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Concluding Thoughts on the Special Issue

Kimberly Collins and Naomi Chi*

This special section on gender and border studies published by the *Eurasian Border Review*¹ provides insight into the plight of women in today's global world. It also provides a different perspective of borders, one based in gender or feminist theory. These papers discuss issues of feminism and power relationships that are inherent to borders – be they geographical, mental, or administrative. Therefore, what is important is not just the physical barrier, but the actions and work around these barriers.

As seen and heard in many different instances in the current conversation about women and their treatment in society (such as #MeToo), there has been a call to rethink the constructs of power and security.² In response to the current system that limits their possibilities, women are working to change the system, both administrative and societal. As we look to what is happening at borders throughout the world, these changes are crucial not only to women's lives, but for all those impacted upon by current systems and institutions. Add to this technological developments changing society, and what is required are new ideas based in scientific inquiry to find solutions for the future. Using a feminist approach provides a method that is contrary to the mainstream, which can create new opportunities to resolve old but pertinent problems.

Notable works on gender and borders include the edited volume by Seema Shekhawat and Emanuela C. del Re, entitled *Women and Borders: Refugees, Migrants, and Communities* (I.B. Tauris, 2018), and an edited volume by Nancy A. Naples and Jennifer Bickham Mendez, entitled *Border Politics* (New York University Press, 2015). Beyond these and a few articles, not much has been written on gender issues within and around borders, and the group of border scholars who worked to make this special issue happen hope that through our work, there is the impetus for more collaboration between the two academic areas.

Gender studies provides a new perspective to the study of borderlands. Traditionally, the study of borders has been based in traditionally masculine perspectives – militarism (security studies), lines in the sand (geography), and power relations (political science/policy studies).

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¹ See also the first three articles in the first part of this special section, "Introduction to 'Border and Gender Studies: Theoretical and Empirical Overlap'" by Kimberly Collins; "Re-victimizing Trafficked Migrant Women: The Southern Border Plan and Mexico's Anti-trafficking Legislation" by Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera and Jennifer Bryson Clark; and "Bad Fences Make Bad Neighbors: Challenging the Citizenship Regime in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands" by T. Mark Montoya, in *Eurasia Border Review* 7:1 (2016).

² Mary Beard, *Women and Power: A Manifesto* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2017).

Gender studies provides a look at the humanism within borders, identifying abuses in the system, and providing alternative options for improving the human condition. Opportunities abound, as more needs to be explored, researched, and discussed regarding the experiences of women in today's global world. Additional cases and theorizing from a feminist perspective may help to design policy solutions to the current exacerbated crises along many borders throughout the world. A better understanding of the phenomena, along with its ramifications, can help to raise the consciousness of leaders – both at the national and community levels – and the creation of new policies.

How do we move forward? A first move would be to remove the borders between and within disciplines. Working to understand one another's perspectives and approaches, we need to find commonalities and bridge differences, in order to find a new way of thinking in a new world. This is not a novel idea or concept, but one that needs tackling systemically. There must be a concentrated effort to diversify and collaborate. We are all well aware of the temptation to continue doing what has been done before. It takes leadership and vision to see beyond the everyday borders that exist everywhere and to build trust between groups historically disenfranchised from one another.

How can this be done? The most important thing is to bring the new generation of talented researchers and scholars to share their innovative ideas to various arenas and forums, such like this special edition. Moreover, as this special edition has demonstrated, there is a wealth of information and case studies from various countries around the world that we can learn from, but often do not get the attention that they deserve. Lastly, though we are met with new challenges and threats in this post-truth era, we must also realize that crises can lead to opportunities, therefore, we must not let real life politics affect our academic endeavors and to continue with collaborations that bridge borders.