

Conflicts and Borders: Between Imagination and Reality

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the preconceived notion of a causal link between the presence of borders and conflicts. To investigate whether there is such a link, this paper proposes a twofold reflection articulated around: (1) a quantitative analysis of the causes of conflict since 1945, based on COW and COSIMO databases. This attempts to weight the importance of the border as primary and secondary factors in conflicts compared to other causes (e.g. natural resources, recognition denial, geopolitical interests). (2) a mixed method approach to critical discourse analysis, facilitated by QDA Miner software. This will investigate, identify and retrieve the ideas, emotions and narratives of “liberal” or “conservative” decision-makers in the US, Canada, Russia, Turkey, France and Germany when it comes to describing the need, or not, for a border. A comparative view of how the two sides understand the concept of borders is also given.

Keywords: border; quantitative analysis; qualitative analysis; conflict; foreign policy.

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Introduction

The term "border" seems to crystallise political positions as well as emotions, both positive or negative. For some, a border is to be fought over, or abolished as far as possible (Wihtol de Wenden 2017). For others, a border gives a feeling of peace and security and should be maintained (or re-established) at all costs.

This article will try and arbitrate between these two positions – border as a source of harm/a source of benefit – through a twofold perspective. First, an analysis of the link between a border and war. Second, an analysis of how a border is thought of politically.

Why borders? Do we need borders? What are they for? Are they unbridgeable? This article aims to study borders in both global and specific terms; notably by adopting an eclectic approach that combines a quantitative analysis of the impact of borders in conflicts since 1945 and a mixed-method approach to critical discourse analysis of public speeches by actual decision-makers. Without a systematic demonstration, the supposed border/conflict

causality can only be a hypothesis, a possibility: basically, a matter of making the invisible visible. An overview of the potential impact of the border at these two levels is therefore provided below.

The study of borders to date

The zeitgeist, in the liberal and progressive register, until recently called into question the notion of borders. Or, at the very least, it certified their obsolescence and all the parameters of power as a denial of the red thread of geopolitics, and certain attributes that accompany it such as sovereignty, state, territory (Le Moullec 2004). Bertrand Badie invoked 'a new world order situated beyond sovereignty and the nation-state' and considered that 'state organisation [was] henceforth placed at the service of the global human community' (Badie 1998, p.20; see also Badie 1995).

These developments were presented as irreversible: the end of national community, of sovereignty, and therefore of the strategic importance of the territorial element in favour of integration into the world-system, networks, multinationals, criminal transnationalities, and international organisations. The "multi-affiliation" of individuals, linked to the pre-eminence of technology, was to complete the uprooting of men formerly united in the "political friendship" of the fatherland, the nation. Underneath this avalanche of evidence, the future of the frontier was nothing short of uncertain, the new paradigm embodied in the 'global village' and 'identity volatility' of the individual (Smouts 1998).

The thesis of state erosion gives priority to the economic over the political, to civil society over leaders and to transnational over interstate (Cohen 2003). Through the standardisation and uniformisation of political systems, as proposed by Francis Fukuyama (1992), the marker par excellence of difference and suspicion no longer made sense and therefore had to disappear: it was desirable to see a border marginalised as a reality, as an object of study, and with it the realist theses built around a vision of international relations that was, to say the least, pessimistic. In this sense, European construction seemed to show the way, with the signing of the Schengen Agreement in 1992 (Barjot and Réveillard 2002). The construction of Europe materialised and made visible a process that began in 1947 and was highlighted by Patrick Thaddeus Jackson: the creation of the West. Germany, an irreconcilable and defeated, ceased to be the enemy and became the ally, the partner (Jackson 2009). This construction and the expansion of NATO in Europe extended the logic to former members of the Western bloc in the East.

These positions have been widely echoed in works on the border. For example, in the classic work of Philippe Moreau Defarges (1993) which attempts to define the contours of globalisation and sees it as an attempt to put an end to national and international political fragmentation, and in the relatively recent work of Catherine Wihtol de Wenden (2017) that concludes, "closure increases the world's fracture lines and generates frustration, which is a

source of insecurity and violence" (Wihtol de Wenden 2017, p.177).

Such optimism was short-lived, however, as signaled by Samuel Huntington (1996). The model of liberal democracy was held in check in Asia and the Middle East. More recently, this model was also being challenged on its own soil, reviving the research agenda of the English School of International Relations: "the revolt against the West" is here. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson explain that this revolt has several stages, the last of which has been against the West's claim to be able to decide how people should live (Bull and Watson 1985). This reintroduces the notion of distinction, of difference, and thus the frontier, in its simplest ontological expression is a distinction between "them and us".

Whether we like it or not, the border is back at the centre of debate, giving legitimacy to the observation made by Michel Foucher in 1986 that, while the current mood is one of "borderlessness", questions relating to borders continue to arise in many states, especially those of the Third World; the geopolitical situation is far from being stabilised and territorial changes are taking place without debate (Foucher 1986). Ironically, at a time when Westerners despise borders at home, they are constantly invoking their necessity elsewhere. The lack of border control has thus become one of the main criteria for identifying "failed states" that can only be saved by so-called humanitarian interventions by the West (Woodward 2017). It is curious that a border is blamed for all the ills in the West but is considered a miraculous solution elsewhere.

Foucher's publications on borders embody the advantage of realism over the crazy years of neo-idealistic happy globalisation (Foucher 1988, 2007, 2012, 2020). For the French school of geopolitics, a reaffirmation of the centrality of borders in the problems of geographical discipline rehabilitates the relevance of its methodology, based on the study of environments, actors, representations and practices. This is why more analytical geopolitical works, built on the realities of the field, have also occupied a place in the broadest horizon of scientific publishing (Baudet 2015; Meier 2020; Dumont 2019, 2020).

But the border is also invested outside its traditional disciplinary fields of geography, history and geopolitics. Numerous issues, whether political (e.g. migration, integration); security-related (e.g. control of trafficking, anti-terrorism); geopolitical (e.g. the struggle for influence between great powers) or linguistic (e.g. arguments over the place of the French language in Quebec), have brought the question of the border back to the fore and given it new relevance.

In addition to geographical analyses of the border (Ancel 1938; Guichonnet and Raffestin 1974), there have been other types of analysis: (i) societal (Holt 1994; Turner 1995; Anderson 1995; Wihtol de Wenden 2017; Fassin 2020); (ii) the construction of Europe (Mattéi and Delsol 2010); (iii) geopolitical (Anderson 1995; Kaplan 2012; Marshall 2015); (iv) cultural and political (Baliba 1992; Bonnemaïson, Camberge and Bourgeois 1996); (v) visual, i.e. the artificial physical borders created by men, namely the "walls" (Novosseloff and Neisse 2015).

Mixed approach: coding dictionary and QDA miner

To examine the impact of border, the methodology used here is twofold. The border/conflict causality will be looked at through a quantitative analysis. The part dealing with conceptions, such as mental and discursive representations of a border, will be analysed using what is called a mixed approach to discourse analysis (Saurette and Gordon 2015). The joint use of these two methodologies within the same approach makes it possible to compensate for the weaknesses of each and to observe the border-conflict link from all angles.

Quantitative analysis makes it possible to answer questions such as "how many?" and "how often?" a word, idea or theme is present. Qualitative analysis makes it possible to highlight and reveal the motives, feelings and perceptions present in the discourse. It allows the researcher to identify complex rhetorical constructions and check whether the language used is consistent with the nature of the source, and, if not, what it means (Titscher, Meyer, Wodak and Vetter 2000; Klotz and Prakash 2008; Fairclough 2010). Combining the two approaches, it is possible to analyse if, how and how often an idea is present.

My mixed-method approach is rooted in the use of a coding dictionary, a list of ideas and hypotheses (codes) organised into categories and sub-categories to be tested and measured (Halperin and Heath 2017). The development of a coding dictionary is not only about creating codes but also about identifying the factors to look for whenever a code is applied. To ensure reliability of coding and to update when necessary, each case was checked three times. The coding dictionary used in this instance is drawn from the literature of international relations theory that focuses on identifying the causes of conflict (Geller and Singer 1998; Diehl 2005; Battistella 2006; Cashman and Robinson 2007; Levy and Thompson 2010; Lindemann 2010a, 2010b; Ramel and Holeindre 2010).

The first part of this article focuses on assessing the potential for a causal link between a border and conflict, and to this end a purely quantitative analysis methodology was employed. The number of cases treated is rather large. Indeed, a first tranche of 170 conflicts since 1945 was selected according to several criteria, of which the two most important were:

1. geographical area (continent)
2. chronological period

It should be noted, since the objective of this article is to study the importance of border in conflicts, that criteria such as the number of deaths or the international importance of parties involved in the conflict are not essential. Each conflict was counted as "1" by definition and then selected randomly as long as it met the selection criteria.¹ The selection

¹ For a detailed discussion of random selection, see George and Bennett (2005).

of conflicts was based on two reference databases: COW (Correlates of War) and COSIMO (Conflict Simulation Model) presented by Larisa Deriglazova (2014).

Quantitative analysis of the border/conflict causality did not stop here as a great deal of research was required. Each case selected was the subject of precise historical research in order to establish its "identity card" in a very precise manner (e.g. number of deaths, trigger factors, roles of the border, who triggered the conflict, who joined the conflict, target actor of the conflict). All information gathered for each case was then entered into the QDA Miner analysis software; each was coded in accordance with the coding dictionary and to analyse the results. It should be noted that the application of a code to an element does not exclude the application of one or more other codes.

The second aspect of this article deals with the mental and political representations of the border maintained by liberal and conservative decision-makers. The methodology used is a mixed approach to critical discourse analysis. This starts from the shared assumption in political science that not only what we say matters, but how and in what context we say it (Tully 1988). Often the methodology is quantitative content analysis (data mining) which involves the automated counting of specific words in a given document. Such an approach is therefore unable to identify complex and implicit constructions, metaphors and speaking strategies. The mixture of qualitative discourse and quantitative analysis can identify an argument as well as its relative importance and its relationship (or lack of) with others.

As this second section focuses on how the border is represented in political discourse, to which narrative systems it is attached and which emotions it arouses, the data comes from the official speeches of political leaders. Here, the coding dictionary was built around academic work dealing with: (i) the personalities and identities of decision makers (Weber 1995, 1999; Saurette 2006; Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston and McDermott 2009; Dyson 2009; Horowitz, Stam and Ellis 2016), and (ii) emotions and narrative systems (Lakoff 2002, 2008; Ahmed 2014; Saurette and Gordon 2015). Because this aspect of research is still in its early stages, for the moment only the explicitly border-related speeches of Donald Trump²,

² President Trump: 9 January 2019, Oval Office address on the border wall; 19 January 2019, address on immigration proposal ending shutdown; 5 February 2019, State of the Union Address; 11 February 2019, speech declaring a national emergency; 30 May 2019, Statement regarding emergency measures to address border crisis.

Vladimir Putin³, Recep Erdogan⁴, Emmanuel Macron⁵, Angela Merkel⁶ and Justin Trudeau⁷ have been coded. The sample of selected speeches is thirty in total, selected on two criteria: (1) they have a direct link to a border (subject/theme), and (2) they date from at 2016, not only because Trump and Macron came to power a year later, but also to facilitate comparisons by having a certain homogeneity in political context.

Results obtained and presented below are expressed in terms of frequency, i.e. the number of cases (conflict for the first part of this study; document for the second) in which the code is found. In addition to the frequency calculation, I have used other more specific features. To facilitate identification of the relationships between codes (those that always appear together, those that never do, those that appear independently), two algorithms in particular were used: (1) Jaccard's coefficient, and (2) the Cosine Theta⁸.

To facilitate the visualisation and understanding of results, the two algorithms are presented in the form of 3D maps (figure 1 to 4), graphical representations of the proximity values calculated on all codes by means of a multidimensional positioning analysis (MPA). When grouping codes, each point represents a code and the distances between pairs of points indicate the probability that these codes appear together (possibly resulting in overlaps cases of very high proximity). In other words, codes that are close to each other in the graph usually tend to appear together, while those that are independent of each other or do not appear together are located far apart in the diagram. Co-occurrence links are represented by lines: the thicker the line, the stronger the relationship between the codes.

³ President Putin: 18 December 2018, speech at meeting of Defense Military Board; 12 August 2018, speech at Fifth Caspian Summit, Aktau, Kazakhstan; 2018 speech at meeting of Security Council; 1 March 2018, address to Federal Assembly, Moscow; 20 February 2019, address to Federal Assembly, Moscow.

⁴ President Erdogan: 24 October 2018, message on 73rd anniversary of establishment of UN, New York; 9 May 2019, Europa day message; 30 August 2019, message on Victory Day; 20 July 2019, message on Peace and Freedom Day; 20 June 2019, message on World Refugee Day.

⁵ President Macron: 1 October 2019, speech at the Council of Europe; 1 October 2019, speech at Strasbourg Opera, 70th anniversary of the Council of Europe ceremony; 4 February 2017, election campaign speech, Lyon; 26 September 2017, speech "for a sovereign, united, democratic Europe", Sorbonne University; 27 August 2019, speech at Ambassadors Conference.

⁶ Chancellor Merkel: 5 February 2019, beim Deutsch-Japanischen Wirtschaftsdialogforum, Tokyo; 19 August 2019, zum 30. Jahrestag des Paneuropäischen Picknicks, Sopron, Hungary; 27 September 2019, beim Festakt der CDU-Fraktion im Thüringer Landtag zum Tag der deutschen Einheit, Erfurt; 3 October 2019, anlässlich des Festakts zum Tag der Deutschen Einheit, Kiel; 7 October 2019, beim Besuch der Herrenknacht AG, Schwanau

⁷ Prime Minister Trudeau: 29 June 2016, speech on "Border facilitation", Ottawa; 28 August 2018, speech on "Minister of border security and organized crime reduction mandate letter"; 22 October 2019, post-election speech; 31 October 2018, remarks on steel and aluminum tariff imposed by the United States, Ottawa; 7 July 2017, address to US governors, 109th Summer meeting in Providence, Rhode Island.

⁸ Cosine Theta works in the same way as Jaccard's coefficient, with one detail that makes it more suitable for speech analysis. Cosine Theta coefficients the presence of a code in each case (speech) according to the number of times it appears; Jaccard's coefficient gives the same weight to the presence and absence of the code. By allowing a more precise identification of codes it therefore provides a better visualisation of the semantic, rhetorical and narrative structure of the discourse.

The Place of Borders in Conflicts

This first part of the study attempts to measure the presence and impact of a number of variables in conflicts since 1945. The main codes used are: (i) the presence of the border as a primary or secondary cause; (ii) the intervention or names of actors; (iii) the types of actor initiating the conflicts most often, and (iv) the actors most often targeted. Any results expressed must be taken as a trend, as only 170 of the 300 conflicts were coded. The algorithm used to calculate the link between the codes is the Jaccard coefficient (based on an absence/presence calculation of the code in each case).

Border as a cause of conflict – a global view

Does a border have an impact on conflicts? It appears that it does in that the border factor appears in 76.2% of coded cases. Identifying this is a start, but a second question arises from it: *What exactly is the role of the border in conflicts?* In response, the 76.2% of cases were analysed in more detail. Whenever the cause of the conflict was directly related to the border (e.g. change of route, territory claimed) the code “trigger” was applied. By contrast, when the border was not the direct cause, but rather a secondary one (e.g. the conflict ends with a border rectification), the code “secondary factor” was applied.

Among the 76.2% of conflicts in which the border plays a role, it is the trigger factor in 58.1% of cases and the secondary factor in 50%. Not only is the border fought over, but most conflicts result in a change of border.

A third question that needs to be answered for a clearer picture of the situation to emerge is: *With what other causes is the border associated?* In decreasing order of importance: (i) a symbolic factor: denial of recognition (Lindemann 2010a, 2010b; Ringmar and Lindemann 2014), independence, decolonization, genocide, etc. (59.7% of cases); (ii) a geopolitical factor: desire to gain/recover a buffer zone, a bridgehead, a crossing point, etc. (58.7% of cases), and (iii) an economic factor (surprisingly only 21% of cases).

Why is it important to quantify this? After all, one can always object that these facts are already known. But measuring the presence/absence of conflict-related factors, even if the results are more or less known intuitively, remains an important task. It is only by quantifying that one realises the importance of a phenomenon. This is not to say, however, that qualitative conflict analyses are not important. They are, for understanding the specific causes and mechanisms that lead to conflict. Quantification gives a second wind to qualitative analyses by providing a global view of a phenomenon.

Let us continue our analysis of border-related conflicts by looking at the participants.

Who initiates conflict? Who ends up being targeted? Who joins the conflict?

In general, of all the possibilities coded, the three actors initiating the most border-related conflicts were: (1) non-state actors (38.7%); (2) medium and/or regional powers (35%), and (3) weak powers (29%)⁹. The preferred targets were weak powers (12.9%), non-state actors (11.3%), and medium and/or regional powers (8.1%). In 71% of cases, a third actor joined the conflict: a major power (35% of cases), a non-state actor (37.1% of cases), a medium-sized and/or regional power (30.6% of cases).

Based on this trend, the great powers are no longer so bellicose, thus confirming the view put forward by John Mueller (1989) and more recently by Frédéric Ramel and Jean-Vincent Holeindre (2010). Surprisingly, this configuration (war initiated by great powers) continues to be the focus of academic research in international relations theory, even though there are now more studies that focus on other actors.

Although conflicts appear to be settled overwhelmingly by the use of armed force (90.3% of cases), the use of what international humanitarian law calls “alternative means of conflict resolution” (e.g. mediation, investigation, conciliation) occurs in 45.2% of cases. This is not surprising. Indeed, the best way to keep, appropriate or recover territory, resources or revenge appears to remain the military option. Despite this, the use of alternative means of conflict resolution in 45.2% of cases puts into perspective the common opinion that these methods of conflict resolution are ineffective or even completely useless.

Having tried to identify what a typical global profile of a conflict including the border would look like, I will now look at whether this typical profile is dependent on different geopolitical eras. Here, the focus will be on the current situation in Africa and in the Middle East.

Two specific conflict profiles: (1) Africa and (2) Middle East

Africa

What does the typical profile of a border-related conflict in Africa look like? The statistical analysis conducted shows that the African profile differs significantly from the global one on a number of points.

(i) Contrary to appearances, and despite what some anti-colonialists may think, the border appears to be more of a secondary factor in conflicts in Africa (54.4% of cases) than a trigger one (45.6% of cases). This reinforces the position taken by Foucher, who demonstrates

⁹ Care must be taken not to shortcut the initiation of armed conflict with the desire for war. The former may well be a reaction to an external stimulus, perceived as sufficiently provocative, humiliating or threatening to justify going to war. History is full of examples: Thucydides notes that it was fear of the rise of Athens that prompted Sparta to initiate hostilities; the Ems dispatch had the same effect on Napoleon III (Downes 2009).

the futile instrumentalisation of the question of African borders for political ends, in particular the feeding of a persistent and misguided anti-colonialist discourse (Foucher 2014). He recalls that in 2002, the African Union (AU) reiterated its commitment to the founding principle of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which in 1964 concerned respect for the borders bequeathed to African states at the time of their independence¹⁰.

(ii) The driving causes of African conflicts are to be found elsewhere: symbolic factors (63.6% of cases) and geopolitical factors (45.5% of cases). In this regard, the divergence from the global profile is not a divergence in terms of content, but rather in terms of ratio and frequency. However, where we observe a real divergence with the global profile, and a reinforcement of Foucher's position, is in the means used to resolve conflict. Thus, it seems that conflicts in Africa are resolved more by negotiation (63.6% of cases) than the world average, even if the use of force remains dominant (81.8% of cases).

The Middle East

The actors initiating most of the conflicts in the Middle East are the middle and/or regional powers (72.7% of cases). The border appears to be the main factor in 81.8% of cases and much less so as a secondary factor (27.3% of cases). Symbolic and geopolitical factors still dominate (both 81.8%). Based on the sample selected, all the conflicts have at some point seen the use of armed force; only 18.2% of them have seen the use of an alternative means of conflict resolution. While third-party actors joining the conflict remain the middle and/or regional powers (54.5%), great powers appear in 36.4% of cases (on a par with non-state actors). It would seem that we are dealing with conflicts that start very quickly and suddenly (54.5% of cases) rather than conflicts that are the result of a long and slow deterioration (45.5% of cases). The two figures below clearly show the differences between African and Middle Eastern conflicts.

¹⁰ Paragraph 3, Art. III of the 1963 OAU Charter on "respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State" and the 1964 resolution on border disputes between African States.

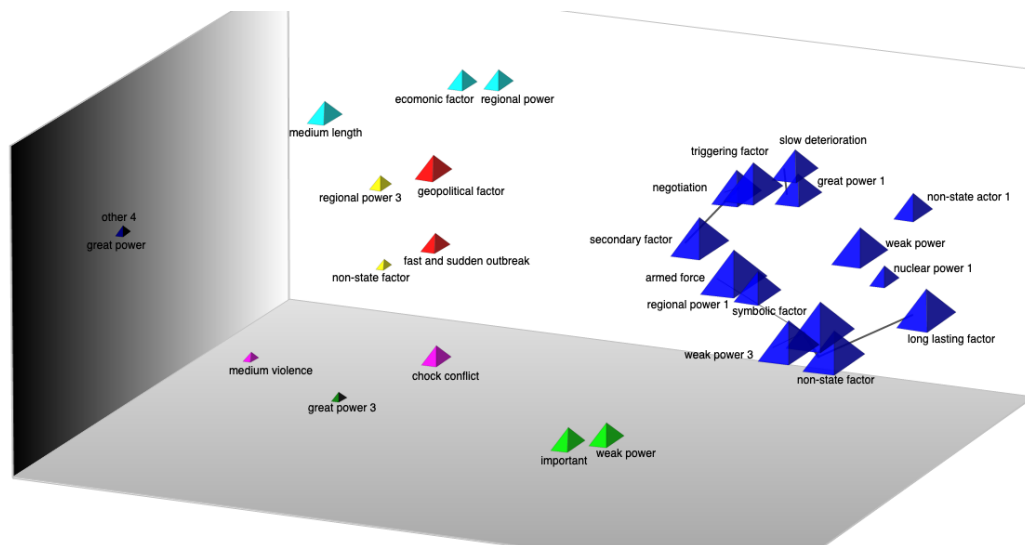


Figure 1. Multidimensional 3D scale – drivers of conflict in Africa

LEGEND: Codes are grouped in clusters (each identified by a different colour) according to their frequency of co-occurrence. The larger the triangle, the higher the frequency of occurrence of the code. The nesting of codes is therefore explained by a very high frequency of co-occurrence. The further apart the codes are (up/down; left/right), the less likely they are to interact. The probability of two factors appearing always together is indicated by a line. The thicker the line, the higher the probability.

- *Economic factor:* used when the main cause of a conflict was economic or access to a natural or energy resource.
- *Regional or middle power:* code used when a state classified as a middle or regional power initiated a conflict.
- *Average:* average duration of conflict.
- *Geopolitical factor:* code used when a conflict had a geopolitical or strategic factor as its main cause.
- *Medium or regional power 3:* code used when a state classified as a medium or regional power was the target of a conflict.
- *Rapid and sudden onset:* if the conflict started quickly with no real pre-crisis.
- *Non-state actor 3:* used when a non-state actor was the target of the conflict.
- *Other 4:* used when an actor targeted in the conflict does not fit the classification of major power/medium or regional power/weak power/non-state actor.
- *Great power:* code used when a state classified as a great power initiated the conflict.
- *Medium 1:* used when the violence of the conflict is considered medium.
- *Low:* used when the conflict is of low duration.
- *High power 3:* used when a state classified as a high power was the target of the conflict.
- *Low power 1:* used when a state classified as low power has intervened in a conflict.
- *Significant:* used when the violence of the conflict is significant in terms of human (civilian and/or military) and/or material losses.
- *Slow deterioration:* used when the conflict has originated in a succession of crises or a significant pre-crisis phase.
- *Trigger factor:* role of the border in the conflict.
- *Great power 1:* code used when a state classified as a great power has intervened in a conflict.
- *Negotiation:* means of conflict resolution.
- *Secondary factor:* role of the border in the conflict.
- *Armed force:* code used when the conflict was resolved by the use of armed force or other coercive means.
- *Regional or middle power 1:* used when a state classified as a regional or middle power has intervened in a conflict.

- *Symbolic factor: used when the main cause of the conflict was a symbolic factor (recognition of minorities, humiliation, etc.).*
- *Low power 3: code used when a state classified as a low power was the target of the conflict.*
- *Non-state actor: code used when a non-state actor initiated a conflict.*
- *Non-state actor 1: code used when a non-state actor has joined a conflict.*
- *Low power: used when a state classified as a low power has initiated a conflict.*
- *Nuclear power 1: code used when a state with nuclear weapons has intervened in a conflict.*
- *Long: duration of the conflict.*

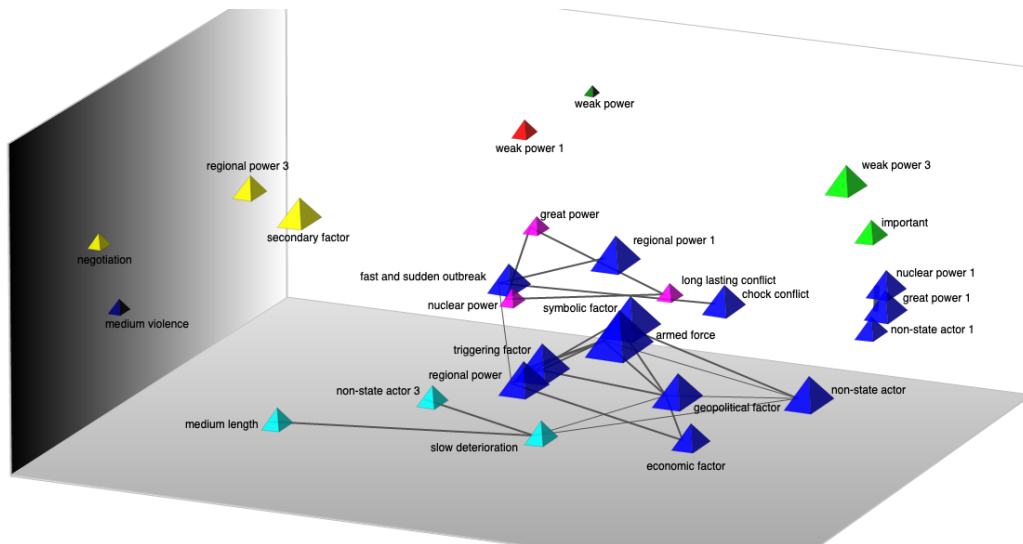


Figure 2. Multidimensional 3D scale – drivers of conflict in the Middle East

LEGEND: Codes are grouped in clusters (each identified by a different colour) according to their frequency of co-occurrence. The larger the triangle, the higher the frequency of occurrence of the code. The nesting of codes is therefore explained by a very high frequency of co-occurrence. The further apart the codes are (up/down; left/right), the less likely they are to interact. The probability of two factors appearing always together is indicated by a line. The thicker the line, the higher the probability.

- *Low power: code used when a state classified as low power has initiated a conflict.*
- *Low power1: code used when a state classified as low power has intervened in a conflict.*
- *Medium or regional power 3: code used when a state classified as a medium or regional power has been the target of a conflict.*
- *Secondary factor: the role of the border in the conflict.*
- *Negotiation: means of conflict resolution.*
- *Medium 1: level of violence of the conflict in terms of human (civilian and/or military) and/or material losses.*
- *Low power 3: code used when a state classified as a low power was the target of the conflict.*
- *Major power: code used when a state classified as a major power initiated the conflict.*
- *Regional or medium power 1: used when a state classified as a regional or medium power has intervened in a conflict.*
- *Rapid and sudden onset: if the conflict started quickly with no real pre-crisis.*
- *Nuclear power: Code used when a state with nuclear weapons has initiated a conflict.*
- *Long: duration of the conflict.*
- *Low: degree of violence of the conflict in terms of human (civilian and/or military) and/or material losses*
- *Symbolic factor: code used when the conflict had a symbolic factor as its main cause (recognition of minorities, humiliation, etc.).*
- *Armed force: code used when the conflict was settled by the use of armed force or other coercive means.*
- *Triggering factor: role of the border in the conflict.*
- *Medium or regional power: code used when a state classified as a medium or regional power has initiated a conflict.*

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- *Non-state actor 3: code used when a non-state actor was the target of the conflict.*
 - *Medium: medium duration of the conflict.*
 - *Slow deterioration: used when the conflict originated in a succession of crises or a significant pre-crisis phase.*
 - *Geopolitical factor: used when a conflict had a geopolitical factor as its main cause.*

As these two visual representation of conflicts show, conflicts in the Middle East are much more complex than those in Africa as so many variables come into play at any given time, making their resolution much more delicate. Before turning to the second part of this article (the place of the border in political discourse and rhetoric), what purpose could this quantitative conflict analysis serve? Remember that this allows for the identification of trends and the highlighting of key factors. It thus becomes possible to identify clearly the key factors and then to analyse them specifically in each case to see the concrete mechanisms. Quantitative analysis enables research efforts to be focused on the most important factors.

The Border in Political Speeches

The coding dictionary used for this part of the analysis was partly inspired by the personalities of the leaders whose speeches were selected (e.g. the importance of strength and virility to Putin (Hill and Gaddy 2012; Goscilo 2013; Foxall 2013; Sperling 2016), and to a lesser extent in US politics (Weber 1995, 1999; Ducat 2005). Other codes were drawn from the literature, notably the work of Lakoff (2002, 2006) and Stephen Benedict Dyson (2009). Lakoff, a specialist in cognitive science, explains that two major systems of metaphor structure political thought: the “strict father” model and the “nurturing parent” model. The former is more evident within the Republican party and is centred around the following themes: the figure of authority, discipline, and the punishment of behaviour deemed legally and morally deviant. Conversely, the 'nurturing parent' is more evident within the Democratic Party and is centred around the ideas of compensation and support. From this, and especially as Lakoff explains that his model can be generalised with other theoretical contexts, one can observe a clear difference between the speeches of Trump, Erdogan and Putin on the one hand and those of Macron, Trudeau and Merkel on the other.

Dyson (2009), on the other hand, focuses on the complexity of the thinking of decision-makers. A particularly interesting comparison criterion with regard to the sample selected here is the type of reasoning Dyson distinguishes between simplistic and complex. The former (which does not mean that the decision-maker is unintelligent) implies that the decision-maker perceives the world as a 'black and white' dichotomy, believing that there is a miraculous solution to every problem, who will tend to make decisions based on personal intuition and knowledge. A decision-maker with more complex thought processes will perceive situations according to a pattern that is closer to a shade of grey, will use more technical vocabulary, and will tend to base their decisions on in-depth and expert studies.

The results presented below are based on a division of the selected sample into two groups: (1) liberals and (2) conservative-realists¹¹.

The liberal view of the border

The table below represents the concept of the border that liberals have as revealed by the quantitative analysis of the combined speeches of Merkel, Macron and Trudeau.

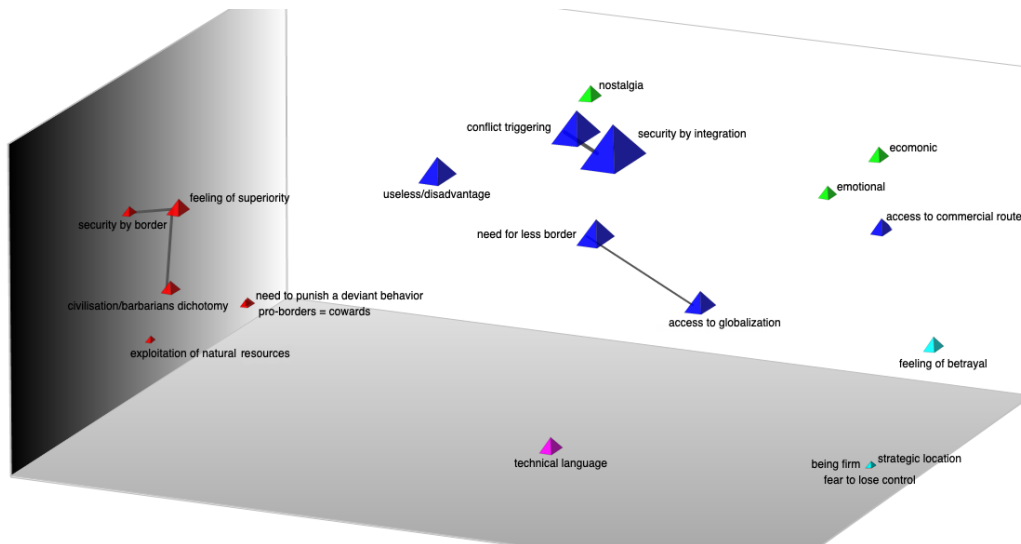


Figure 3. Multidimensional 3D scale – the liberal view of the border

LEGEND: Codes are grouped in clusters (each identified by a different colour) according to their frequency of co-occurrence. The nesting of codes is therefore explained by a very high frequency of co-occurrence. The further apart the codes are (up/down; left/right), the less likely they are to interact. The larger the triangle, the higher the frequency of occurrence of the code. The probability of two codes always appearing together is indicated by a line. The thicker the line, the higher the probability.

- *Nostalgia: code applied to any reference to an idealised, bygone past.*
- *Conflict creation: code applied when the border was explicitly identified as a cause of conflict.*
- *Security through integration: used when security could only be achieved through further integration between states (and thus lower barriers between them).*
- *Unnecessary/disadvantageous: code used when the border was either described as unnecessary or as a disadvantage.*
- *Need fewer borders = positive: code used to measure the idea that fewer borders are needed.*
- *Access to globalisation: code used to measure the idea that access to globalisation is facilitated by the absence of borders.*
- *Sense of superiority: code used when a word or phrase expressed a sense of superiority (related to the policy maker or the state).*
- *Security through the border: code used when the border is associated with the idea of security.*
- *Civilisation/barbarian dichotomy: code applied to any semantic construct indicating a pejorative and devaluing separation of them/us.*

¹¹ The terms "realist" and "liberal" are to be understood in the sense attributed by international relations theory (Brown and Ainley 2005; Burchill, Linklater, Devetak, Donnelly, Nardin, Paterson, Reus-Smit and True 2009; Battistella, Cornut and Baranets 2019).

- *Need to punish deviant behavior: code used to measure the idea that anyone who thinks or behaves in a deviant way (relative to the position of the speaker) should be punished.*
- *Pro-border = cowardly: code used to measure the idea that border advocates are afraid of the “outside” world and favour withdrawal.*
- *Exploitation of natural resources: used when the text referred to the exploitation of natural resources.*
- *Technical language: used when the vocabulary used to talk about the border was technical.*
- *Economic: used when the vocabulary used to talk about the border was economic.*
- *Emotional: used when the rhetoric used to talk about the border is emotional.*
- *Access to trade routes: used when access to trade routes is mentioned in the text.*
- *Sense of betrayal: used when the idea of having been betrayed is present in the discourse.*
- *Strategic location: code used when a place of strategic importance is mentioned.*
- *Fear of losing control: code used to measure the idea of losing control of a situation.*
- *Firmness: code used to measure the link made between the presence of the border and the idea of being intransigent.*

What is the liberal vision that emerges from these discourses? The starting point is that we would normally see fierce opposition from liberals to the border and several codes were created to check this. “Conflict creation” was used whenever there was a direct association between the word or idea of border and that of present/past tensions/conflicts (66.7% of cases). The border is explicitly characterised as disadvantageous at the practical level (for economic development and inter-state cooperation in particular) in 46.7% of cases, reinforced by the wish that there should be fewer borders (53.3% of cases).

The question arises as to why? From a theoretical point of view, the liberals, following in the footsteps of Charles-Louis Montesquieu (1748), Immanuel Kant (1795) and Fukuyama (1992), explain that international relations can be pacified and stabilised by free trade, because – as it creates interdependence – it would no longer be in the interest of states to wage war against each other (Rosecrance 1986), by the development of democracy (Doyle 1983; Russett 1993) and by the development of law and international institutions (Donnelly 2003).

Are these theoretical arguments found in the speeches? Yes, they are. The border appears in narrative linked to an economic idea (40% of cases); access to trade routes (26.8% of cases); easier exploitation of natural resources (6.7% of cases), and absence of border enabling better integration into globalisation (33.3% of cases).

Is the idea of democracy found? Once again, yes, even if only indirectly expressed. The notion that borders are associated with an outdated, morally questionable or deeply anti-democratic political state is essentially present. This was measured by the code “civilisation/barbarian dichotomy” (13.3% of cases) and the explicit characterisation of anyone who supported the border being regarded as cowards (6.7% of cases). These ideas were found exclusively in Macron's speeches (referring to Russia, the USA, and Spain and Portugal before their integration into the EU). If the border is negatively described, even as a source of conflict, then security appears to be the result of integration (86.7% of cases).

There are divergences and specificities in the unity of narrative within the liberal

camp. For example, the idea of the border as protection appears in 13.3% of cases. The question is why and how? In Macron's speeches, he explains that Europe's external borders must be strengthened. In Trudeau's speeches, the border is time associated with the idea of "treason" (13.3% of cases), not surprising since Trudeau is referring to tariffs imposed by the Trump administration.

The realist/conservative view of the border

What would be the realist-conservative vision of the border? Logically, there should be the presence of narrative systems opposite and opposed to those of the liberals (as can be seen in the 2D map below).

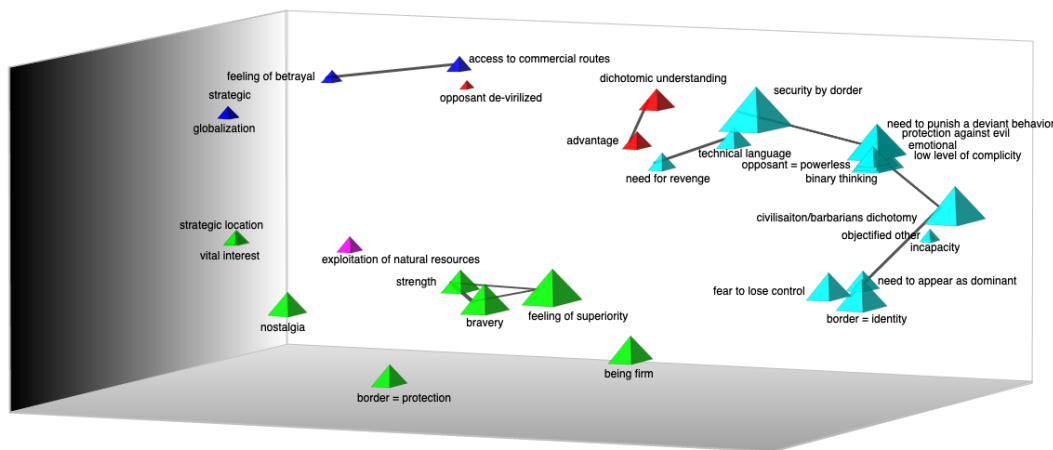


Figure 4. Multidimensional 3D scale – the realist-conservative view of the border

LEGEND: Codes are grouped in clusters (each identified by a different colour) according to their frequency of co-occurrence. The nesting of codes is therefore explained by a very high frequency of co-occurrence. The further apart the codes are (up/down; left/right), the less likely they are to interact. The larger the triangle, the higher the frequency of occurrence of the code. The probability of two codes always appearing together is indicated by a line. The thicker the line, the higher the probability.

- *Access to trade routes:* code used when access to trade routes is mentioned in the text.
- *De-virilised opponent:* code used to measure the qualification of border opponents as homosexuals (a strategy to deny the masculinity (understood in the sense of feminist literature) of opponents).
- *Sense of betrayal:* code used when the idea of having been betrayed is present in the discourse.
- *Strategic:* used when the vocabulary used to talk about the border is strategic and/or geopolitical.
- *Access to globalisation:* code used to measure the idea that access to globalisation is facilitated by the absence of borders.
- *Strategic location:* used when a location of strategic importance is mentioned.
- *Vital interest:* used when the border is explicitly associated with the idea of protecting a vital interest.
- *Exploitation of natural resources:* used when the text referred to the exploitation of natural resources.
- *Strength:* code used to measure the link between the presence of the border and the idea of strength.
- *Nostalgia:* code applied to any reference to an idealised, bygone past.
- *Courage:* code used to measure the link made between the presence of the border and the idea of courage.
- *Sense of superiority:* code used when a word or phrase expressed a sense of superiority (related to the

- decision maker or the state).*
- *Firmness: code used to measure the link between the presence of the border and the idea of being intransigent.*
 - *Border = identity: code used to measure the idea that the border is a component of national identity.*
 - *Dichotomous conception: code used to measure the dichotomous (black/white) view/presentation of things by the individual.*
 - *Advantage: code used to measure the idea that the border is an advantage.*
 - *Security by the border: code used when the border is associated with the idea of security.*
 - *Need for revenge: code applied to any semantic construct linking the border to the need for revenge (individual or state).*
 - *Technical language: code used when the vocabulary used to talk about the border was technical.*
 - *Need to punish deviant behaviour: code used to measure the idea that anyone who thinks or behaves in a deviant way (in relation to the position of the speaker) should be punished.*
 - *Protection from evil: code used when the boundary is explicitly identified as the best way to protect against an evil deemed "absolute".*
 - *Emotional: code used when the rhetoric used to talk about the border is emotional.*
 - *Low complexity: code used to measure the complexity of the discourse (shortcuts, simplification of reality, etc.).*
 - *Opponent = powerless: code used to measure the argument that opposition to the border is a symbolic castration of the individual.*
 - *Binary thinking system: code used to measure the tendency to construct the discourse around a binary opposition (them/us; success/failure; victory/defeat etc.)*
 - *Civilisation/barbarian dichotomy: code applied to any semantic construction indicating a pejorative and devaluing them/us separation.*
 - *Objectified other: code used to measure the argument that others are incapable of making decisions and must defer to a higher authority.*
 - *Incapacitated: code used to measure the idea that the lack of boundaries makes the state powerless.*
 - *Need to appear strong/dominant: code applied to any semantic construct linking the border to the need to appear strong (individual or state).*
 - *Fear of losing control: code used to measure the idea of losing control of a situation.*

The need for borders appears in two forms in realistic/conservative discourse. First, in a negative form (the absence of). The speeches of Trump, Erdogan and Putin describe what the situation would be like if there were no borders. A borderless state is presented as a powerless state, unable to manage itself (6.7% of cases). This is associated with a loss of control at various levels (20% of cases), particularly in terms of internal security. Second, the need for the border appears from a positive point of view (in the presence of). In this configuration, the border allows access to a point of arrival considered desirable and is built around the following ideas: (i) the border allows a strong state (20% of cases); (ii) the border allows protection (46.7% of cases), and (iii) security (53.3% of cases).

Also associated with the border is a discourse built around Lakoff's 'strict father' narrative system. Two main ideas were identified. First, the need to punish deviant behavior from a moral and legal point of view (33.3% of cases). For Trump, this is associated with the fight against illegal trafficking of kind, which can only be stopped at the border. Such discourse uses mainly negative emotions (33% of cases), evoking disgust, fear, even horror. For Putin and Erdogan, the border is associated with a nostalgic discourse referring to lost greatness of the past that must be regained. This vision of the border between Russia and Turkey is not

surprising given the foreign policy and geopolitics practised by these two countries since 2008.

A vision of the border as protection is reinforced by the presence of two other narrative systems centred on masculinity. First, a mirror effect in which opponents of the border are described as effeminate or 'false men', in short, the opposite of being a manly man (26.7% of cases). In other words, border opponents are described as indecisive, unable to make decisions, weak and cowardly. In contrast, those who want borders are described as strong (33.3% of cases), courageous (40% of cases) and firm (33.3% of cases), characteristics traditionally associated with the masculine/virile ideal (Weber 1999; Hooper 2001; Ducat 2004; Sjoberg 2014; Corbin, Courtine, Vigarello 2016).

Another feature of conservative/realistic discourse, especially in the Trumpian version, is what Dyson would probably call a discourse of low intellectual complexity: the border is associated with a dichotomous discourse (20% of cases) that pits two extremes against each other: chaos without a border and paradise with one; there is no middle ground. The problems are described in categorical terms and the solutions are judged to be simple and immediately effective – in short, real miracle solutions (26.7% of cases). Finally, the last marker feature of low intellectual complexity defined by Dyson: no need for expert analysis as the situation is clearly identifiable (26.7% of cases).

Conclusion

What are we to make of all this? Quantitative analysis focused on two themes: (1) the role of the border in conflicts since 1945, and (2) the way the border is treated in political discourse. These themes, which might at first appear to be separate, each provide information on one dimension of the border.

In the first part, the role of the border in conflicts was made visible and quantified. It became apparent that its role could vary according to geographical and/or geopolitical areas. Similarly, quantitative analysis highlighted the critical importance of symbolic factors. The immediate “operationalisable” conclusion seems to be that if the border is cryogenic, it would be wrong to put it at the top of the list of causes of wars.

Quantitative analysis of the political speeches of Trump, Erdogan, Putin, Macron, Trudeau and Merkel revealed a deep division between conservative-realists on the one hand and liberals on the other regarding the border. Both in the vision of the border and in the emotions with which it is associated. The qualitative part also showed that the border did not leave anyone indifferent, since powerful emotions were mobilised by both sides.

But can we stop there? What value can be placed on this approach? While the overall contribution is that it is possible to establish trends, to have a global vision, and to validate or invalidate a certain number of received ideas, it would be wrong to consider a quantitative

approach as an end in itself: in fact it is only half the battle.

Both areas (speeches and conflicts) must be subject to qualitative analysis to better identify divergences and similarities.

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