

Editorial Note

Since its beginning in 2010, *Transcultural Studies* has developed into an interdisciplinary voice for the broad field of transcultural research, welcoming articles with new theoretical and methodological openings and exploring novel formats for the dissemination of cutting-edge knowledge. This issue continues our exploration by featuring five essays, and—as a new feature—our first “Report from the Field.”

The issue opens with Rudolf Wagner’s study of the history of the Chinese term *guafen* 瓜分 (cutting up like a melon). Having studied the translingual and transcultural migration of the conceptual metaphor of China as a nation “asleep” and “awakened” in issue 2011.1 of our journal, the author now turns his attention to the genealogy and the use(s) of a metaphor that stands for the cutting up of China by foreign powers. The essay follows *guafen*’s startling semantic trajectory from a rather “dead” metaphor in the pre-modern era to the rediscovery of its metaphorical value as a translation of the Western legal concept of partition in the mid-nineteenth century, and finally to its development into a highly articulate concept to express a foreign threat to the Chinese nation. Wagner leads the reader through a vast body of Chinese and foreign printed media pertinent to the partition discourse, revealing the significance of Poland’s fate as the origin of the Chinese partition narrative. In a next step, he shows why the intrinsically neutral term *guafen* acquired negative connotations as the Chinese equivalent of a foreign legal concept and how it was later (ab)used first by the reformers and revolutionaries in the political discourse on the danger of China’s partition by the Powers, and most recently in the PRC’s foreign propaganda. By demonstrating the virulent power of transcultural and transmedial flows for the different platforms of conceptual expression, the article makes a strong argument against a nation-and-language-bound history of concepts as proposed by Reinhart Kosseleck and other scholars who limit the study of concepts to a single-language environment.

The next four essays are closely related and based on contributions to the workshop “Transregional Crossroads of Social Interaction” of the BMBF-funded Crossroads Asia Competence Network at Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, on March 21, 2014. They explore emerging notions of identity and belonging in South-Central Asian borderlands. Their topics cover the activities of South Asian Muslim networks in the context of transregional interaction with actors and institutions from Post-Soviet Central Asia (Reetz); the transregional character of the Panj and Amu

river regions in Eastern Bukhara and the increased leeway coming with marginality (Dağyeli); processes of territorialisation in Gilgit-Baltistan by the Pakistani state and the counter-force of local responses (Bouzas); and the history of the Soviet Union's engagement in northern Afghanistan as a turn of the region from a socialist borderscape to a "postcolony" (Nunan).

The study by Dietrich Reetz, "Mediating Mobile Traditions: The Tablighi Jama'at and the International Islamic University between Pakistan and Central Asia" explores connections between South and Central Asia in an alternative to or contestation of globalization. These connections, argues Reetz, are an attempt to revive or maintain Islamic practices and values while accepting the market economy and the political changes of the post-Soviet environment. Reetz supports his argument with two case studies based on qualitative interviews and written records of the institutions involved while drawing methodological inspiration from Norbert Elias's concept of "figurations." The article shows how the original agendas of the Tablighi and the International Islamic University in Islamabad were re-configured through their local adaptation, their adaptability being the condition for their mobility. The actors and institutions studied here operated on both a transregional and a local scale. They did so in an environment characterized by dramatic change, which reframed inter-state relations as much as it impacted local governments and communities: the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the re-emergence of older connections between South and Central Asia, the introduction of market economies, and the rising concerns about radical Islam. As new challenges and opportunities emerged, with shifting power asymmetries influencing the depths of the former and the range of the latter, the religious actors and institutions in Reetz' study adjusted their strategies. At the same time, they all claimed to represent the only true Islam, rejected other teachings, kept a distance from governments with their security and stability concerns, and remained critical of local communities with their traditions and ethnic tensions. The globalization that went with this environmental shift in terms of the economy, secular government, and new values called forth the defensive efforts traced by the author. These were to secure a different type of globalization that would—in its moderate forms—accept the shifts in the economy and state administration, but try to anchor knowledge, values, and behaviour in a revivalist brand of Islam.

Jeanine Dağyeli's study, "Weapon of the Discontented? Trans-River Migration as Tax Avoidance Practice and Lever in Eastern Bukhara," challenges the nation state historiography with its focus on the political center and its fiction of hard territorial borders. It does so by studying

the way in which populations on both sides of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border crossed to the other side to avoid what they saw as excessively burdensome state exactions or deterioration of their agricultural environment. Largely based on archival records surviving in Tashkent, on travelogues, historical geographical, and climate records, while for methodology drawing on studies of low-level peasant resistance in the wake of James Scott's work on Southeast Asia, the author redefines the border. As in this case the border does not coincide with a language, religious, natural, or ethnic cleavage, both sides appear to the locals as a contiguous area divided by borders that neither state is able to police. At the same time, the local state authorities contribute to the weakening of these borders by trying to attract settlers from the other side to secure a sustainable population density required for reasons of security and taxation. The study not only offers an important and well-documented historical exploration that brings Central Asia into the discussion of the complex dynamics of borderlands, but also poses a wider, implicit challenge to the border narrative even of highly developed and densely policed nation states; the examples that immediately spring to mind are the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain.

In another micro-study of the complex dynamics of borderlands, "Territorialisation, Ambivalence, and Representational Spaces in Gilgit-Baltistan," Antía Mato Bouzas investigates the ways in which the local inhabitants in an area contested between India and Pakistan cope with a recent, heavily militarized border, which separates them from their relatives while keeping them in limbo as to their citizenship. They are Pakistanis when traveling abroad but remain deprived of full citizen rights when at home because of the territory's open status. The ensuing disputes play out on maps, laws, and administrative practices on the state side, and in cultural strategies of securing identity on the side of local activists. Based on interviews with locals and government officials on both sides of the border controlled by Pakistan and India, and drawing on an approach opened by Henri Lefebvre's discussion of the frontier as a "space lived through its associated images and symbols," the author documents different strategies to fix these images and symbols. On the state side, this takes the form of marking on official maps the fact that the area is not, constitutionally, a part of Pakistan, while developing a strategy of attracting tourists to this peaceful "jewel of Pakistan." On the side of the locals, it takes the form of drawing benefits from the massive presence of Pakistani military in conjunction with efforts by local activists to culturally redefine Muslim Baltistan by reviving historical connections with Tibetan Buddhism. The side-connections are, for the time being, reduced to occasional visits that involve many detours, but, as the cultural

permeability of the Berlin Wall or the explosion of ethnic and religious strife between closely intermarried groups in former Yugoslavia have shown, hidden in these cross-border linkages lie historical forces of considerable strength.

In his essay “The Violence Curtain: Occupied Afghan Turkestan and the Making of a Central Asian Borderscape,” Timothy Nunan focuses on Afghanistan’s northern border as an arena of transcultural mobility and interaction during the Soviet Union’s military occupation of Afghanistan. The article explores the forms, the impact, and the aftermath of the Soviet intervention in the context of a strategy that sought not only to protect the Soviet border but also to realize a Soviet model of state building abroad. On the one hand, the Soviet intervention involved as a massive “informal” military presence through the stationing of sixty-two thousand Soviet border guards whose main task was to extend the actual Soviet border over a hundred kilometres south. On the other hand, it had the character of a mission with the aim of integrating the borderlands into a socialist project by the engagement of Soviet Komsomol advisers who were responsible for educating Afghan youth. Despite the fact that the article—unavoidably—draws on Soviet sources exclusively, the author challenges previous approaches by shifting the focus from the Soviet actors to different forms of trans-regional encounters and highlighting the active role of the Afghan side. In doing so, he employs the dynamic concept of borderscapes as a suitable analytical tool for exploring the role of political and social structures as well as human agency within and beyond a border zone. With the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev and the abandonment of the socialist project to forge a Soviet-Afghan world in this borderland, northern Afghanistan moved to a “postcolonial” condition which was cemented when the Soviet Army and the Border Forces withdrew from the region in the late 1980s. For evaluating the severe effects of this development, the author refers to typical “postcolonies,” in which similar processes have been thoroughly studied. In doing so, he shows that the turn from socialist borderscape to postcolony was marked by the common process of glorifying the market economy, which the local authorities and population regarded as the only way out of a dramatic crisis.

Our journal’s first “Report from the Field” is written by Srđan Tunić and is dedicated to the oeuvre of Muhamed Kafedžić, a Sarajevo-based artist with an extraordinary hybrid style which absorbs Japanese *Ukiyo-e* woodblock printing (seventeenth through nineteenth centuries) as well as American pop art (twentieth century), predominantly by Roy Lichtenstein. Tunić, who collaborated with the artist between 2012 and 2015, provides a vivid analysis of the paintings focusing on the intentions behind them

rather than their impact. Excerpts from discussions with the artist are complemented by the author's thoughtful analysis, which demonstrates how Kafedžić's paintings are a reaction to his own society and its visual tradition. The artist himself, an absolute outsider in his local milieu, explains that by appropriating alien images he had no ambition to become a Japanese *Ukiyo-e* painter but to use specific "exotic" motifs in order to articulate his own messages more effectively. He understands this artistic escape not in negative terms but as a creative response to his environment, being convinced that a transcultural attitude can enrich his own culture. It becomes apparent that the *raison d'être* of reproducing Japanese prints and American pop art in modern Bosnia and Herzegovina is firmly situated not in an international milieu but in a local context. Taking this oeuvre as a case study for complex transcultural processes, the author discusses different types of appropriation. He concludes that Kafedžić's work is an example of assimilative appropriation that affirms the value system of the original.

We hope this issue of the journal makes for stimulating reading and look forward to your feedback and contributions.

Diamantis Panagiotopoulos with Rudolf Wagner