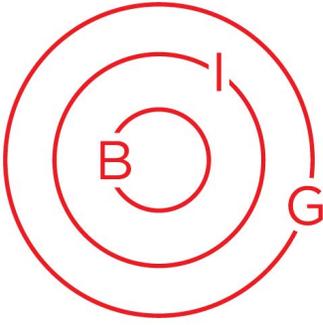




# **BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION**





## Borders in Globalization Research Project 90

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**#WelcomeRefugees: A Canadian  
phenomenon that illustrates temporal  
dimension of *border constructs***

**Renata Grudzien**

## Introduction

Every year Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) issues Canada's benchmark for its refugee resettlement. In the past, Canada has committed to resettling 25,000 refugees per year from all over the world; however, after the international outcry when little Alan Kurdi's body washed up on Canada's shores, IRCC significantly shortened expected processing times for refugee resettlement.<sup>1</sup> In November 2015, IRCC initiated a five-phase plan to resettle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February 2016. Despite significant domestic and international scepticism, Canada successfully resettled 26,000 Syrian refugees in an unprecedented four months under the #WelcomeRefugees plan.<sup>2</sup>

The #WelcomeRefugees plan was a curious development that elucidates a novel perspective on the bordering process. The phases are as follows: 1) Identifying Syrian refugees to come to Canada; 2) Processing Syrian refugees overseas; 3) Transportation to Canada; 4) Welcoming in Canada; and 5) Settlement and community integration. The phasing of the Canadian border process suggests a new dimension to Canada's *border construct*: time. These five phases of #WelcomeRefugees clearly outline the border process that Syrian refugees had to traverse, much like they had to traverse territory in order to reach Canada.

Insofar as we accept that borders are not strictly demarcated lines on a map, but rather that they are constructed in part by the processes associated with them,<sup>3</sup> this paper will aim to develop a *temporal border construct* theory. I posit that the hegemony of the territorial

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<sup>1</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2014, October 31. 2014 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/publications/annual-report-2014/index.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 21. #WelcomeRefugees: Milestones and key figures <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>

<sup>3</sup> Newman, David. 2010. Territory, compartments and borders: Avoiding the territorial trap. *Geopolitics* 15(4): 773.

dimension has already been challenged due to significant literature on many other dimensions of *border constructs*. However, the temporal dimension is largely missing from existing literature. The #WelcomeRefugees plan is an example that clearly illustrates the temporal dimension of the *border construct*.

This paper will be organized in five parts. Part I will offer a literature review on the notion of the *border construct* and its various dimensions, as well as existing literature on time-space theory. Part II will put forth my theory on the significance of the temporal dimension to *border constructs*. Part III will explore how the temporal dimension of *border constructs* challenges our traditional understanding of the concept. Part IV will explore the temporal dimension of Canada's *border construct* as exemplified by the five phases of the #WelcomeRefugees plan. It will also compare this version of Canada's *border construct* to previous versions of Canada's *border construct*. Ultimately, this theory seeks to add to the mounting notion in territory and territorialisation literature that the border is a fluid, living organism.

## **Part I: Dimensions of borders and border processing**

### *The border construct*

For the purpose of this paper, I will be discussing the *border construct*, an entity that encompasses all concepts relating to borders, including but not limited to borderlands, border regions and border processes. Discussing the *border construct* as a whole allows us to be critical of its composition, which exceeds the constraints of its territorial dimension.

Throughout this paper, it will be necessary to view the *border construct* in the abstract to truly understand it as an evolving organism so as to better understand the organism's genetic makeup. The notion that territorial configurations can be studied more thoroughly in the abstract

is not a novel one. In the field of geopolitics Kirby (2015) has abstracted territory, using the fictional territory of Panem in the Hunger Games to critically assess contemporary gender norms.<sup>4</sup> In a similar way, bringing the *border construct* into an abstract realm separate from territorial bindings enables us to view its different dimensions, including its temporal dimension.

#### *Different dimensions of the border construct*

Generally, we tend to consider the border as a physical entity encountered at the moment of crossing from one state to the next. Borders have long since been a way for a state to protect its territorial hegemony from competing claims. In addition, borders demarcate territory within which a state has the right to a monopoly on the use of force.<sup>5</sup> Borders carefully separate states on maps, they represent the shape of nations or states to which people feel connected, and their placement has been a cause of dispute between peoples and states for generations.<sup>6</sup>

This Westphalian idea that a state is partially defined by its territory as bound by its borders has deteriorated since John Agnew's (1994) pivotal piece on the "territorial trap." Since then the work of academics seeking new critical theories of territorial and border configurations has abounded.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Newman (2010) posits that "our understanding of territory has moved beyond the limited dimensions of physical and finite spaces, so too has our understanding of the lines which demarcate these territories moved beyond the fixed and absolute."<sup>8</sup> Together, Agnew and Newman suggest the need for a more permissive understanding of borders. Recent

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<sup>4</sup> Kirby, Philip. 2015. The Girl on Fire: *The Hunger Games*, feminist geopolitics and the contemporary female action hero. *Geopolitics* 20. 460-478.

<sup>5</sup>For more on state defence of territorial integrity and the state's monopoly on the use of force see Max Weber's *Essays in sociology*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1946.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso Books, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Agnew, John. 1994. The territorial trap: The geographical assumptions of international relations theory. *Review of International Political Economy* 1(1): 53-80.

<sup>8</sup> Newman, David. 2010. Territory, compartments and borders: Avoiding the territorial trap. *Geopolitics* 15(4): 773.

works on territory and territoriality pivot on the idea that borders have more than just a physical dimension; scholars have incorporated power discourses and have examined social, political, and economic dimensions of borders to better describe the *border construct*.

Alvarez Perez and Berger (2009) highlight that even though the physical dimension of the *border construct* exists, it can be inconsistent depending on the standards that shape it. A *border construct* can appear very different on one side compared to the other. The authors employ the United States-Mexican border as an example to illustrate how “the border here is only really a border in one direction. If you enter Mexico on foot, it is unlikely that anyone will ever check your passport or identity papers. However, the process of crossing to the United States...requires that you do possess a passport.”<sup>9</sup> In this way, a *borderline* may be shared by two states, but the *border experience* may be very different, underscoring that there is more to a border than just its territorial fixation.

In his *theory of the suture*, Salter (2012) suggests that the *border construct* is comprised of evolving socio-political discourses. Specifically, that borders are a symbolic manifestation of “a division and a unity between the inside and outside”<sup>10</sup> of a state. Here, borders derive their meaning from socio-political processes over time and they act as physical reminders of processes, such as the outcome of colonialism, conflict, secession and so on.<sup>11</sup> His theory not only links the territorial dimension with the socio-political dimension, but it also touches on the temporal dimension of borders as these processes evolve over time.

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<sup>9</sup> Alvarez Perez, Marcela and Berger, Mark T. 2009. Bordering on the ridiculous: MexAmerica and the New Regionalism. *Alternatives* 34: 1-16.

<sup>10</sup>Salter, Mark B. 2012. Theory of the /: The suture and critical border studies. *Geopolitics* 17: 734-755.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, 734-755.

Valdivia, Wolford and Lu (2013) illustrate the human dimension of *border constructs*. In particular, how the *border construct* exists insofar as humans continue to administer it and attribute it with meaning. The authors examine the discourse between farmers and conservationists on the Galapagos Islands and how they draw and re-draw internal borders to define competing spaces.<sup>12</sup> It can be argued that a *border construct* is a direct manifestation of human effort because if we look to nature (the flora and fauna in the area) these entities defy borders and move easily between realms.

Finally, Konrad (2015) explores the evolutionary potential of *border constructs* with his *borders in motion* theory. He strongly suggests that the *border construct*, or border system, is a living organism “born in motion.”<sup>13</sup> They are sites of numerous overlapping processes, relationships, exchanges, and developments; therefore the border is a constantly evolving organism that reflects these transformations. By discussing the discourse surrounding the Pacific Northwest border region he illustrates this point: “the border system needs to accommodate greater or lesser volumes of movement, sudden changes of flow characteristics, enhanced impediments to predictable flows, and changes in barrier configuration.”<sup>14</sup> The constant need to accommodate evolving processes constitutes and reconstitutes the *border construct* and thus, the border transforms and ages over time much like any other living organism.

This review has illustrated the interconnected of numerous moving parts and dimensions that constitute *border constructs*, yet the list of constitutive parts has by no means been

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<sup>12</sup>Valdivia, Gabriela, Wolford, Wendy, and Lu, Flora. 2013. Border crossings: New geographies of protection and production in the Galapagos islands. *Association of American Geographies* 104(3): 686-701.

<sup>13</sup> Konrad, Victor. 2015. Toward a theory of borders in motion. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 30(1): 2.

<sup>14</sup> Konrad, Victor. 2015. Toward a theory of borders in motion. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 30(1): 9.

exhausted. Elden provides us with a direction for further exploration with his elegant theory on the height and depth of territory. He indicates that “territories are bordered, divided and demarcated, but not understood in terms of height and depth.”<sup>15</sup> If we can explore borders two dimensionally, like on a map; three dimensionally, as in Elden’s theory; and through multiple socially-constructed dimensions, as can be seen from the preceding literature, so too should we be able to explore the temporal dimension of borders.

In fact, efforts to illustrate the relationship between time and space – not exactly time and borders – have occurred in the past. Agnew (2005) himself discusses the concept of “time-space compression,” the notion that globalization has shortened time and shrunk space. He argues “fixed territorial spaces of modernity no longer match a new world of kaleidoscopic and jumbled spaces where speed conquers established geopolitical representations.”<sup>16</sup> If we understand *border constructs* as geopolitical representations, then it would make sense that speed – or the sense of urgency to fit the government’s resettlement deadline – had the power to change the nature of the Canadian border process. We shall revisit this idea later on.

The literature mentioned above exemplifies how borders are so much more than lines on a map but maps are still the easiest way to identify and discuss global spaces. Perhaps one reason as to why temporal discourse has remained largely absent as a way to describe *border constructs* is because it is difficult to visualize in such a way. Spiekermann and Wegener (1994) provide a solution to this problem by highlighting an unconventional map – the “time-space map” – that uses a temporal rather than territorial lens to describe global spaces:

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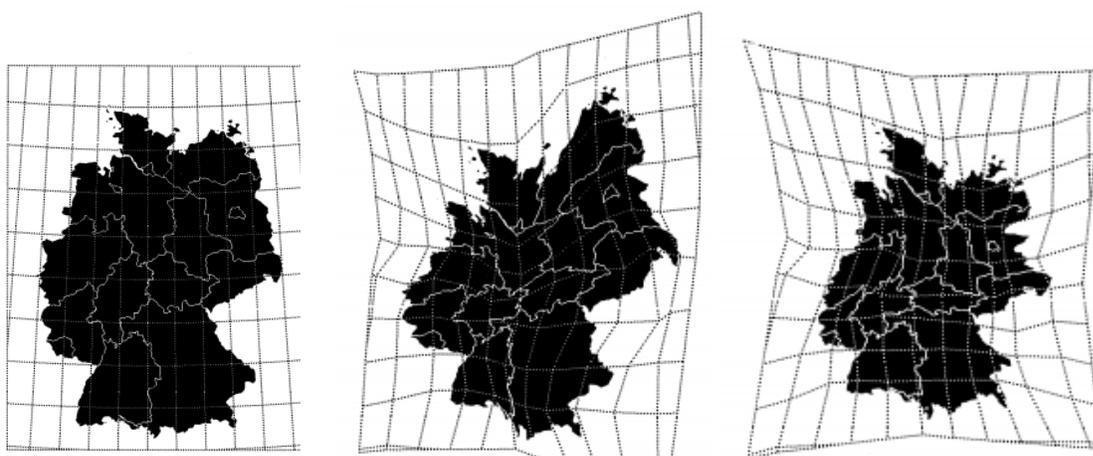
<sup>15</sup> Elden, Stuart. 2013. *Secure the volume: Vertical geopolitics and the depth of power. Political Geography* 34: 35.

<sup>16</sup> Agnew, John. 2005. *Hegemony: The new shape of global power*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. 159.

The elements of a time-space map are organized in such a way that the distances between them are not proportional to their physical distance as in topographical maps, but proportional to the travel times between them. Short travel times between two points result in their presentation close together on the map; points separated by long travel times appear distant on the map. The scale is no longer in spatial but in temporal units.<sup>17</sup>

The authors used the high-speed rail in Germany as the basis for their time-space map.<sup>18</sup>

They compared how Germany appeared based on travel times in 1985, 1993, and projected travel times for 2010. This is what their maps looked like, respectively:



a) Germany, air, 1985

b) Germany, rail, 1993

c) Germany, rail, 2010

The first map, based on airline speed, depicts relatively uniform time-space cartography even during the Cold War, perhaps because there were no obstructions in airspace akin to the Berlin Wall. The second map, based on rail speed, depicts differences between East

<sup>17</sup> Spiekermann, K. and Wegener, M. 1994. The shrinking continent: new time-space maps of Europe. *Environment and Planning B: Planning and Design* 21: 654.

<sup>18</sup> To elaborate on their calculation: "Time-space maps are created by transforming physical coordinates of a physical map into time-space coordinates. This can be expressed in global terms as follows  $u = f(x, y)$ ,  $v = g(x, y)$ . Here,  $(x, y)$  are the coordinates of a point on the physical map,  $(u, v)$  the coordinates of that point on the time-space map, and  $f$  and  $g$  are transformation functions. The functions are calibrated in such a manner that the distance between points  $I$  and  $j$  on the time-space map is in as close an agreement as possible with the time distance  $t_{ij}$ . ...Because there are different speeds in the network, it is not possible to reproduce exactly the time distances of a time-space map in two dimensions. This would require a coordinate space with more dimensions. Time-space maps therefore can only be approximate." (Ibid, 655).

and West Germany, where the West appears more shrunken (due to superior rail infrastructure) compared to East Germany, which was behind in infrastructural development even after fall of the Berlin Wall. The third image depicts shorter time-spaces due to projections of uniformly developed rail systems in Germany's future.<sup>19</sup> Speikermann and Wegener provide evidence that time has the power to change our understanding and the traditional appearance of distance and space.

## **Part II: Exploring the temporal dimension of *border constructs***

### *Explaining the territorial dimension*

A “process” implies a finite or infinite segment of time during which circumstances progress from one state of being to the next. Therefore, we naturally engage the temporal lens when discussing border processes. Newman (2010) says:

Borders are the constructs which give shape to the ordering of society, determining the places at which transition from one entity or space into the next takes place, either as a sharp movement from one to the other, or as gradual process of transition through spaces which have become known as frontiers, borderlands, border regions and the like.<sup>20</sup>

Here the *border construct* is described through phrasing such as “process of transition” and “gradual processes,” both of which highlight the rate of transition. Rate is another measurement unit to denote time. Newman uses rate to describe frontiers, borderlands, and border regions, which require time to reach their current form.

To clarify our perception of the temporal dimension, a necessary question to ask is whether time is an intrinsic characteristic of *border constructs* or whether it is simply

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 664.

<sup>20</sup> Newman, David. 2010. Territory, compartments and borders: Avoiding the territorial trap. *Geopolitics* 15(4): 774.

instrumental in the *border construct's* development.<sup>21</sup> One could argue that border constructs exist *within* the temporal dimension. Theoretically, this would mean that time is a constant or a backdrop for evolution rather than a specific dimension of the organisms' composition. Take the following example: "When I was eight months old I began to walk." The statement implies that age is just a matter of marking our development over time, where development (walking) occurs within a time space continuum marked by age. However, over time we attribute meanings to phases that we experience, which form an intrinsic bond between us and time.<sup>22</sup> For example, we use "sweet sixteen" and "25<sup>th</sup> anniversary" as temporal short forms to describe developmental milestones. They are at once understood as defining for the person and their relationships. If we look at it this way, time ceases to be a backdrop for the *border construct's* development and instead, it becomes an intrinsic part of its identity. This is an important clarification because each milestone of the #WelcomeRefugees plan helped to gauge its overall progress and defined its body in the eyes of the world. Moreover, compared to other dimensions which offer different value, the temporal dimension is uniquely positioned to allow for comparison of the border construct (both along each phase and to previous/future versions of the border construct).

*Measuring the territorial dimension: quantitative and qualitative measures*

Time is an elusive entity. The most common way to discuss it is by using quantitative measures such as the rate of change, milestones, timelines, deadlines, and phases. These measures standardize the passage of time.<sup>23</sup> In addition, they allow us to visualize the passage of time they also help us to compare an organism's changes over a given period.

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<sup>21</sup> Fraisse, Paul. 1984. Perception and estimation of time. *Annual Review of Psychology* (35): 9-10.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 1-3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 1-3.

Even though humans have developed a standard way to understand the passage of time, as the saying goes *time is relative*. This phrase indicates that a less common but nevertheless important way to measure the time is by using qualitative measures. For example, Galasinska (2003) explores how time can be measured by personal accounts about the *feeling* of its passage. She explores personal reflections about Zgorzelec, a Polish border town represented by photographs, to show how over time: “even presented with the relatively specific historical time of the photograph, the informants’ narratives invariably tended to hover around the very concrete temporal dimension of the present day.”<sup>24</sup> Her conclusion has dual significance. On one hand, it suggests that the passage of time can feel irrelevant compared to the present day. On the other hand, her passage suggests that we are presently living in a time construct and the present is an important point of reference for comparisons between the past, present, and possible future versions of our reality. We can identify both quantitative and qualitative measures of time in the #WelcomeRefugees plan.

### **Part III: Temporal challenges to the territorial hegemony of border constructs**

The #WelcomeRefugees plan illustrated how territory only plays a partial role in the genetic makeup of the *border construct*. No longer was the border simply a crossing from one state to the next guided by signs, lane dividers, and border officials. Instead, it would be more realistic to say that one was guided through a collection of sequential processes to reach one’s final destination. This is best demonstrated by illustration of the #WelcomeRefugees plan below:



Image taken from the IRCC website: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase1.asp>

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<sup>24</sup> Galasinska, Aleksandra. 2003. Temporal shifts in photo-elicited narratives in a Polish border town. *Narrative Inquiry* 13(2): 393-411. 1-19.

The way in which its phases are arranged (along a timeline) presents a more realistic depiction of the Canadian border than a simple line indicating Canada's territory on a map. Even without words this image alludes to the bureaucracy, transportation factors, and length of time inherent to the resettlement process. It provides a good starting point from which to explore the Canadian *border construct* in its full form.

#### **Part IV: The temporal dimension of Canada's *border construct***

In order to understand the evolution of Canada's *border construct* it is first necessary to understand Canada's refugee policy. The Canadian *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act 2001* is the main piece of legislation governing refugee resettlement in Canada, and it stemmed from the *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees 1951*. A refugee is someone who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."<sup>25</sup> There are two ways for such a person to resettle in Canada: 1) they will either travel (legally or illegally) to Canada and to claim asylum on Canadian territory or 2) they will apply to be selected to resettle in Canada from within their country of first asylum.<sup>26</sup> The second option was the foundation for the #WelcomeRefugees plan as Syrian refugees were selected to come to Canada from countries of first asylum, specifically from Jordan and Lebanon.

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<sup>25</sup> UNHCR. 1951. *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>

<sup>26</sup> Ostrand, Nicole. 2015. The Syrian refugee crisis: A comparison of responses by Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. *Journal on Migration and Human Security* 3 (3): 258.

In the past, Canada's border process has been criticized for its complexity and lethargic pace.<sup>27</sup> Official wait times listed on the IRCC website were anywhere between 13 and 18 months. Even still, according to some personal accounts resettlement could sometimes take up to three years. In the meantime, refugees were living in a figurative limbo, receiving only a small stipend while unable to officially gain employment and housing.<sup>28</sup> However, Syrian refugees experienced less of such a limbo, specifically owing to the #WelcomeRefugees plan.

While the #WelcomeRefugee plan has changed little in Canada's official refugee resettlement policy<sup>29</sup> the government's commitment to a tight deadline and the intake of strictly Syrian refugees was unprecedented. This move highlights quantitative and qualitative temporal characteristics of the *border construct*. The quantitative nature of the *border construct* was emphasized by the five stages of processing and the IRCC's close tracking of the resettlement progress in milestones arranged by date.<sup>30</sup> The qualitative nature of the *border construct* was underscored by the process's straightforward and sequential nature, which was meant to simplify the process and to orient Syrian refugees. Ideally, Syrian refugees and the greater public would better understand each stage of the process, exactly what was coming next, and whether the

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<sup>27</sup> Ngugi, Kamau. 2007. Long walk to safety: experiences of refugee claimants with Canada's refugee policies and practices. *Theses and dissertations, Ryerson University*. Paper 254: 1.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 1.

<sup>29</sup> In 2013, Canada has accepted approximately 24,000 refugees from all over the world so the November 2015 benchmark was not as staggering as media sensationalism suggested (Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2014, October 31. 2014 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration). <http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/resources/publications/annual-report-2014/index.asp>

<sup>30</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 21. #WelcomeRefugees: Milestones and key figures. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/milestones.asp>

government was meeting its goal.<sup>31</sup> The qualitative perspective is particularly necessary to evaluate and compare different phases of *border construct*.

*Comparing the phases of Canada's #WelcomeRefugees plan*

*Phase 1: Identifying Syrian refugees to come to Canada. "Canada will work with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to identify people in Jordan and Lebanon, where they have an extensive list of registered refugees."*<sup>32</sup>

Phase 1 is the clearest example of how #WelcomeRefugees challenged the *territorial trap* of Canada's *border construct* is how early refugees were faced with the Canadian border process. Motivated by a sense of urgency, IRCC and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) representatives relocated to Turkey and Lebanon to process Syrian refugees in the country of transit. It is as though the edge of Canada's border transcended its *territorial trap* and became part of a "kaleidoscopic jumble" of space, extending beyond the continent and ocean to commence in transit countries.

Moreover, the *border construct* did not begin at a specific territorial position even in Turkey or Lebanon. It began psychologically, at the time that the refugee made the decision to come to Canada.<sup>33</sup> The decision needed to be made after the refugee received a message from UNHCR: "As refugees in Jordan and Lebanon are identified, the UNHCR will be contacting them by SMS (text message) to determine if they are interested in being resettled to Canada."<sup>34</sup>

There were numerous factors that highlight how the psychological threshold was not so easy to overcome. Factors that prevented a facile decision-making for the Syrian refugee

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<sup>31</sup>Evaluating whether the government was successful with this effort is a topic that is not explored within the scope of this paper.

<sup>32</sup>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 15. #WelcomeRefugees: How it will work. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

<sup>33</sup> Van den Velde and van Naerssen (2011) explain this as the "psychological threshold."

<sup>34</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 1. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase1.asp>

included: the perception of Canada's far distance from Syria;<sup>35</sup> Canada's policy to accept mostly women, children, and families, largely excluding single men;<sup>36</sup> and the rapidly approaching deadline for the decision.<sup>37</sup> Two of the three of these justifications have to do with time.

The thickness of the psychological threshold is not a new concept. Difficult choices have dictated refugees' decisions in previous versions of the Canadian *border construct* as well. Ngugi (2007) took numerous personal accounts of various refugee experiences and overwhelmingly the response was that it was one of the hardest things the refugee had done.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, some refugees refuse to leave transit countries because they perceive that the cost-benefit of resettling in Canada is too low.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the reality of the temporal dimension had the power to exert very real pressure on refugees as they experienced Phase 1.

*Phase 2: Processing Syrian refugees overseas. "Interested refugees will be scheduled for processing in dedicated visa offices in Amman and Beirut."*<sup>40</sup>

To maintain the expedited rate of border processing promised by the Government of Canada, the IRCC deployed "approximately 500 officials, including temporary visa officers"<sup>41</sup> to process Syrian refugees abroad. Typically, immigration screening processes – such as the full medical examination, collection of biographical information, biometrics including fingerprints

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<sup>35</sup>Chase, Steven and LeBlanc, Daniel. 2015, December 02. Syrian refugees reluctant to resettle in Canada immediately, Ottawa says. *The Globe and Mail*.

<sup>36</sup>Stevens, Christina. 2015, November 23. Liberals' Syrian refugee plan to exclude single men met with mixed reaction. *Global news*.

<sup>37</sup>Berthiaume, Lee. 2015, December 3. Syrian refugees lukewarm on coming to Canada by December 31, officials say. *The National Post*.

<sup>38</sup>Ngugi, Kamau. 2007. Long walk to safety: experiences of refugee claimants with Canada's refugee policies and practices. *Theses and dissertations, Ryerson University*. Paper 254: 32.

<sup>39</sup>Williams, Sara Elizabeth. 2016, January 01. "Why some Syrian refugees decline Canada's resettlement offer." *The Globe and Mail*.

<sup>40</sup>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 15. #WelcomeRefugees: How it will work. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

<sup>41</sup>Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 2. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase2.asp>

and digital photos, and the visa issuing process – occur on Canadian soil. As these processes were exported abroad, they helped form the impression that Canada’s border process was a more distant yet efficient, mobile and flexible entity.

However, there are also drawbacks to altering the temporal dimension. Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall “released an open letter urging Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to take more time to accomplish the goal”<sup>42</sup> by suspending the deadline in order to “make sure [Canada is] driven by results to ensure good settlement results for the refugees themselves in the communities to which they are moving and also from a security perspective.”<sup>43</sup> Thus, cautious discourse surrounding the urgency and tight deadlines set out in Phase 2 formed the opposing side of the dialectic emerging about Canada’s *border construct*. On one hand, the *border construct* appeared efficient and sleek; on the other hand, its rate of processing and deadlines could render it an imperfect organism prone to disaster.

*Phase 3: Transportation to Canada. “Beginning in December, transportation via privately chartered aircraft, with military aircraft assisting if needed, will be organized to help bring refugees to Canada.”*<sup>44</sup>

The transportation phase is most closely linked to the territorial dimension because it is where refugees have intimate contact with land, sea, or air. In this case, refugee contact with the territorial element of their journey was meaningfully considering how time – rather than distance – was of the essence in transporting 25,000 refugees. Through a combination of private charters,

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<sup>42</sup>“Sask. Premier Brad Wall asks Ottawa to suspend refugee plan.” 2015, November 16. *CBC News*.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 15. #WelcomeRefugees: How it will work. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

military aircraft and loaned planes from Jordan, IRCC met its benchmark.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, time at the border was actually reduced by the chartered transportation process.

That is not to say that the temporal and territorial dimensions did not intersect. Indeed, their relationship was very important. The landing locations – Montreal and Toronto – were specifically chosen because of their capacities to process refugees quickly: “Flights will be destined to either Montreal or Toronto. These cities naturally have the capacity to accept a large number of flights daily, and the necessary facilities and services available to process this volume of refugees for a short time.”<sup>46</sup> So while we can look at such dimensions separately, often their processes intersect, depend on each other, and transform in relation to one another.

*Phase 4: Welcoming in Canada* “Upon arrival in Canada, all refugees will be welcomed and processed by Border Services Officers for admission into Canada. This will include final verification of identity.”<sup>47</sup>

The intersection of the temporal and territorial dimensions is highlighted again in Phase 4. Here refugees finally met the Canadian land border crossing and, like previous phases, the process was quick: “After being admitted into Canada, refugees who come to Canada as privately sponsored refugees will then continue directly to the community where their private sponsor is located.”<sup>48</sup> Long processing times at the border characteristic of the refugee process were virtually non-existent.<sup>49</sup> The government had already pre-empted this process and refugees

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<sup>45</sup>Boutillier, Alex. 2015, December 01. Liberals look to private aircraft, military planes to transport Syrian refugees. *The Star*.

<sup>46</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 3. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase3.asp>

<sup>47</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 15. #WelcomeRefugees: How it will work. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

<sup>48</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 4. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase4.asp>

<sup>49</sup> Ngugi, Kamau. 2007. Long walk to safety: experiences of refugee claimants with Canada’s refugee policies and practices. *Theses and dissertations, Ryerson University*. Paper 254: 11.

were only faced with one final screening to verify their identity before they were sent on their way.<sup>50</sup>

This version of Canada's *border construct* was much different than previous versions based on key differences in the temporal dimension. Before the #WelcomeRefugees plan (and indeed, for refugees who were not of Syrian origin) the Canadian border was a monolith of indeterminate processing. For example, one Venezuelan refugee waited four years for her resettlement claim to be processed once she arrived in Canada.<sup>51</sup> During this time, the *border construct* acted less like a sleek entity and more like a limbo, trapping refugees without social insurance numbers, employment prospects, adequate income, and often poor housing. Without clearly outlined phases, the refugee's present moment in the *border construct* is uncertain and the future stretches on without the sure stepping-stone of the next phase.

*Phase 5: Settlement and community integration. "Syrian refugees will be transported to communities across Canada, where they will begin to build a new life for themselves and their family. They will be provided with immediate, essential services and long-term settlement support to ensure their successful resettlement and integration into Canadian society."*<sup>52</sup>

So far, we have explored the present and past dimensions of the Canadian *border construct*. The #WelcomeRefugees plan also elucidates the future dimension. The last phase is particularly interesting because it projects into the future beyond that which we would typically expect from a *border construct*: "Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada is working with settlement partners, private sponsors, provincial, territorial, and municipal government to coordinate and welcome these refugees into their new communities. Support that will be

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<sup>50</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 4. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase4.asp>

<sup>51</sup> Ngugi, Kamau. 2007. Long walk to safety: experiences of refugee claimants with Canada's refugee policies and practices. *Theses and dissertations, Ryerson University*. Paper 254: 38.

<sup>52</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. 2016, March 15. #WelcomeRefugees: How it will work. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/overview.asp>

available includes orientation to life in Canada, access to healthcare, permanent housing, counselling, language services, schooling and other federal, provincial, territorial and municipal support services.”<sup>53</sup> These services would exist in society for migrants and refugees regardless of the *border construct*; however, these services were specifically associated with the Phase 5 and as such, they became an integral part of the *border construct*. This long-term commitment to the ease of transition for refugees has not been emphasized as strongly in the past.

## Conclusion

The overarching value of temporal dimension to the study of border constructs is two-fold. First, it allows us to evaluate the *border construct* along its phases and compare their efficacy. Phases 1 through 4 were implemented so quickly and Canada suddenly took in a great number of refugees so Phase 5 (long-term settlement) was criticized for not being as robust as promised. Refugees found that their living stipend ran out after four months instead of five and that long-term employment was more elusive than expected.<sup>54</sup>

Second, the temporal dimension allows us to compare the overall *border construct* as it appeared under the #WelcomeRefugee plan with past and future versions. The #WelcomeRefugees project was commended domestically and internationally for its efficiency compared to previous versions of border processing, which were considered bureaucratic and lethargic. The plan was so successful that Parliament has pushed to resettle future refugee groups using its blueprint.<sup>55</sup> Granted, not every future *border construct* will take the same shape as

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<sup>53</sup> Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. N.d #WelcomeRefugees: Phase 5. <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/welcome/phase5.asp>

<sup>54</sup> A greater evaluation of #WelcomeRefugees can be found at Zyfi, Jona. 2016, May. Syrian refugee resettlement in Canada: An auto-ethnographic account of sponsorship. Canadian Association for Refugee and Forced Migration Studies. *Working Paper No: 2016/2*.

<sup>55</sup> Levitz, Stephanie. 2016, July 17. Canada Syrian refugees program sparks political push for other refugee resettlement. *Huffington Post*.

#WelcomeRefugees moving forward because of resource constraints (for example, chartered flights for each group may be unfeasible). However, there will surely be uptake of transferable elements, perhaps those such as expedited processing in transit countries.

Finally, in a world where globalization has shortened time and shrunk distance, it would be worth it to see how IRCC's three-month deadline condensed time-space between Canada and Syria between November 2015 and March 2016. In the future, perhaps such an understanding and visualization would be instrumental in helping refugees overcome the *psychological threshold* that holds them back from decisions that might improve their livelihood, since their families, friends, and home state may not appear so far away on Speikermann and Wegener's time-space map. Regarding territory in this way may be a more accurate moving forward in a world with faster travel and sleeker border processes. One thing is for certain: understanding that a temporal dimension of exists helps us more fully understand the living, mobile organism that is the *border construct*.

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