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Eurasia Border Review Second Series

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Beginning our Second Series

In October 2020, the *Eurasia Border Review* begins its Second Series. As we noted in Volume 10, the concluding volume of Series One, the new series signals the transition to a new publication model, one that will offer the opportunity to develop special issues on disciplinary or thematic issues. COVID-19 is transforming our world, and we are encountering new issues on a daily basis. Our revamped *EBR* will stress speed and flexibility, and provide a platform for innovative and socially-engaged research.

The first issue of this Second Series, Volume 11 in our run, grows out of the Summer Symposium held on July 2-3, 2020 at the Slavic-Eurasian Research Center. Entitled "Northeast Asia: Pitfalls and Prospects, Past and Present", the conference was under the aegis of the NIHU Area Studies Project for Northeast Asia (NoA-SRC), and as with previous iterations was originally planned to take place on site at Hokkaido University in Sapporo, Japan. As may be imagined, COVID-19 prevented our overseas guests from travelling to Japan and also limited mobility within the country, so the entire event was rapidly transferred online. While the time difference provided some headaches, participants from Korea, Russia, New Zealand, Poland, the UK, the US, and so forth ensured a tremendously successful socially-distanced event.

This issue provides a record of one of the sessions from the symposium, a Special Lecture on "Rebordering in the EU under Covid-19: Lessons for Northeast Asia?" given by Jarosław Jańczak of Adam Mickiewicz University, Poland. COVID-19 is a pandemic that has overwhelmed regional as well as national borders, but it has manifested itself differently in different regions, with the responses of various national governments heavily marked by these regional differences. The majority of the Symposium was devoted to research papers focussed on Northeast Asia, but the current lecture provides us with the opportunity to contextualize Northeast Asia's response and thus offers a number of lessons for the region. This first issue of our new Series of *EBR* provides a clear contribution to the work we are conducting under the NIHU Area Studies Project here at the SRC.

We would be delighted if our first contribution to the new series provides everyone with an opportunity to usefully reflect upon such critical questions. We also look forward to more volumes emerging in the future.

October 2020

On behalf of the Editors

Akihiro Iwashita &
Edward Boyle

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Re-bordering in the EU under Covid-19 in the First Half of 2020: A Lesson for Northeast Asia?

Jarosław Jańczak

Introduction

The 2020 pandemic has been the most challenging development for domestic and international relations in the twenty-first century, affecting not only all states and societies worldwide but also the international system itself. The coronavirus, originally detected in China, very quickly spread globally, ignoring political borders (Liu & Saif 2020) as well as most efforts to prevent its spread. Consequently, the disease (and its results) moved from Asia to Europe and then on to America and Africa, causing previously unimaginable turbulence.

As early as March, statistics demonstrated that East Asia as a region (as well as the individual states located there) were coping with the pandemic much more effectively than EUrope, despite the fact that the virus had struck Asia first. When looking for explanations, scholars, commentators, and politicians have tended to point to several reasons for Asian states successfully overcoming Covid-19. They are, among others, social habits (the mask wearing tradition in East Asia, the model of less direct contact in everyday situations, or a different diet resulting in fewer illnesses that coincide with the virus), the orientation towards authority (Asian obedience towards authority), the relation between communitarian and individualistic attitudes (Salomon 2020a), leadership (less politicized in Asia), earlier vaccination policy (only recommended in many West European states) (Salomon 2020b), and many others.

Accepting the explanatory value of (at least some of) these arguments, it seems that the attitude that Europe could learn from East Asia (and not the reverse) has been almost unanimously accepted in both public and academic debates. However, the current situation can be also interpreted in reverse: Europe, heavily affected by the pandemic, started to sink into political, economic, and social crises that will have significant consequences not only for the region but also for the global order. The way these crises have already manifested themselves, and the reactions to combat them seem interesting for other global regions as to how they may be affected or influenced by their consequences.

The above perspective is the starting point for this article, which reflects on whether and to what extent the political, economic and social changes caused by the pandemic in Europe may serve as a lesson for the region of Northeast Asia. The author decided to concentrate on

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one of the most crucial aspects of combatting the pandemic, border (control) policy, and test the situation in the first half of the year 2020. As Peter Ulrich and Norbert Cyrus remark, "the measures to contain the corona pandemic can be reduced to a large common denominator: it is the drawing of new borders and the consolidation of existing ones" (Cyrus & Ulrich 2020). Closing borders has several effects. On the one hand, massive re-bordering in Europe was both functionally and symbolically considered the primary and most important tool for fighting the further spread of the coronavirus across the region. On the other hand, it quickly became one of the elements of changing regional and global orders, with serious consequences for both the integration processes in Europe and relations between Europe and other global regions.

This analysis is composed of six sections. After the introductory remarks, the meaning and role of borders in Europe are discussed. This is followed by an empirical and analytical overview of pandemic re-bordering and a case study investigating multi-level governance elements at the time of the pandemic. Finally, a short parallel to the East Asian environment is proposed, which leads to the concluding remarks.

Europe, borders and the (myth of a) borderless world

European history is the history of shifting borders and territorial disputes. Starting in the seventeenth century, numerous feudal states fighting for space were replaced with nation states, based on the principle of national self-determination and a population of members of one's own nation within state borders. The concept of the frontier and overlapping influences was transformed, together with the creation of the Westphalian order, into boundaries (Kristof 1959). They marked the exclusive power of the national center over a precisely defined territory. Border sensitivity in Europe is shown by the fact that at the beginning of the nineteenth century only a very small group of states had the same borders as they have today. The post-1945 order in Europe was characterized by the general principle that the location of a border should remain unchanged (unless the parties agreed on such a development), and the Helsinki process was a final step in the mutual and wide recognition of the borders existing in Europe. Against this background, the collapse of communism (usually symbolized by the collapse of the Berlin Wall), and the conclusion of the Schengen Agreement some years later, created an environment that broke with the painful territorial past in Europe: once the location and permanence of state borders was finally recognized they (could) became permeable or even practically "non-existent" from the point of view of common Europeans (Alkan 2002).

This de-bordering had at least two dimensions, functional and symbolic. The former was manifested by the emergence of the common market and the implementation of "the four freedoms". The liberal policy of eliminating barriers saw borders in Europe as obstacles to the

flow of goods, services, people, and capital. Schengen supplemented free flows, reducing costs and permitting uninterrupted mobility. The latter, framed by the post-1989 myth of "a borderless world" (Agnew 2003), symbolized the freedom of individuals and unity of the continent. It should be remembered that within the wide spectrum of orientations towards the EU and the integration project among the Europeans, the Schengen system has been widely and almost unanimously regarded as one of the most important and appreciated achievements. Both functional and symbolic dimensions have been a manifestation of the European project and of the supranational level (the European Union), especially in relation to nation states.

A borderless Europe has been a material manifestation of the redefinition of nation states (Kolossov 2005) with regard to both redesigning the role of border regions and designing the role of the supranational level in European governance. Both were possible because of the stable, reliable, and highly predictable international environment in the region, an environment which, additionally, continues to develop following the (neo)functional logic of integration, both vertically and horizontally. At the conceptual level, it resulted in a constructivist turn and a shift from the neo-realistic and neo-functional perspectives to a social constructivist one. Borders that used to be perceived as the instruments of power relations or liberalized obstacles are now considered social constructs based on norms, values, and identities. This attitude was transferred also to the international level, where Europe perceived itself as a normative power, bringing stability, prosperity, and openness to other states and regions.

Covid-19 and re-bordering in Europe

The pandemic in Europe has become a political disaster, destroying many of the political ideas based on the myth of "a borderless Europe". As Jaume Castan Pinos and Steven M. Radil remark, "the word myth has a dual meaning, both referring to a story people tell themselves to explain something about the world and to something that is widely believed as true but is actually false" (Castan Pinos & Radil 2020). The key question is who should respond to the challenge and what means should be employed. Especially at the beginning of the crisis, this seemed to be the task of EU member states, which (almost exclusively) took the lead, at the time of the (at least initial) passiveness of other actors, especially the EU.

At the beginning of 2020, border closing as a counter-pandemic policy was viewed in Europe as a tool implementable in autocratic states, especially in East Asia. Surprisingly for Europeans themselves, they very quickly decided to employ the same model (Cyrus & Ulrich 2020). The policy of East Asian states closing cities or entire provinces was followed by Europe at the national level, leading to re-bordering tendencies (Salomon 2020b).

Today, the Schengen zone consists of 26 states, 22 of them being EU members. Its

non-control regime may be suspended by a member state in the event of a foreseeable or immediate threat to public policy or internal security, and should always be exceptional, temporary, and proportionate (Dumbrava 2020). Member states have used this opportunity in critical moments, for example, during the 2015 immigration crisis. The immediate measures, following the Schengen Code, may be introduced for ten days, prolonged for the next twenty days, and last a maximum of two months in total. Additionally, border control reestablishment should be notified to the European Commission and other member states. By April 21, Schengen zone states introduced various border restrictions, which resulted in a drastic and immediate decrease of human traffic across Europe (Sabbati & Dumbrava 2020) .

Still, the border closing in Europe was not as obvious in February and March as it was later on. Empirical research on the impact of travel limitations on the transmission of Covid-19 in China and between China and the rest of the world proved that

> travel limitations (up to 90% of traffic) have only a modest effect unless paired with public health interventions and behavioral changes that can facilitate a considerable reduction in disease transmissibility […]. Travel restrictions to COVID-19–affected areas will have modest effects and that transmission reduction interventions will provide the greatest benefit for mitigating the epidemic (Chinazzi et al. 2020, 400).

Despite that, limiting mobility has been used as one of the key elements preventing coronavirus transmission, and border control has become one of the key instruments in preventing individual movement across Europe and to Europe. It served this purpose both functionally (leading to movement limitations) as well as politically and symbolically (allowing member states to re-gain control over crisis management and take the lead in combating the pandemic).

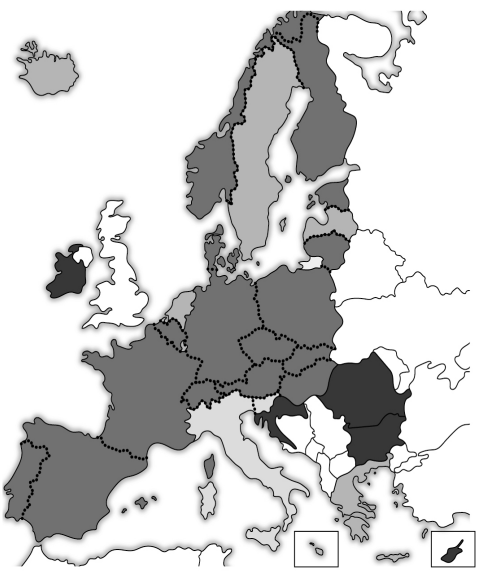
Almost all EU member states introduced restrictions on border crossing, which ranged from border controls to the practical closure of the borders (Koerner & Boettcher 2020). Most of the restrictions were imposed on human traffic; usually only nationals were allowed to enter their state of residence, typically with a 14-day quarantine (see Figure 1). Cargo traffic was allowed and even recommended to maintain supply chains. Due to border controls (temperature measurement and location documents), enormous traffic jams appeared at many borders. The European Commission pushed for "Green Lines" reducing the formalities on strategic border crossings to limit the re-bordering effects, especially as intra-EU trade creates about 45 per cent of the EU's GDP and 75 per cent of road-transport based trade (Koerner & Boettcher 2020).

The restrictions affected human traffic, primarily hitting tourism but also cross-border labor commuters. There are almost 2 million people commuting to work across borders on a regular basis in the EU. Additionally, there are a significant number of seasonal workers circulating around Europe. All that makes numerous regions, or even states highly dependent on

a labor force crossing borders. Consequently, the European Commission encouraged member states to facilitate free flows for critical human labor forces (Koerner & Boettcher 2020).

Some exceptions to this general tendency can be found, nevertheless. Sweden was practically the only European state (except for Belarus and the UK in the first phase) that did not employ a lockdown policy, left its borders open (they were closed however by its neigbours) and instead of closing the economy introduced "trust based" suggestions for its citizens (Paterlini 2020). This resulted, however, in one of the highest number of cases of infection, especially in comparison to other states in the region.

Figure 1: Schengen restrictions on land borders, April 27, 2020.



BE	Notified	All internal borders	18/03/20-08/05/20
CZ	Notified	Land Borders with AT and DE	14/03/20-24/04/20
DK	Notified	All internal Borders	12/11/19-12/11/20
DE	Notified	Land borders with DK,FR,LU,AT and CH	16/03/20-05/05/20
EE	Notified	All internal borders	17/03/20-17/05/20
ES	Notified	All land borders	17/03/20-26/04/20
FR	Notified	All internal borders	18/03/20-31/10/20
IT	Restricted	All internal borders	14/03/20-
LT	Notified	All internal borders	14/03/20-14/05/20
HU	Notified	All internal borders	12/03/20-01/05/20
AT	Notified	Land borders with DE,IT,SK,CZ,CH and LI HU and SI(14/03/20-12/05/20)	14/03/20-07/05/20
PL	Notified	Land borders with CZ,SK,DE and LT	15/03/20-03/05/20
Pt	Notified	Land borders with ES	16/03/20-05/05/20
SI	Restricted	Special conditions of entry from IT and AT	19/03/20-
SK	Notified	All Internal borders	13/03/20-07/05/20
FI	Notified	All Internal borders	19/03/20-13/05/20
CH	Notified	Land Borders with IT. DE,FR and AT(26/03/20-15/04/20)	13/03/20-02/05/20
NO	Notified	All Internal borders	16/03/20-13/08/20
EL	No reintroduction of border controls		
LV	No reintroduction of border controls		
LU	No reintroduction of border controls		
MT	N/A		
NL	No reintroduction of border controls		
SE	No reintroduction of border controls		
IS	N/A		
LI	No reintroduction of border controls		

Source: based on Sabbati & Dumbrava 2020, 2.

As demonstrated by this short overview of de-bordering tendencies, borders and nation states matter. They have been "making a temporary comeback affecting everyone directly but not all equally" (Calzada 2020), and definitely more than Europeans expected. Several dimensions of re-bordering can be identified when reflecting on the recent developments in Europe.

Firstly, the **physical re-bordering** that, as described above, boils down to closing the borders and preventing human flows in a very material sense. The principle of crossing borders in any place was suspended, traffic was directed again to the border crossing points and border

gates, fences, guards, etc. were re-introduced.

What was behind this, however, was the **political re-bordering** aimed at retaking control of the processes related to the corona-crisis. Probably its most striking manifestation was the ban on exporting medical materials, especially masks, by some of the states less affected by the virus to those in trouble. Politically, this poisoned relations, for example, between Italy and Germany (Wynne 2020), following the decree of March 4 stopping the flow of equipment (The Brussels Times 2020). Germany was accused of lacking European solidarity and sensitivity. In the case of this most important actor in the EUropean game, this situation has led to reflection and numerous manifestations of solidarity, including the transfer of infected patients from affected states to German hospitals (Böhm & Kurowska-Pysz 2020). Still, a bad impression remained, especially in the European South. The EU criticized all the bans and called for European solidarity (Tsang 2020). But on March 15, the European Commission issued an Implementing Regulation banning export of personal protective equipment outside the EU.

The key response to Covid-19 was initially given at the national level and re-bordering formed one of the key instruments. The EU got involved later on, and apparently in a more reactive rather than proactive mode. At the end of February and beginning of March, Ursula von der Leyen's European Commission was more focused on the Turkish border, when President Erdogan blackmailed the EU to let another wave of migrants come to Europe (Herszenhorn & Wheaton 2020). The European Commission proposed closing the EU's external borders to non-EU residents, hoping that this would encourage states to leave the internal borders open (Koerner & Boettcher 2020).

David M. Herszenhorn and Sarah Wheaton claimed in their analysis that "EU nations, despite their pledge to an ever-closer union, reacted selfishly and chaotically once the threat became evident" (Herszenhorn & Wheaton 2020). Various forms of re-bordering seem to be the best illustration of this observation. Undermining Schengen, one of the most citizen-friendly and noticeable elements of European integration (especially as confronted with annoying Brussels bureaucracy) may lead to a crisis of integration itself, especially with regard to legitimacy and trust (Castan Pinos & Radil 2020).

The European Commission suggested liberalizing border obstacles on internal EU borders while keeping external borders closed. The further success of the integration project required ending up with temporary border restrictions. June 16 was decided by several EU states as the date for reopening their borders, sometimes in a selective way. For example, Czechia allowed Poles to enter, with the exception of those from the Silesian region, which suffered from Covid-19 the most in Poland. This caused a form of external re-bordering, affecting not only relations with neighboring states but with their specific parts.

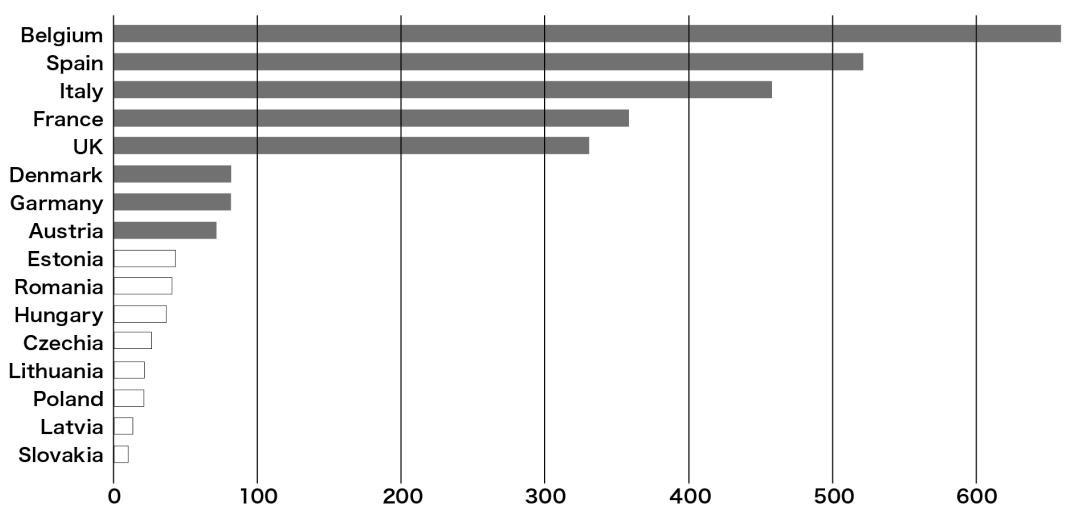
Re-bordering was easily **historically contextualized**, especially in the case of difficult legacy borders, for instance, in the form of misunderstandings of where the border is actually

located. One of these examples was the village of Pielgrzymów-Pelhrimov on the Polish-Czech border, where a Polish border guard, by accident, established a border post on the Czech side of the border "arresting" a local chapel located about 30 meters from the border river. Some radical politicians compared this incident to the historical events form 1938, when Poland took advantage of the German invasion of Czechoslovakia and captured a strip of land along the border inhabited by speakers of Polish.

Technological re-bordering demonstrated how selective the nature of border permeability is. While some professions and individuals were stopped by border closures, others, because of the online mode of their activities (home office, online education), have continued to operate in cross-border ways (Cyrus & Ulrich 2020).

An interesting phenomenon was related to **phantom re-bordering**. The western part of the continent was much more affected by the pandemic than the eastern one (Figure 2). When looking for the reasons, commentators have drawn attention to several factors: the early lockdown in the East (the states there are poorer, have less developed health care systems and, being aware of that, were more eager to quickly introduce radical measures); much harsher re-bordering (Shotter & Jones 2020) (criticized in Western Europe and in Brussels); as well as a different vaccination legacy (obligatory over recent decades in the East and only advised in the West).

Figure 2: Covid-19 deaths per 1 mln inhabitants in Western and Eastern Europe in April 2020



Source: based Shotter, Jones, 2020 after Eurostat and John Hopkins

It was symptomatic that the states of Central and Eastern Europe, forced to knock at the EU's doors and then request Schengen enlargement in 2007, were now very eager to become isolated from their Western neighbors to prevent the proliferation of the pandemic. This refers to Poland and Germany, or Slovenia and Italy, among others. Eastern EU states closed borders practically immediately after the first confirmed cases, contrary to the states of Western Europe

(Herszenhorn & Wheaton 2020). Re-bordering revealed continental divisions but also reversed power relations on the continental scale.

Economic re-bordering was already in place. Following the pattern revealed by the 2008 economic crisis, a clear line has been drawn between the dynamic European north, which is able to cope with challenges, and the European south, which has faced serious problems again. This translates into international relations, for example, in a softer approach towards China offering assistance and investments (Seaman 2020, 8-9), especially within the logic of "mask diplomacy" (Salomon 2020b), balancing between aid, trade and blackmail. The argument of dependency on external medical supplies has also been raised. This referred especially to China, and the postulate to bring some segments of production (crucial for national security) back to Europe. The EU seemed to employ a more geopolitical approach and consider Chinese domination in some production sectors as an attempt to create strategic dominance (Seaman 2020 8-10).

Social re-bordering resulted in growing hostility towards others, including people of Asian origin being blamed for the pandemic, and calling China for more transparency in sharing information about the virus's origins (Liu & Saif 2020). It became especially visible after the Italian pandemic developed, starting with Chinese visitors (Ghiretti & Mariani 2020, 35). On the other hand, with regard to the direct neighborhood of the EU, the most challenging issue of migration was silenced and migrants were physically stopped due to the bordering principle.

This short overview of the re-bordering dimensions still requires deeper analyses of the re-bordering mechanism. A brief look at a specific case reveals the multi-level nature of the process.

Multi-level governance and pandemic re-bordering – the case of the German-Polish border

As already shown, European borders are in constant motion and are the objects of never-ending ordering. The same also especially applies to the internal borders of the EU. This was rather dramatically (and painfully for many individuals) demonstrated by the massive (re-) bordering caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (Shachar 2020), affecting, among others, the German-Polish border – a line that (despite being rooted in conflict) only three months earlier had been considered just another "boring" European integration location whose key problems had been overcome and were a thing of the past.

But how did the pandemic affect this specific border? Covid-19, like most of the material and non-material elements shaping Polish reality over the centuries, entered Poland from Germany. The Polish "patient zero," living near the border town of Słubice, returned from a family visit across the western border (celebrating carnival in the district of Heinsberg) at

the beginning of March. Eleven days later, the Polish government, after introducing a state of epidemic risk, practically closed the border, suspending passenger train and bus connections between both states and limiting the number of crossing points available for private cars to six, and leaving some others open for pedestrians. This immediately resulted in enormous traffic jams on the highways and queues of Poles trying to enter Poland on foot. The protests of lorry drivers and local inhabitants resulted in more crossing points being opened and simplified border formalities.

The real problem for the border actors started, however, when on March 27, 2020, the Polish government banned border crossings, requiring a 14-day quarantine for returnees, including cross-border commuters (Bangel & Vooren 2020). This has heavily affected the local cross-border economy – especially shopping and services and, more importantly, labor relations. About 150,000 Poles working on the German side of the border, and numerous German enterprises employing them, were cut off from each other. The German regional authorities reacted to the problem immediately, by offering financial assistance to Poles in order to encourage them to stay on the German side. However, high levels of uncertainty about further developments made most of them stay on the Polish side. The quarantine provisions introduced in Germany on April 10 excluded border commuters from this obligation. The end of the month saw massive protests of Polish cross-border commuters against the de facto closed border, which undermined their material existence (Ziarek 2020). Their voices were supported by the regional-level leaders of the German *Bundesländer,* who petitioned the Polish government. Eventually, on May 4, the Polish government decided to abolish the quarantine for cross-border commuters, thereby defusing the atmosphere.

The above developments inspire several interesting questions regarding the German-Polish border as an example of internal borders in the EU.

Firstly, about its liminality (understood as a state of transition and "in-between" space) (Schiffauer et al 2018): where and how does it manifest itself? The most affected victims of the sudden pandemic re-bordering were the cross-border commuters and enterprises. This made the economic ties (and not cultural, identity, or cultural ones) across the border the key indicator of what the "third space" on the German-Polish border is. Long-lasting efforts to create a cross-border community based on mutual knowledge and understanding – as present in EU programs and postulated by academics in constructivist logics – did not result in visible effects under the circumstances of the crisis. The actors involved in functional cross-border interactions were the most vocal in attempts to overcome the sudden and unexpected isolation. When observing the reaction to the border closing and asking if there is a cross-border community, the answer would be – that yes, there is one. But it is, above all, a community of (economic) interests, not a community with a cross-border territorial identity.

Secondly, regarding the permeability of borders: who negotiates and decides, and how?

During the crisis, the Polish central authorities used border closing as a tool of protection. Exclusive territorial control served as both a practical and symbolic instrument of taking responsibility and the lead in overcoming the epidemic crisis. But the Polish commuters were the most active actors in opposing central decisions, alongside the German regional authorities that actively proposed and implemented solutions enabling Polish labor to remain in the German labor market. Local Polish and regional German actors managed to influence the central institutions and increased their sensitivity to the problems of the peripheries, embodying a form of multi-level governance in its (asymmetric) cross-border form. Still, the argument related to economic stagnation seemed to be the most persuasive.

Thirdly, about the durability of the border: what is the real and current purpose of borders in state structures? At the time of the corona-crisis, it was, at least in Warsaw, a sovereign-territorial vision of central control over space that clashed with functionally oriented arguments, which could be reduced to economic activities determining the satisfaction of basic needs.

The pandemic is still affecting cross-border life on the German-Polish border. One of the realistic scenarios is that it may, together with a second wave (or later waves), cause further problems in the future. The question is what the situation has revealed about the border and cross-border cooperation on the German-Polish border, and whether any alternative forms should be proposed. It seems that market forces are the most dominant in creating a cross-border reality, toghether with the (neo)functional links operating as cross-border fibers linking both sides. On the one hand, this is not what many cross-border cooperation supporters or scholars observing this border dream about, but this is possibly the firmest base for cross-border cooperation that has been created over the last three decades, and should be appreciated as an achievement. Moreover, the border itself is much more sensitive than expected. The long-lasting stability and one-dimensional perception of the integration process (although undermined by border restrictions during the immigration crisis or Brexit) had eliminated hard re-bordering from realistic scenarios in the minds of most of borderlanders. Finally, border areas need to be more vocal in articulating their interest vis-à-vis central authorities. Their future activities will determine whether they become an element of multi-level governance in its cross-border form, or whether they end up (again) as the interface of the state, with their main role being to protect the mainland.

A lesson for Northeast Asia(?)

As announced in the introductory section, brief overview of the re-bordering tendencies in the EU in the first half of 2020 is intended to offer lessons for Northeast Asia. As presented, borders in Europe are open, first of all, to the citizens of EU member states, allowing them to freely circulate across the continent. Similarly, because of the common market, the exchange of goods is not limited by borders either in physical or legal form. Additionally, European states are among the top destinations in international tourism, and the absence of borders is one of the constituting elements of EU openness policy. A similar borderlessness is not the case in East Asia – no similar economic or human border-free area exists there. Additionally, many of the states are islands or semi-islands, which determines a specific level of isolation (Salomon 2020b). What can be learned then? It seems that still some elements of similar processes can be observed there. They are related to the economic relevance of borders' liminality, the role of central authorities versus. other actors in determining border permeability and the borders' protective role determining their durability. Testing developments in East Asia can identify interesting regularities similar to European ones:

Firstly, the meaning of borders is deeply rooted in (conflictive) historical legacies and trust-sensitive pandemic relations, as manifested by Japan and South Korea. Japan's ban on visitors from South Korea (a 14-day quarantine and suspension of the visa waiver program) on March 5 became quickly politicized and resulted in a political debate there and similar restrictions (suspension of the visa free program). Under circumstances defined by earlier tensions at the diplomatic and economic levels (caused by Second World War legacies), grassroot exchanges were considered relevant (Nikkei Editorial 2020), especially after January 2020 when the Korean President and Japanese Prime Minister spoke of "closest neighbor" and "most important neighbors" (Gibson 2020) in an attempt to resolve a two year-long crisis in mutual relations. Covid-19 deepened mutual tensions again. South Korea accused Japan of a non-scientific approach (Nishimura 2020) and criticized Japan's lack of consultation on the issue (Harding & White 2020). Re-bordering quickly became a highly politicized issue (Kasulis 2020). Mutual distrust became visible in contesting the anti-pandemic methods applied by the other state and the quality of medical equipment produced, as visible in the following weeks (New Straits Times 2020). Distrust between South Korea and Japan continued in May (The Asahi Simbun 2020).

Secondly, economic border openness in the region was undermined, as demonstrated by the Japanese reaction towards China. Japan has been considering relocation of its industrial production from China back to its own territory as a key element of strategic security and supply chains. Apart from political declarations, a multi-billion US dollar package has been offered to Japanese companies to assist them in such a strategy (Zhigang 2020). National interest seems to

be emphasized in Japan at the expense of the previously dominant regional coordination based on multilateral principles (Zhigang 2020).

Thirdly, the creation of regional potential for economic and political de-bordering is visible in Chinese policy towards states of the region. Given worsening relations with the United States and Australia, China aims at improving relations with Japan and South Korea (Tachikawa 2020). Relations between China and Japan at the very beginning of the corona-crisis were played according to the principle of friendly relations. Japanese assistance to China with regard to medical equipment was rapidly repaid, and in the latter, created a narrative of friendly relations between both states. China also adopted a moderate tone commenting on the collision of the vessels of both states (Japanese military and Chinese fishing ships) near the Diaouyu/Senkaku Islands and new Japanese schoolbooks describing the conflict over this territory at the end of March (Burcu & Wang 2020). In May, another incident regarding the islands was reported again, but it was not escalated (Chinese Coast Guard vessels chasing Japanese fishing boats). A softening of the Japanese policy towards China has also been visible (Tachikawa 2020), but numerous acts (as name changing from Tonoshiro to Tonoshiro Senkaku in April and Chinese protests) reveal further tensions.

Conclusions

The first reaction to the pandemic observable in these re-bordering tendencies suggests that both people and states seem to prefer their own security over cooperation with others (Akiyama 2020). Jan Zielonka claims that the pandemic has undermined three compromises forming the contemporary (Western) world, namely individual freedoms, the concept of community and the market model, in order to combat Covid-19. All three are manifested in re-bordering and may have consequences in other regions, including East Asia. With regard to individual freedoms, the question is if people are prepared to accept mobility restrictions, or limitations on political rights? At the community level, the question is who is "us" and if this is again (and primarily) nation states forming the key reference point for solving problems. What about regional "togetherness"? With regards to the market, the issue is based on the domination of the private sector over the public one, with the latter, underinvested and underestimated, eventually made responsible for solving the crisis (Zielonka 2020). All this leads to the question of whether the pandemic will change the European model and make it more collective, national and public sector-oriented – reversing (or at least modifying) the recent decades of cultural, political and economic developments in the continent? And what does this mean for other global regions?

At the individual level, the question is if global citizens – using the opportunities offered by a borderless world – will also, after the pandemic, be trapped "inside closed nation

states surrounded by contradictory new walls and old borders" (Calzada 2020). At the state level, as Jaume Castan Pinos and Steven M. Radil point out, re-bordering has been used "to 'shield' the state and its citizens from a virus that is, in many cases, portrayed as a foreign invader" (Castan Pinos & Radil 2020). Epidemic risk has become one of the key elements of national security. At the border-reflection level, the conclusion is that even if border controls (and other physical markings of a border) are absent, the border itself is still there because states (still) do exist – both for people and goods. Economic crises, epidemic crises, and the crises of democracy – all use borders (Castan Pinos & Radil 2020) and are manifested through borders. This creates an interesting research perspective – to understand what is happening inside, one needs to understand how the edges are structured.

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Q & A

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Okay, thank you very much for a fascinating special lecture, Prof. Janczak. Based on your special lecture, we can now discuss how COVID 19 and the global pandemic have affected the Northeast Asian community and the rest of international society. I believe that it is important to compare regional responses from an interdisciplinary perspective; we have a lot of scholars from different parts of the world today. We will now turn to our distinguished commentator, Prof. Suzuki. Prof. Suzuki, now you have the floor. Please could you give your comments in 10 minutes or so.

Kazuto Suzuki:

Ten minutes, okay. Prof. Janczak, thank you very much. It was a very, very interesting discussion and very interesting paper. My name is Kazuto Suzuki. I've long been working on European affairs. I did my Ph.D. study in the Sussex European Institute at the University of Sussex, where I was working with Prof. Helen Wallace. So I have some basic understanding of what European integration means and how Schengen works.

A good paper always has a lot of interesting points to discuss. One of the issues I would like to discuss with you is whether it is really the borders of the sovereign state that matter? I think you mentioned that the border divides who is us and who is them, and I think that is true. But given the pandemic situation, there are a number of places, for example, currently certain states in the United States, like New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, which are demanding that visitors from other states, other states in United States, self-quarantine for 14 days. Cities in the UK like Leicester is now shutdown while other cities in the vicinity are not.

There are borders, which are not necessarily lines of separation based on political units, like sovereign states. They may be distinguished as cities, states, regions, you name it. You have the unit of community and you try to protect the community, which is not necessarily a state. So, should we understand this pandemic situation as the end of the sovereign borderless situation or is it just a temporary measure to distinguish communities, which are not necessarily sovereign states but which are political units. So, that's one of the questions.

The second question I'd like to ask is to what extent will the economy overcome the fear of spreading disease. For example, there are many countries, including Europe and United States as well as Japan, where there are always tensions between political demands for lockdown and shutting borders down, and the pressure to reopen the economy and reopen the border.

Currently, from yesterday, July 1st, the EU is now accepting visitors from 14 countries, and this is definitely because of the tourist industry. The industry is in dire straits, and they need foreign visitors to bring their cash into the European Union. How do you measure this pressure from the economy against the fear of spreading disease? This, of course, is the primary factor in making decisions on how

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to close borders or who can cross borders. For example, currently visitors from 14 countries including Japan are allowed to go into the EU but not from Russia, not from United States, not from Brazil. So, there are a number of cases in which there is a distinction between who is allowed in and who is not. The EU makes a sovereign decision to reopen the border. It's a semi-transparent border as a figure of speech.

What is also interesting is that the EU regards, you know, the state as a unit, because you can only check a passport to identify where he or she comes from. Whether you are from the states of New York or Texas or California or Florida can't really be distinguished if you are coming from the United States and have a US passport. Yet, the different levels of infection mean that this matters. If you are from New York, you are fine. If you are coming from Florida, you are not. If that is the case, it is also a question of borders, not just separating you and them, but also how to identify who they are. There are borders outside. So, let's call these third-party borders, that it's not about you and others, but it's about distinguishing A and B from outside. It is very interesting that this COVID-19 case is creating this sort of situation where you distinguish the people from their affiliation to the state. That was also a very interesting point that can be made.

The third point is the crisis of democracy, and it is certainly true that we appear to be in the midst of a crisis of democracy, of populism, et cetera. However, I also think it is interesting that the definition of us and them is based on the democratic system. You are a person who has a vote in this territory, for the government of this territory. If you are Polish, you cannot vote in the German election. You can only vote in the Polish election, even if you are a cross-border resident and work in Germany. Of course, if you are talking about the regional municipal election or European Parliament election, that's a different story, but when it comes to the national politics, still nationality is closely tied with democracy. In that sense, when the state re-borders, that may have implications: a re-definition or reemphasis on who you are and which political community you belong to. Interestingly, it is the physical distancing of closing the border that will refresh your sense of belonging within the state system. In that sense, it is interesting to see that you mentioned about functionalism, or neo-functionalism. I think one of the key issues about the discussion of neo-functionalism was the shift of loyalty to a higher political entity but at the end of the day, this re-bordering will remind you that you are still defined by the national level. You have to live together through national level politics. So, that is the third point. I have plenty of other smaller points to make but I'll stop here for the moment.

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Okay, thank you very much for your comments, Prof. Suzuki. There will be questions from the floor, I think, so before Prof. Janczak replies to his comments, I'd like to collect a couple. Professor Chi?

Naomi Chi:

Dr. Janczak, hello, it's nice to see you. Thank you for joining us today. It was a really interesting presentation, thank you. I'd like you to expand a little because you went through the slides quite quickly.

I just wanted you to elaborate on one point. I was quite interested in the East-West divide, why is it that there are a lot more cases in the Western side of Europe, rather than the Eastern side of European. This of course coincides with the Iron Curtain, so if you could elaborate on that point, that would be great, thanks.

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Thank you, Naomi-san. So, just the one question from the floor? Okay. Prof. Janczak, please engage with those points from Prof. Suzuki and Prof. Chi.

Jarosław Janczak:

Yes, think you very much for all the questions and comments. First, let me try to answer or react to them in the sequence in which they were asked, with one small exception. Prof. Suzuki, the first question is about: is it only state borders, or are there other territorial units that are experiencing or contributing to this movement towards re-bordering?

Let me answer using two or three arguments. The first one is that when the pandemic started in East Asia, in China, and then spread to the region, the first reaction in the European public was that re-bordering or closing borders, of states limiting mobility to that extent, would be absolutely unacceptable in Europe. But a mere month later, seemingly to everyone's surprise, Europeans did the same or even more with regards to what tools were used and how they were employed. There are of course numerous actors involved in re-bordering processes. Indeed, there are cities that are no-go zones because of the pandemic and so on. But still my key argument here would be that usually it is the states who are deciding what borders are set. At the end of the day, except in states where the political system is a federal one, like Germany, where the Länder, the regions, have some competence to determine how to deal with borders with regard to permeability there is a central authority decides that a specific city or region will be the one that you cannot enter or you cannot leave.

However, we have at least two interesting developments within this logic. The first one was something I also mentioned as an aside in the paper which is that sometimes, it is other states that determine which territorial units in a given state are affected by restrictions. Political decisions taken within one state have serious consequences for who is entitled to do what in another state. Just as an example, the Polish-Czech border was closed for some weeks. Then both sides decided they would let the other's nationals circulate across the border. However, the Czech authorities said that Poles with permanent residence in the region of Upper Silesia, which was experiencing the most severe outbreak in Poland, were not allowed to enter Czech Republic. It is actually the Czech central authorities who grant specific freedoms to Polish citizens depending where their permanent residence is.

We also see the opposite. At the Polish-German border, the situation was very interesting, just maybe two sentences on that, because the border was initially closed by the central authorities. Generally, on the German side, the commuters are from Poland, there are about 150,000 Poles – also

some Germans, but mainly Poles - living on the Polish side of the border, and commuting every day to their workplaces on the German side of the border. The distances are short and so on. Both sides closed the border but the German side said, okay but cross-border commuters they can still circulate freely, but on the Polish side there is a 14 day quarantine obligation. So, you can go to work in Germany, you can go back to your home to Poland, but then you have to stay in Poland at your apartment for 14 days, so you cannot go back the next day. So what happened? People started to protest. The commuters began directing petitions to the Polish central authorities, but at the same time German entrepreneurs started to petition regional authorities in Germany, who were then petitioning the Polish central authorities. So we see suddenly a multilevel structure where, with regards the competence to decide, the border is closed or the border is open on the Polish side because of the central authorities, and the relations that exist between the people, the commuters, regional authorities in Germany, the Polish central authorities, and so on.

To make a long story short, I would still say that it is national and federal states and regional authorities that retain control over territory, executing exclusive competence in controlling human mobility. However, we are seeing signs that multilevel governance is in there. There are numerous actors who can at least try to influence the final decision. In the Polish-German border case, they were successful, because this quarantine obligation was ultimately abolished.

With regard to economic depression as a factor that overrides fear of the pandemic, yes, there is also a set of interesting developments. First of all, as you might know, what I presented is a general tendency in Europe, but there have been some exceptions, like the U.K. at the very beginning of the pandemic or Sweden until today. Swedes, or the Swedish government, basically said we are going to control pandemic, not to stop the pandemic. So almost no restrictions, especially related to economic activities, have been imposed on society. They call it a trust-based approach, where people are encouraged to behave themselves, but this resulted in an increase in the number of victims and then the neighboring states Finland and Denmark closed their borders with Sweden. So, at the end of the day, you don't need to close your own borders to be trapped. Sometimes, it is somebody else's decision but still the problem is that, I would say, we don't know if closing borders in order to suspend economic processes have been or are a good decision or a bad decision. How can you approach it methodologically, to calculate, for example, how many people died because of the pandemic per million inhabitants? But on the other hand, and this is the argument in many states, one could say, but how many will die because the economy is doing not as good as it did, and, consequently, the healthcare system is weaker, many businesses bankrupted, etc. Many people will no longer be offered social assistance and many, many other things. Indeed, there is a general tendency, most politicians say, we cannot afford a second lockdown, so even if there is a second wave, we cannot afford it.

Here, I would now like to somehow combine this question with what Prof. Chi asked about the East-West division. Because this is actually a question about the phantom border that appeared as a topic in the previous session as well. Definitely, the number of deaths is visibly much, much smaller in

what used to be the Eastern camp than what used to be the Western Europe.

Well, there are at least two explanations for how this no longer existing border between two systems is still influencing what is happening there? The first point, well, the eastern part of the European Union is still much less developed. If it is less developed, it means that its healthcare capacity is much more limited in comparison to what is the case in Western Europe. If this is the case, and both public opinion and political elites are aware of this fact, then they have reacted differently. So, instead of waiting for the number of people infected to grow and be sent to hospitals and so on, the decision was, well we cannot afford having hundreds of thousands of infected people because we simply do not have enough emergency units prepared to take care of them. As a result, the states of Eastern Europe almost immediately closed their borders, suspending university education, closing schools and so on, as soon as the first cases appeared within their borders. On the other hand, the Western European states, they waited, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. In some cases, like in Germany, the number of victims is high but it is somehow under control, whereas for some like Italy or Spain, there were moments where it was a real national disaster.

There is also another hypothesis, very interesting but just a hypothesis, nobody can really confirm it yet. In the eastern camp, vaccination policy between 1945 and today was different than in Western Europe. In central and eastern parts of the continent, starting from the post-war time, and because of the communist system, vaccinations were obligatory. We have actually nowadays practically everyone immune to a wide spectrum of diseases. We are talking about three or four generations of people who were immune. Whereas in Western Europe, for different reasons, different climatic conditions, different perception of individual freedoms and so on, they usually were just recommended to people. This more medical hypothesis, well, this is actually the phantom border across the continent. East of the Berlin Wall medical healthcare or the vaccination policy resulted in different immunity levels than seen in the western part of the continent. Again, I'm not able to prove it or disprove it. I'm just putting it out there. You can easily see where the east-west border was located.

Then there are still two short remarks. About identifying who is them and who is us according to what criteria and so on; it is there in the paper, in the form of the concept of borders in motion. The concepts of liminality, permeability and durability of borders together with the general questions to which they give rise, who actually in Europe is negotiating borders, deciding borders? Where the borders are to be located, what is to be the border region and so on. I would still believe that it is nation states, after at least two, three decades of making borders more fuzzy that has decided to retake control and retake responsibility, but I would also insist on this occurring in competition with other actors, of multilevel governance being present there.

The question is especially with regard to the concept of liminality. If we do have a third space, you would have a space in between states, understood either literally or more figuratively. Remember, for example, the case of the cross-border commuters I noted at the Polish-German border, and then recognize that there are about 2 million of such people generally in Europe, so maybe they do form a sort

of third space. They are the ones who cannot afford to agree with re-bordering because it undermines the very basis of their everyday material existence.

If this is the case, this has another interesting set of consequences for the logic of European integration processes. What the European spirit is about is normative dimensions. It's about looking for similarities, looking for common identities, but at the end of the day there are groups, as again the Polish-German case proves, which do not feel a togetherness with people living on their side of the border because they have economic interests on the other side of the border. So those working across borders were protesting, were against re-bordering, not because of identity but because of money. This means that maybe we need to revise the whole logic of international integration where interests and a whole neo-functional logics are the key driving forces, despite the fact that many politicians and most scholars have been asserting for decades that it's about something more. I think that has been a long answer, thank you.

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Okay, thank you very much. We have 10 minutes more, so if anyone from the floor has any questions or comments?

Kazuto Suzuki:

Can I make a comment on what Prof. Janczak said?

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Sure.

Kazuto Suzuki:

Thank you very much for your comment and I think it was very useful, very fruitful. The points that you made about the cross-border workers, I think this is an interesting case, and that on the one hand people are working and living where they are for economic reasons. You are living in Poland and commuting to Germany because you are Polish and you have the attachment to the Poland. But, also you want to gain money by working in Germany. The European Union, or European integration, has been driven by not just identity, and not just neo-functionalist causes, but also a number of other factors, including prosperity or the creation the job opportunities. The whole idea of the single market is all about finding a new place to work. It happens to be cross-border, but at the end of the day, it is the objective of the single market. I think that is not surprising. I think the fact that as a result of their movement the Polish workers were exempted from the 14-day quarantine was very interesting.

I think one of the questions or thoughts coming to my mind is: "What would be the future of the European Union after this pandemic?" In some cases, you reestablish the concept of a trans-border single market logic, and people are going back to normal but in some cases, like Sweden, are very

interesting. For instance, Sweden opens its border but the countries around it close theirs. Even after the European Union allows free movement across its internal borders, Sweden remains an exception due to the surge of cases. What is interesting is that Denmark allows their people to go to Sweden and come back without any quarantine but those people who are living in Sweden are required to have a two-week quarantine if they enter in Denmark, so that's the double standard.

If these sorts of measures sporadically remain, differing from one place to another, and if there is no unified or uniform measures being introduced, how will this affect the future of European integration? It is hard to see because, on the one hand, the driving force of the single market and European integration is still there, despite the current anti-EU sentiments including BREXIT; still, there are reasons for reestablishing a single market, and there are reasons why people would want to go back to the single market. So, I think the European Union per se is not going to be dismantled because of this. But there are some spots, like Sweden, that can be identified as weakest links in the European Union as a whole. This is a sort of unevenness. In the past, there was unevenness, as well. For example, Denmark is not a member of the Euro, and Britain is now out of the EU but then was out of Schengen. This kind of unevenness existed, but it was largely due to the voluntary decisions of states. But I think in the case of Sweden, it is a consequence of the treatment of Sweden by other countries. So, it's a sort of reestablishment of de facto borders even though Sweden is voluntarily opening its border. I think this may be an interesting subject to discuss in the future. I will just raise it here.

Fuminori Kawakubo:

Okay, please make it short Prof. Janczak, time is running out. Just a short reply.

Jarosław Janczak:

Thank you very much for those remarks. Then I will just answer with three key arguments responding to those remarks. First of all, one of the concepts is, what is the internal dynamism of the European project. One idea says that the EU has been always developing because of various challenges and crisis. So, those who study the European Union, especially those closer to neo-functional logics, tend to think about development using the spillover model; the longer we integrate, the more integrated we are. It's a linear approach. But then if we take a look at the comments made by the neo-neo-functionalists, no it's not aligned; it's always a wave that is on average somehow a kind of line that is adding more and more to the integration project. Development problems regress, then progress again, and so on and so on.

The current situation including, for example, the case of Sweden, can be considered from this perspective. Maybe it is just another crisis, another spillback in the neo neo-functional logics. Sooner or later, as always happens, it will result in further acceleration. So from the perspective of this logic, borders will have to be reopened. There is no other solution, and maybe even we will then develop better solutions, more efficient mechanisms, on how to avoid similar problems in the future.

Second, I would say that we appreciate what we have before it turns into what we had. If we think about the very origins of the European project, it's actually about overcoming a conflictive past. It's that the tragedy of the Second World War must never again be repeated in Europe. This is what Europeans believed several decades ago. But now we have a third generation living in this Europe. A generation for whom conflict, war, victims and so on, is black magic, they have never experienced it. It is something that is observable on TV, but TV, on the other hand, provides you with pictures that well, maybe they are false, maybe they are true, what is the difference between news and soap opera and so on? Well, it is not the real, but then the pandemic or BREXIT happens. By the way, today, after finally realizing what BREXIT means for most of the Brits, the support level for leaving the Union is only 30 something percent. My argument is simply that sometimes, when living in comfortable conditions where the reality that surrounds you and you take advantage of, which you consider as something natural, when this world is somehow destroyed then you start appreciating what you had.

Then finally some of your remarks were touching on, I would say, another interesting problem, about the concept of flexible integration. This is a problem to every integration project, and which the European Union has been specifically discussing for a number of years. To have been a successful project, do we need everyone to follow the same rules, or can we achieve our aim with different solutions, styles, make different provisions and so on. Actually, again the European Union has always been a kind of compromise between the two. Formally, every new member state had to follow the act of complying—there is no other option. On the other hand, Britain has never been in the Schengen Zone, and you mentioned Denmark with it several provisions. So, this discussion is definitely an open one. There are states that opt for more integration as the answer to the pandemic crisis, especially Germany but recently also France. They think that only when they stay together, the borders are open and they collaborate closely— they can succeed. They can overcome difficulties. However, the question is how trustworthy these ideas are after the beginning of the pandemic and the early "selfish" policy of Germany? Later of course, Germany was accepting patients, in fact, patients from both Italy and France were in its hospitals, on German territory, just to demonstrate that it was just a temporary issue of mutual trust. But other states might say, no, maybe we need less integration, we need more exceptions, which might lead to more non-temporary limitations in specific integration areas.

About the Contributors

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