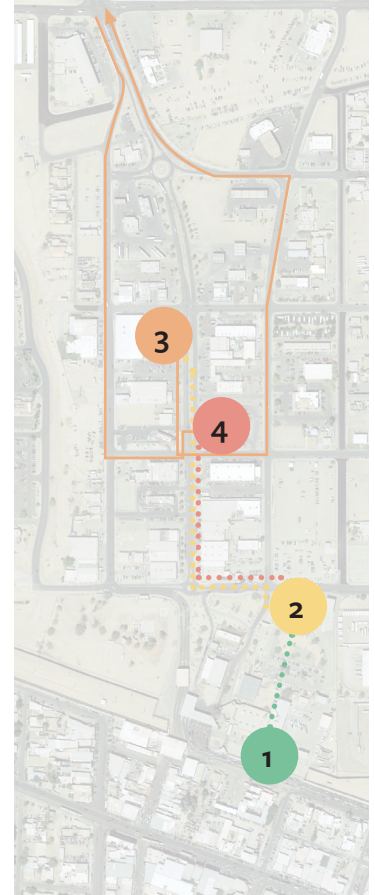
Ríoscape 4

Left: [04.22]
Ríoscape 4
Illustration of Object
Author's Work
(2021)

Right: [04.23]
Daily Ritual of Migrant
Laborers in San Luis
ArcGIS Map
Author's Work
(2021)

The fourth ríoscape begins with an analysis of the daily ritual of Joel, the migrant laborer introduced earlier. Joel, and thousands of other migrant laborers begin their journey at 3:00AM with a customs check process that takes hours. He then travels up Main St. to the Del Sol parking lot where food carts sell menudo. Joel is picked up by bus at 7:00AM and brought to work at a farm in Southern AZ before returning later in the evening at around 6:00PM. He then travels back across the border to go home.

This ríoscape imagines an object that's used for the ritual done by the thousands of migrant laborers every morning as they cross the border to work in the Arizona fields. Seen to the left, the object has several functions. [1] The object has two attached flashlights (in case one goes out) so the migrants can walk more safely from their home in San Luis Rio Colorado to the land port of entry (there are not many streetlights in the city). [2] At the land port of entry, officials can scan the QR code on the object to verify their I-9/W-4 status (this is an alternative to the criticized biometrics system which is used now at the port of entry). [3] Lastly the object is a vessel, so it can be used as a bowl for oatmeal or menudo when the migrants wait for the bus to pick them up.



1-2. Customs Check
Distance: 0.15 Miles
Time: 3:00AM-6:00AM

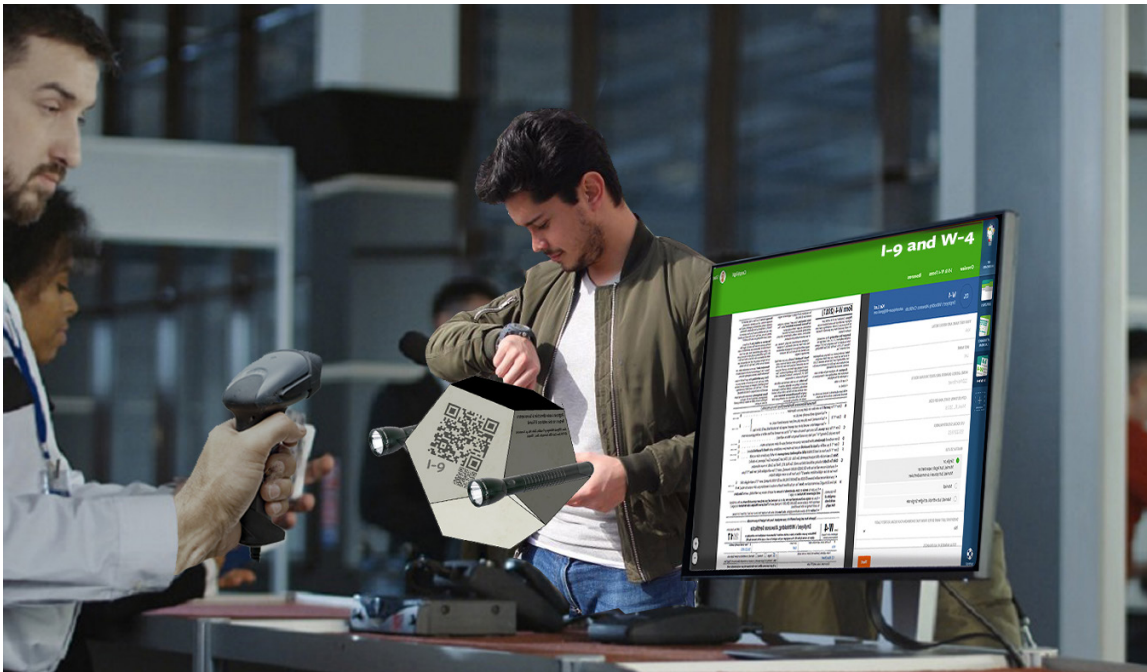
2-3. Walk up Main St.
Distance: 0.28 Miles
Time: 6:00AM-6:05AM

3-4. Work at Fields
Distance: ~25 Miles
Time: 7:00AM-6:00PM

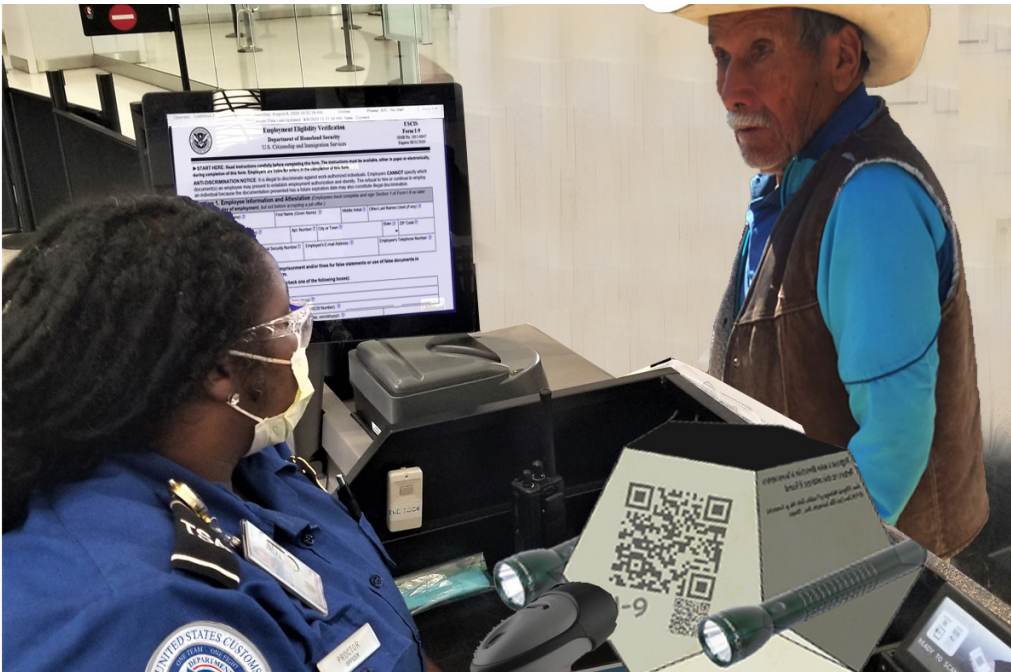
4-x. Walk Back
Distance: 0.24 Miles
Time: 6:40PM-6:49PM



Left: [04.24]
[1] Migrant laborers
use object to light
their way through the
streets of San Luis Río
Colorado SO
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Left: [04.25]
[2] TSA/CBP officials scan the object to process the laborers coming through the port of entry Vignette Author's Work (2021)



Left: [04.26]
[2] TSA/CPB officials
scan the object to
process the laborers
coming through the
port of entry
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Left: [04.27]
[3] As the laborers wait for the bus, food trucks can use the object to serve the laborers oatmeal or menudo.
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Ríoscape 5

Left: [04:28]
Ríoscape 5 - Colorado
River Wet Season
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)

Top Right: [04:29]
Slovenia-Croatia
Border Dispute
Map
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
NASA WorldWind
(2021)

Bottom Right: [04:30]
Lower Colorado River
Basin Overlaid by Slo-
venia-Croatia Border
Dispute
Map
Author's Work
(2021)

Made Possible By:
Google Earth
(2021)

The fifth ríoscape addresses the liminal condition presented by the Colorado River West of San Luis. As discussed earlier, the international border West of San Luis AZ is defined by the Colorado River which has shifted and changed over time. In other places where this has happened, such as the Dragonja River at the Slovenian-Croatian Border (seen to the right), there is a dispute over territoriality. This ríoscape imagines the Colorado River as a disputed border.

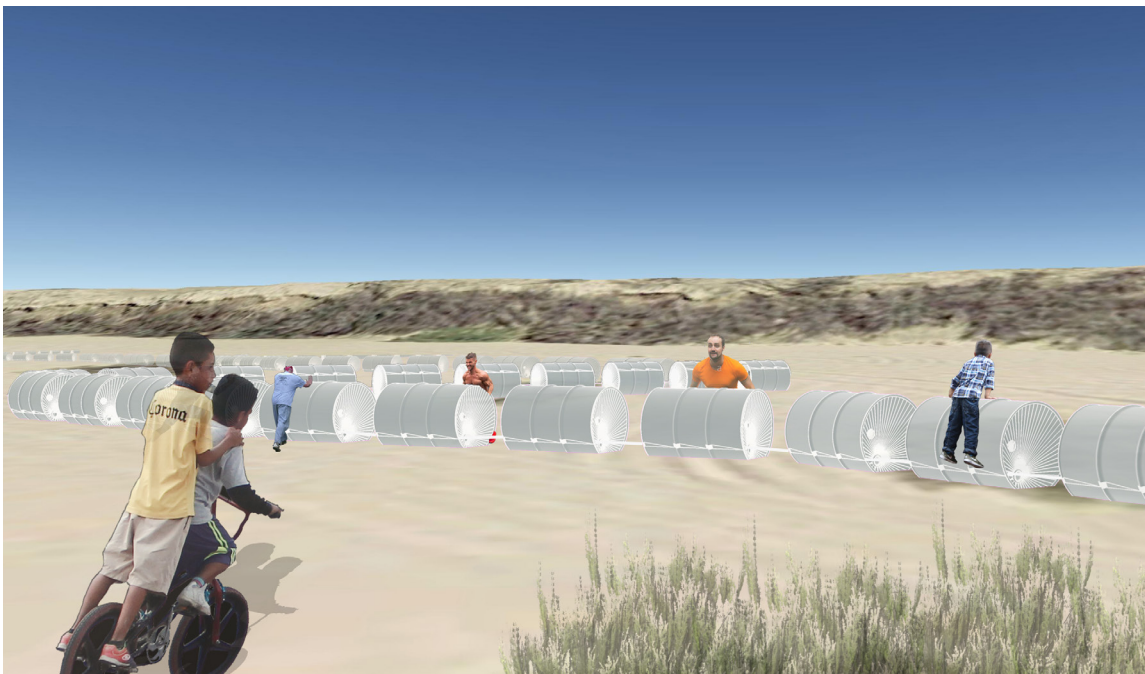
This ríoscape imagines the disputing of the border as something playful by linking recycled oil drums along the length of the dry Colorado riverbed. This creates an unending game of pushing the border back and forth, annexing and ceding territory. When the water does flow to the Lower Colorado River basin, the recycled oil drums rise with the water and can be further interacted with by kayakers or fishers, such as in the image to the left. When the river is dry, people can come to the riverbed and push the border back and forth. The most popular activity in the Colorado River Basin during the dry season is racing ATVs/four wheelers. This ríoscape can make that activity more exciting while adding a bi-national dimension (see next page).



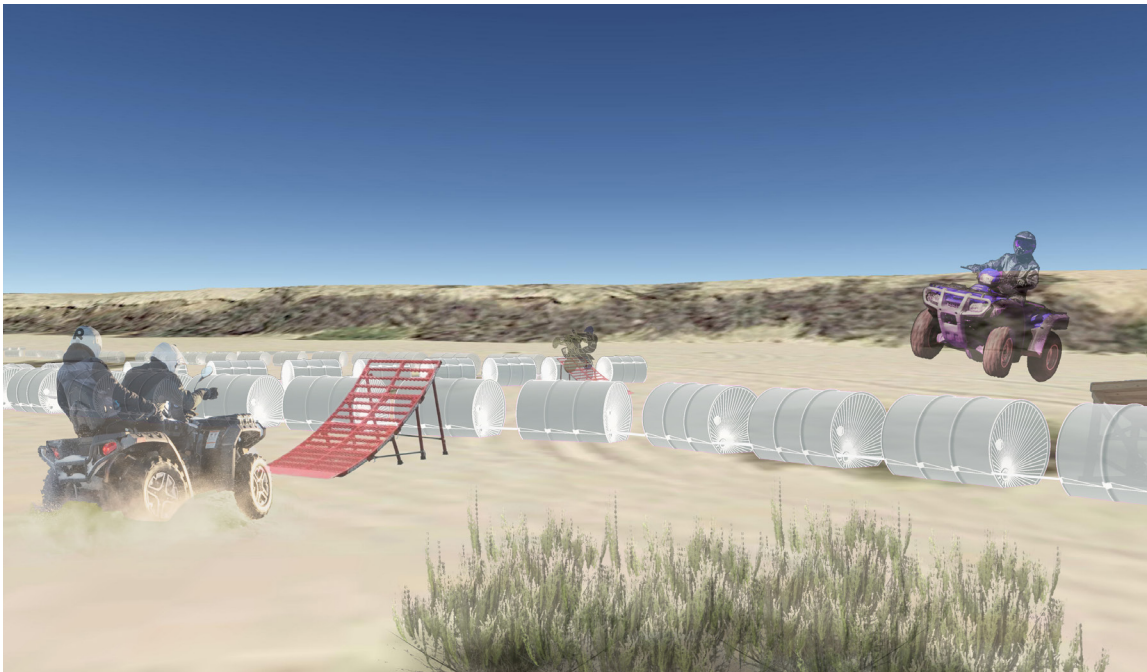
— Dragonja River
Original flow of the
river (some Croatians'
claim)

— Slovenia's Claim
Consists of the land
south of the river delta

— St. Odric Canal
Current flow of the
river (Official Croatian
claim)



Left: [04.31]
Rioscape 5 - Colorado
River Dry Season
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)



Left: [04.32]
Rioscape 5 - Colorado
River ATVs
Vignette
Author's Work
(2021)

Chapter 05

Conclusion



Critique
Pages 100-101

Final Discussion
Pages 102-103

List of Figures
Pages 104-109

References
Pages 110-121

"No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark ... you only run for the border when you see the whole city running as well"
— Warsan Shire, 2017.



On April 5th, 2021, this thesis was presented to the University of Detroit Mercy School of Architecture and Community Development community. The thesis defense yielded positive feedback overall. The presentation was completely virtual due to the restrictions of in-person gatherings as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. In fact, all presentations, critiques, advisor meetings, and university events related to this thesis was done virtually.

The above image [05.01] is an image of the St. Clair River near the Blue Water Bridge between Port Huron, Michigan and Sarnia, Ontario. The image is cropped and flipped to make the river look folded over. Like the images featured in earlier chapter introduction pages, this image was part of an early exploration in how to re-imagine borderscapes.



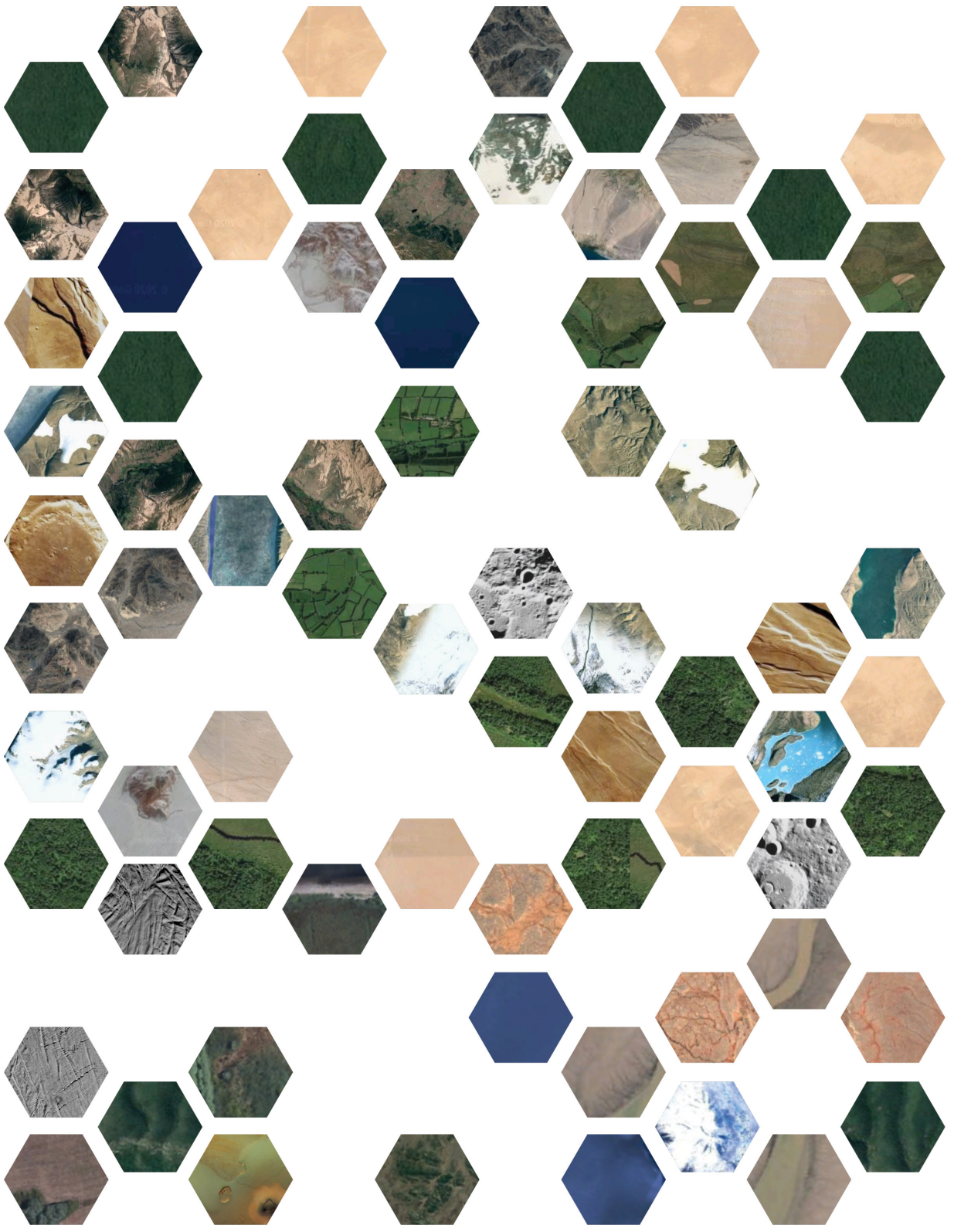
Critique

Left: [05.02]
Virtual Critique
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

Generally, the thesis defense was successful. The presentation went smoothly. That being said, there are areas where the thesis production is imperfect or could have been done better. The role of the design propositions in chapter 4 was unclear to the jurors. While this thesis maintains that the ríoscapes presented in chapter 4 are ways to re-imagine the border, the jurors were not convinced that was a strong conclusion. The jurors recommended identifying which ríoscape was the strongest and to develop that one to its fullest potential, rather than dividing attention between five different ríoscapes. Put more simply, each ríoscape has quite a bit of potential but none of them are fully developed. Albeit, the time spent on each was commended by the jury.

One comment zeroed in on the land port of entry in the first ríoscape. The comment suggested combining the third ríoscape to add depth to the liminal condition. The comment also asked what the queue line looked like in space where the people were waiting. Overall, there was great appreciation in the theoretical rigor of the thesis, particularly with ríopolitics and liminality. In regards to liminality, though, it was unclear to the jurors if the work was trying to create or mitigate the liminality. The amount of interaction occurring in the transborder scenes was also not clear. For most of the ríoscapes, the architectural language could have been better. The third ríoscape in particular drew a lot of critique due to its similarity in appearance

to the Berlin Wall. Upon reflection, some of the design choices in the third ríoscape were not great. Those choices contrast with the strong idea of counter-apodemics. Finally, the ríoscapes would benefit from being clear about the difference created between before and after.



Final Discussion

Left: [05.03]
Borders Game Board
Eidetic Image
Author's Work
(2021)

In most of the rioscapes discussed, a common theme was shared between them: they changed the meaning of land ports of entry from a necessary condition of crossing a border into an opportunity for positive human impact. An implication in this change in meaning is that since ports of entry are a function of borders, the borders can also change in meaning. If you strip away the facticity of what makes borders a condition—such as sovereignty, territoriality, and politics—and examine borders as an opportunity instead, they can take on a whole new meaning. Borders are experienced by tourists, traders, and migrants. Those experiences allow borders to be a place where border trade, bazaars, immigrant housing, tourist hospitality, and co-governance can all co-exist in a grand borderscape.

Of course, that vision is very different from current-day reality. Government organizations such as the U.S. National Security Agency require to know everyone who is and isn't inside the country. If that requirement ever subsided, the meaning of borders could be more freely re-imagined by those who oversee their existence.

Still, World War I, the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and the COVID-19 pandemic make it very unlikely that border security will ever subside. The rioscapes presented in chapter 4, however, are still possible. Designers must find ways to extrapolate the phenomenological opportunities nested in borders at land ports of

entry for the sake of the human experience. The future ramifications of doing so would have positive human impacts on those who cross the border for pleasure, for money, and for their livelihood.

Figure 01.01	San Diego-Tijuana LPOE	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.02	Location of San Luis	Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.03	Tactics	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.04	Underpinnings	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.05	Argument	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.06	San Luis Experiential	Collage	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.07	Detroit-Windsor Tunnel	Photograph	Public Domain (2006)
Figure 01.08	Detroit River	Photograph	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.09	Bridge near Austria-Slovakia Border	Photograph	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 01.10	Calais-Dover Ferry	Photograph	Jiel Beaumadier (2008)
Figure 02.01	Border Wall Kaleidoscope	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.02	Gated Community	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.03	Firewall	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.04	Global Border	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.05	Political	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.06	Land Ports of Entry	Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.07	Tourist Inspection	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.08	Customs Hierarchy	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.09	Texas Gulf Megaregion	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.10	Cargo Inspection	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.11	Viapolitics	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.12	Counter-Apodemics	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)

Reimagining Borderscapes

Figure 02.13	Apodemics	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.14	Phantasmagoria	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.15	C-Phantasmagoria	Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.16	Transborderism	Diagram Sketch	Iglesias-Prieto (2012)
Figure 02.17	Spatial Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.18	Juxtapositional Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.19	Material Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.20	Directional Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.21	Temporal Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.22	Gravitational Liminality	Diagram Sketch	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.23	Riopolitics	Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.24	Location of Detroit	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.25	Personal Vehicle Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.26	<i>Ambassador Bridge and a Fragment of Windsor</i>	Photograph	Angela Anderson-Cobb Flickr
Figure 02.27	Detroit-Windsor Trade	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.28	Gordie Howe International Bridge	Photograph	Jeff Yoders (2020)
Figure 02.29	<i>Lewiston-Queenston Bridge from Niagara Gorge</i>	Photograph	Marc A Wilson (2015)
Figure 02.30	Lewiston Casual Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.31	Lewiston Commercial Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.32	Location of San Luis	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.33	Commercial Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.34	<i>San Luis Arizona - Border Wall</i>	Photograph	Tony Santiago (2020)

Figure 02.35	Western Migrant Map	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.36	Migrants Wait near Wall	Photograph	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.37	San Luis Casual Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.38	<i>Memorial to Migrants</i>	Photograph	(Meyer and Isacson, 2014)
Figure 02.39	Hidalgo Casual Traffic	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.40	Eastern Migrant Map	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 02.41	8 U.S.C. § 13 25	Text	United States Federal Code
Figure 02.42	Article 31 of the U.N.C.R. relating to the Status of Refugees	Text	(U.N.C.R., 1951)
Figure 02.43	<i>Border Management Modernization</i>	Book Cover	Drew Fasick (2004)
Figure 02.44	<i>Handbook of the Best Practices at Border Crossings</i>	Book Cover	Damir Krizmanic (2012)
Figure 03.01	San Luis Borderscape	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.02	Physical Isolation	Fictional Signpost	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.03	Economic Isolation	Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.04	Meldy	Photograph	(Arizona Public Media, 2019)
Figure 03.05	Meldy's Ledger	Photograph	(Arizona Public Media, 2019)
Figure 03.06	Martin	Photograph	(Woodbridge, 2019)
Figure 03.07	Joel	Photograph	Jesse Shapins (2009)
Figure 03.08	Migrant Laborers	Photograph	Jesse Shapins (2009)
Figure 03.09	Georgina	Photograph	Jesse Shapins (2009)
Figure 03.10	Liminal Spaces	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.11	Liminal Space 1	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.12	Liminal Space 1 Material Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)

Reimagining Borderscapes

Figure 03.13	Liminal Space 1 Temporal Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.14	Liminal Space 2	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.15	Liminal Space 2 Temporal Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.16	Liminal Space 3	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.17	(not used)		
Figure 03.18	Liminal Space 3 Spatial Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.19	Liminal Space 3 Juxtapositional Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.20	Liminal Space 4	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.21	Liminal Space 4 Directional Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.22	Liminal Space 4 Material Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.23	Liminal Space 5	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.24	Liminal Space 5 Juxtapositional Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.25	Liminal Space 5 Material Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.26	Liminal Space 6	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.27	Liminal Space 6 Directional Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 03.28	Liminal Space 6 Temporal Liminality	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.01	Border Crossings Cropped and Flipped	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.02	Border Crossings Cropped and Flipped	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.03	Border Crossings Cropped and Flipped	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.04	Border Crossings Cropped and Flipped	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.05	<i>Theoretical Overview of the Proposed Action at San Luis I LPOE</i>	Plan Drawing	(Kadri, 2019)
Figure 04.06	GSA's Proposed Action for San Luis I with Flipped Central Portion	Plan Drawing	Author's Work (2021)

Figure 04.07	GSA's Proposed Action for San Luis I with Flipped Central Portion	Plan Drawing	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.08	Ríoscape 1A	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.09	<i>Theoretical Overview of Alternative 2 at San Luis I LPOE</i>	Plan Drawing	(Kadri, 2019)
Figure 04.10	GSA's Alternative 2 for San Luis I with Flipped Central Portion	Plan Drawing	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.11	GSA's Alternative 2 for San Luis I with Flipped Central Portion	Plan Drawing	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.12	Ríoscape 1B	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.13	San Luis International Townsite	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.14	San Luis International Townsite	Circulation Diagram	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.15	Line of Cars Awaiting Entry to U.S.	Google Street View	Image Retrieved Nov 11, 2019
Figure 04.16	Ríoscape 2	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.17	What the Border Looks Like	Drone Footage	(Weatherbear, 2019)
Figure 04.18	Ríoscape 2	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.19	Ledger Wall	Collage	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.20	Ríoscape 3A	Elevation Drawing	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.21	Ríoscape 3B	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.22	Ríoscape 4	Illustration	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.23	Daily Ritual of Migrant Laborers	ArcGIS Map	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.24	Step 1	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.25	Step 2A	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.26	Step 2B	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.27	Step 3	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.28	Ríoscape 5 Colorado River Wet Season	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)

Reimagining Borderscapes

Figure 04.29	Slovenia-Croatia Border Dispute	Map	NASA WorldWind (2021)
Figure 04.30	Lower Colorado River Basin Overlaid by Slovenia-Croatia Border	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.31	Rioscape 5 Colorado River Dry Season	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 04.32	Rioscape 5 Colorado River ATV Season	Vignette	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 05.01	St. Clair River	Manipulated Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 05.02	Virtual Critique	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)
Figure 05.03	Borders Game Board	Eidetic Image	Author's Work (2021)

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