



Magazine

Borders

THE MAY ISSUE // 2022

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EDITORIAL

Borders: Lines That Shape Our Lives

Photo: The US-Mexico Border Wall/
Gary Goodenough/Flickr.

Physical border structures are the most tangible, and often controversial, representation of international division.

Aarne Hakomäki

Editor-in-chief

Tanya

Editor-in-chief

States' sovereign control within their borders is generally regarded as a cardinal rule keeping the international order in place. Borders, however, are much more than just legal limits for governments. They represent the division of people and cultures. Being born on a specific side of an international border can have an immense impact on a person's prospects and opportunities.

How borders impact our daily lives is constantly in flux. While the emergence of political and economic unions such as

the European Union (EU) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have created seemingly borderless pockets of the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic brought border controls back into reality everywhere. Respect for international borders is also not a universal truth. This became alarmingly clear on February 21st, as Russia recognised the independence of two breakaway regions in Eastern Ukraine and began a full-blown invasion of Ukraine's territory on February 24th.

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In this issue of FUF Lund Magazine, the impact of borders on development issues will be addressed through a broad range of topics. Our writers report on cases including the impact of trade agreements such as The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and the African Continental Free Trade Area, life in border regions between Tanzania and Kenya as well as in the Sahel stretching from Eritrea to Senegal, indigenous peoples' rights, differences in treatment of refugees within the West, intangible borders created by technology as well as the potential of blockchain for a more transparent development sector.

How do cross-border inequalities affect the daily lives of those caught on the other side? What have been the impacts of free trade agreements on development and what are the key challenges to their enforcement? Can technology create borderless alternatives, or will it just create different kinds of borders? The May 2022 issue of the FUF Lund Magazine hopes to answer these questions and bring the many aspects of borders some much needed attention.



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Photo: Michael Gabelmann/ Flickr

Flourishing Market in Marrakech Filled with Regional Goods and Traders

COVID-19 Delays the Ambitions of one of the World's Largest Economic Unions

A News Article by Anton Ottosson

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of the largest economic unions in the world, celebrated its first anniversary on January 1, 2022. However, COVID-19 related restrictions, political clashes, and poor infrastructure have proven obstacles to this young economic union.

The trade deal was signed by a staggering 54 countries that pledged to eliminate import tariffs on approximately 97% of all goods traded between the countries. The scope of the effort is the largest of its kind, as the deal applies to 1.3 billion people in over 54 countries and an area that is responsible for a total GDP of USD 3.4 trillion. The hope is that it will increase Africa's GDP by a further USD 450 billion by 2035 whilst also adding 76 billion in revenue to the rest of the world per a World Bank report.

The implemented measures of the agreement include areas such as trade facilitation and services, as well as regulatory measures adhering to issues such as sanitary standards and technical barriers to trade. The union is hoping to bring 30 million people out of extreme poverty whilst equally increasing the incomes of an additional 68 million people who live on less than 5.50 dollar per day. Ultimately, the deal's main objective is to create the environment needed to implement the reforms necessary to attain long-term and inclusive economic growth.

The AfCFTA Struggled in the Wake of the Pandemic

Whilst many had high hopes for the agreement, the first year would prove suboptimal due to the pandemic causing a global economic downturn which concurrently disrupted global supply chains. Nevertheless, as Mr. Wamkele Mene (the Secretary-General of the AfCFTA) stated in an interview with Africa Renewal, "Increased intra-African trade is what will drive economic development post-COVID-19." Enabling intra-African trade will prove essential in the success of the AfCFTA as this currently only constitutes 17% of the continent's total exports.

As the pandemic is coming to an end, the socio-economic impact on the continent has been substantial. Economic growth decreased by 3.3% in 2020, throwing Africa into its first recession in over 25 years. Forcing over 40 million people into extreme poverty and eradicating what is estimated to be a 5-year effort on poverty alleviation.



Increased intra-African trade is what will drive economic development post-COVID-19.

Another issue relates to the political standings and opinions of the signatories. Whilst many have pledged on paper, as Tanzanian economist Gabriel Mwang'omda said, "The political will is not 100% and not every country is committed to implementing this free trade area agreement". Particularly worrying is the lack of transparency, as most negotiations are happening behind the closed doors.



People trading different goods on a pier in Barra, which is a crossing point to Banjul.



The political will is not 100% and not every country is committed to implementing this free trade area agreement

Other hurdles that have been mentioned in AfCFTA's successful implementation include poor continental infrastructure, corruption, waiting times at border crossings and excessive bureaucratic obstacles. In addition, there are eight other regional economic blocs within the AfCFTA which further complicates the process. However, the pandemic did provide benefits as it made companies digitise their infrastructures, forcing many to get acquainted with online solutions to manage employees, customers and clients. In short, only time will tell how successful the AfCFTA will turn out to be.



Anton Ottosson

23 years old, currently finishing my BsC in Economy & Society at Lund University, my major interests include economic development and international relations.

Rising Inflation Disproportionately Threatens the Lives of the Poor

A News Article by Tove Björling

Photo: JAXPORT/Flickr

The pandemic has caused major disruptions in production and supply globally, which has contributed to inflation.

In the shadow of a global supply chain crisis and the invasion of Ukraine, prices have soared and deliveries have been delayed globally. This has major implications for development prospects of the near future.

Today, production and supply of goods is highly dependent on continuous flows across national borders. To illustrate this, an iPhone requires components produced in 43 countries spread across six continents to reach its final form. This transnational production network is called the global supply chain.

Labor disruptions, restrictions and lockdowns amid the COVID-19 pandemic have severely disrupted the system - causing delays and rising production and

delivery costs. Meanwhile, demand for goods has remained fairly high despite the pandemic. In some aspects, partly because of it. For example, it has led to a shift in spending from services to goods. It had also contributed to a rise in e-commerce, which grew 26 percent in 2020. As delivery and production costs have been passed on to consumers, consumer prices have risen sharply - generating widespread inflation. The high inflation is also a result of supply not keeping up with demand, amplified by

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rapidly rising demand in countries recovering from the pandemic.

Disproportionate effect on the most vulnerable

The supply chain crisis has led to a slowdown of global growth and is estimated to have affected two thirds of the world population in 2021. However, those hit the hardest by the rising prices are the poorest within and among countries. This, since they spend a larger share of their income on basic necessities.

There is also another dimension to this – rising prices reduce the capacity of humanitarian organisations. The UN World Food Programme recently stated

that “the costs of reaching people in need is rising”. Their cost for food has increased by 30 percent since 2019 and 42 million dollars monthly for its delivery. Absolute poverty had already increased by 70 million people in 2021 compared to pre-pandemic levels, leaving more people in need of humanitarian assistance.



***“The costs of reaching people in need is rising”
- The World Food Programme***



Photo: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid/Flickr

The delivery delays have also disrupted vaccine distribution, potentially stalling recovery from the pandemic. Due to the large gap in the rate of fully vaccinated individuals between high- and low-income countries, this could also disproportionately affect poorer countries.

Recovery could take time

Although supply chains have partly recovered as the pandemic fades in many parts of the world, full recovery is expected to take time. On top of this, the invasion of Ukraine has caused renewed pressure on commodity and energy

prices. Wheat prices rose by 54 percent and oil prices reached record levels in just over a week after the invasion, although both prices have dropped slightly since then. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned of this accelerating the pre-existing inflation crisis – which has since then materialized. The UN has warned of the invasion worsening the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, calling for urgent financial assistance. Concern has also been raised by the World Bank, warning of rising poverty levels. The situation is likely to put inflation recovery on further hold. Considering the disproportionate effect on the world's poor, this paints a bleak picture of global development and poverty reduction in the near future.



Tove Björling

Tove Björling is studying a Master's programme in Economic Development at Lund University. Her interests include topics related to inequality, the environment, conflict and the political dimensions of economics and development.

A group of women in a rural Sahel landscape, some carrying water on their heads.

How the UN is Creating Small Islands of Hope in the Sahel

A Reportage by Lauritz Elias Gaard

Many years of bad governance, and very little focus on the needs of the majority of the population in the Sahel's border regions has now started to show its effects; elite capture on agency has led to marginalisation of local communities, which in turn is fuelling conflict and violent extremism in the Sahel. With a population expected to double by 2050, and with temperature increasing 1.5 times faster than the global average, these trends are only getting worse.

Africa's western Sahel region, which stretches from Senegal and Mauritania to Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger and Chad as well as northern Nigeria, has been increasingly affected by a disease with a far more devastating impact on its popu-

lation than the recent Covid-19 pandemic; conflict and violent extremism. Although not a communicable disease, conflict and violent extremism has been spreading rapidly throughout the central Sahel region like a contagion,

and has now started to threaten its border areas with coastal West Africa.

- Since the president of Libya was deposed in 2011, we have seen a downward trend of conflict dynamics and forced migration spreading across the Sahel region, especially in rural cross-border areas where the majority of the population live, with a high risk of cross border transfer, says Olivier Mukarji, CEO at [OAM Consult](#).

Despite attempts to hold perpetrators accountable, many reports still go uninvestigated. And when agencies do try to act, issues such as lack of referral pathways, failure to contextualise reporting mechanisms, and

a continued culture of silence mean that cases rarely get properly addressed.

The number of violent events in the Sahel such as attacks by violent extremist groups, has tripled since 2016, whilst the number of displaced people has amounted to 3.4 million as of December 2021. Currently, approximately 20 million people are facing severe levels of food insecurity, the highest caseload recorded since 2016. Although the Sahel was never part of the problem of climate change, it will bear some of the world's heaviest burdens from the climate crisis as the region is facing temperature increases 1.5 times faster than the global average. Coupled with a population expected to





Photo: OAM Consult / WFP

double by 2050, levels of food insecurity, forced displacement and conflicts are predicted to further increase in the Sahel if the underlying drivers of these issues are not addressed.

- There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development, states the Preamble of the United Nations General Assembly resolution “The World We Want: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

These words highlight the devastating impact of conflict on human security, human development and human rights which may reset many years of hard-won development gains. but more importantly, that development is a prerequisite for preventing conflicts from emerging in the first place.

According to Olivier Mukarji, the upsurge in conflict and violent extremism in the region is caused by many years of poor land use structures and governance, such



The number of violent events in the Sahel such as attacks by violent extremist groups, has tripled since 2016, whilst the number of displaced people has amounted to 3.4 million as of December 2021.

as management of access to land and natural resources. This is driving competition over resources between farmers and herders, which often results in violent conflicts. The effects of climate change such as desertification and shifting rainfall patterns are further exacerbating tensions between farmers and herders. Elite capture of agency has led to political marginalisation of rural populations who lack access to basic social services and jobs. This is especially the case for the large unemployed youth population, who as a result have become more vulnerable to radicalization by violent extremist groups.



Elite capture of agency has led to political marginalisation of rural populations who lack access to basic social services and jobs

While the response from the international community to the contagion of conflict and violent extremism in the Sahel has included prompt security interventions and increased humanitarian assistance to affected populations, these are all short-term solutions. A recent study by the United Nations has highlighted the lack of more long-term solutions in the Sahel such as addressing the underlying issues of poor local governance and land rights, lacking natural resource management and limited jobs especially in rural areas where the majority of the population live.

- There is a need to reset development to its primary principle by figuring out 'the why', whilst strengthening 'the how' through active participation by the people, says Ishmael Doodoo, Programme Manager & Coordinator, UN Joint Sahel Programme.

The United Nations Joint Sahel Programme is an example of the need to change the narratives around Africa's border regions to one that emphasise the capabilities and agency of local communities. The programme is carrying out interventions in the hotspot of the conflict in the Sahel and thus bringing development to many communities who have never before received support from international actors engaged in the region.

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- If we want to address the issue of rising insecurity and violent extremism, we need to stabilise the cross-border areas while bringing development to maintain peace across the Sahel, by creating small islands of hope, Ishmael Doodoo elaborates.

Through its interventions, the *Joint Programme* has created small islands of hope in the Sahel region. By assisting farmers and herders on land issues and focusing on social cohesion, the programme has prevented the emergence of new conflicts in its areas of intervention. It has provided livelihood opportunities and vocational training, especially for the youth, which has helped in preventing radicalisation and recruitment of local young populations by violent extremist groups. The programme has also strengthened the capacities of the local

governments in the Liptako-Gourma Area to take over these interventions. This ensures the sustainability of development outcomes and strengthens the local ownership of interventions by the Joint Programme.

According to Olivier Mukarji, any prospect to effectively stop the contagion of conflict and violent extremism in the Sahel region is dependent on addressing underlying development issues such as management of shared natural resources and land rights, lacking jobs and livelihood opportunities, as well as marginalisation and poor social cohesion. In turn, this implies changing the narrative of the Sahel from one that highlights the region's immediate threats, to one that highlights its potential and opportunities of change – its people and their agency.



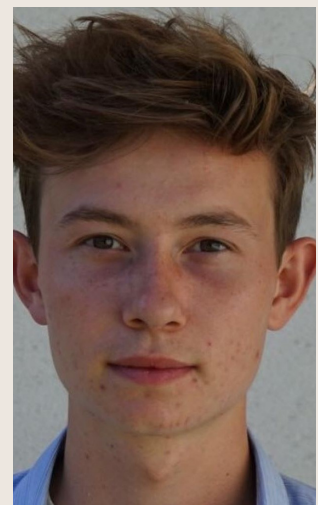
About the interviewees:

Olivier Mukarji is the CEO of OAM Consult, a boutique consultancy that seeks to strengthen coherence between the policy, programming and research sphere as well as securing short- and long-term financing – in particular climate finance – for international development actors. OAM Consult also has a strong focus on data feedback loops to strengthen the ownership of development interventions by local populations.

Ishmael Doodoo (UNDP) is the Programme Manager & Coordinator of the UN Joint Sahel Programme; a Swedish funded programme in the cross-border areas of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, also known as the Liptako-Gourma area.

Lauritz Elias Gaard

Lauritz is a student at the Development Studies Program at Lund University with a special interest in the interlinkages between development, security, and climate change in the Sahel. He is also a Humanitarian, Development, & Peace (HDP) and climate finance analyst at OAM Consult.



The Avocado Business and Invisible Barriers

A Reportage by Tim Möller

The growth of avocado farming in northern Tanzania is limited due to invisible barriers

Arbitrary divisions of people is a common theme across the African continent. In Tanzania it has direct consequences on businesses in the agricultural sector, at a time when both the produce and the opportunities they possess are ripe. Borders between farmers and market, however, make transactions difficult.

A border separates the two countries of Tanzania and Kenya. The shared history of the two countries has been emphasised from the top of the political hierarchy. In an agreement signed last spring, the two countries decided to remove barriers to trade caused by the

Covid-19 pandemic. The President of Kenya stated that the two countries share a common culture, language, heritage and a common ancestry. These similarities were echoed as a reason for greater integration of trade and for the removal of barriers created by a border

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that acts as a reminder of their colonial legacies.

The Miti ya Maajabu Initiative seeks to empower farmers

The challenges in trade and the attempts at overcoming them can be exemplified by the Miti ya Maajabu Initiative in northern Tanzania - a social enterprise aiming at empowering smallholder female farmers. Through crowdfunding the initiative has been able to set up a tree nursery of avocado seedlings to be sold by the women.

One of the main destinations for the avocados is Kenya. The founders of the enterprise, Elisabeth Makala, Irene Francis, and Vasco Kido, provide insights into how these barriers affect actual livelihoods. Their enterprise currently supports around 50 female farmers, and aims to reach over 1200 women across the Northern Highlands, an area endowed with good conditions for large scale agricultural production, but shackled by the legacies of colonial borders.

The production of Hass avocados is an example of a field where improvements can be made, but also one where the border proves an obstacle. The global market for avocados is growing, and it is expected to become the most traded

tropical fruit globally by 2030. As the opportunities for countries to venture into the market grows, Kenya has already positioned itself as a major emerging exporter. These developments are closely linked to Tanzania, as 57% of Tanzanian avocado exports are sent to Kenya, usually for transshipment to later be shipped to the larger markets in Europe.

According to Elisabeth and Irene, Kenya has both better infrastructure, better knowledge about activities of advertising and packaging, as well as a population more adept at English compared to Tanzania. They claim that all of these things combined make Kenya the go-to country for exporting avocados to a global market, meaning that for initiatives such as Miti ya Maajabu to succeed, most of the produce needs to be sent across the border.

This is where barriers come into play. As Elisabeth, Irene, and Vasco explain, the process of cross-border trade is riddled with barriers. During the Covid-19 pandemic both countries enforced mandatory testing for truck drivers, often paid out of pocket and with long waiting times. The border also represents a divide in larger institutional differences, including different currencies forcing producers to account for exchange rate fluctuations, a feat made harder as many of the small-scale farmers lack the necessary education. Another issue is

that of country-specific laws, including tax law, of which many of the small-scale farmers also lack education in.



The border also represents a divide in larger institutional differences.

Higher agricultural productivity is important for multiple reasons. It is a source of food security in a country where one in five people state that they have to occasionally have access to less food than they would want. It could also alleviate poverty and create a foundation for future economic growth. On the contrary, the lower realized productivity has the effect of lower wages than what could otherwise be the case, and limited access to formal employment. It is for this reason that the countries have been working on improving the situation.

Why borders matter to avocado farmers

In theory, barriers may create direct costs for businesses, disincentivising them from investing in increased production and to make new investments. The barriers also create two separate domestic markets instead of a larger shared East African market. The effect is a reduced potential for economies of scale, or in other words, higher productivity.



The barriers also create two separate domestic markets instead of a larger shared East African market

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As the people behind the initiative explain, education on administrative differences between the countries could be one way of overcoming some of these issues. The Miti ya Maajabu Initiative's efforts act as an example of mitigating measures taken by the invincible barriers that the arbitrary border creates.

While attempts have been made and steps are being taken to reduce the perceived obstacles the border creates, it remains a symbol of arbitrary divide from colonial times. An arbitrary divide of land, and of people. An arbitrary divide with real life consequences for the world's poor.



The Miti ya Maajabu Initiative's efforts act as an example of mitigating measures taken by the invincible barriers that the arbitrary border creates.



Tim Möller

Tim Möller is 25 years old, and currently studying his last semester pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Economy and Society. Interests include economic development, primarily issues pertaining to poverty alleviation.



The virtual 10th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Intersessional Ministerial Meeting

Economic Partnership Boosts Cross-border Trade in the Asia-Pacific Region

An analysis by Camilia El Sayed

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement's purpose is to boost trade across borders as well as narrowing the gap between developed and developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region. But some countries, such as the Philippines and India, fear downsides to this deal.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement is a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the ten members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) plus Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia and China. RCEP is the largest FTA in the world. It is made up of about 30 percent of the world's GDP, and is expected to make up 50 percent by 2030, and incorporate about a third of the world's population.

Negotiations concerning RCEP were first launched during the 2012 ASEAN Summit in Cambodia, and then signed on 15 November 2020. The legal minimum for the agreement to be able to enter into force was then reached in November 2021. On 1 January 2022 the RCEP Agreement entered into force for ten out of the fifteen participating countries – Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, China, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam. It will enter into force for the remaining signatories 60 days after they have handed in their ratification with the Depositary. A Depositary is usually a state or an institution that is entrusted to take care of documents such as multilateral treaties and agreements. South Korea has ratified the agreement, and it entered into force on 1 February 2022, but Indonesia, Malaysia, and Myanmar are yet to ratify the deal, and the Philippines made the choice not to ratify the RCEP at all.

The purpose of the RCEP Agreement

The RCEP Agreement shows the region's commitment to keep their markets open. It is a deal that they claim will strengthen the economic integration in the region, support a rules-based multilateral trading system that is free, open and fair, and sooner or later also contribute to global post-pandemic recovery efforts. Many different actors in the Asia-Pacific region have expressed their support and made statements about the beneficial aspects of the RCEP.

According to Bounleuth Luangpaseuth, the vice-president of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the RCEP Agreement is a tool that can be used to boost trade and attract investments among ASEAN members, and it is of great importance when it comes to further promoting free trade.



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The HSBC bank is one of the leading international banks, their regional head of global trade and receivables finance for Asia-Pacific, Ajay Sharma, stated that RCEP's entry into force would allow Asia to gain its pre-Covid growth trajectory back. With the help of the RCEP Agreement, it will also be easier to use Southeast Asia as a base when it comes to production, and this in its turn could speed up the variety of supply chains and redistribute the foreign direct investments that are already moving around in the region.

Jack Lee, chief executive officer and founder of the online market Smile Shop in Cambodia, said that the RCEP Agreement will boost cross-border e-commerce and make the development gap between developed and developing countries smaller. In the case of cross-border e-commerce, the RCEP will help boost it since there already exists relevant rules concerning electronic certifications, electronic signatures, consumer rights protection, and so on, which will aid the development of cross-border e-commerce. In the case of Cambodia, an agreement like the RCEP Agreement, which does not impose tariffs on cross-border e-commerce, will have a positive effect on Cambodia's

national e-commerce related tax regulations, according to Lee. Other good things coming out of the agreement, according to magazines like the South China Morning Post, are;

- Tariffs, which are taxes imposed on imported goods and services, on 65 percent of traded goods are expected to immediately reach zero under the regional agreement, and in the coming 20 years that figure is expected to rise, which means that around 90 percent of tariffs on traded goods will reach zero.
- Furthermore, the RCEP Agreement's "rules of origin" framework is another benefit that states that exporters within the RCEP only need to source 40 percent of inputs from within the bloc, in order for their final products to qualify for tariff preferences when exported to other countries belonging to the RCEP.

By entering the RCEP Agreement the members could boost their economies through free-trade across intra-regional borders, which would somewhat aid the members in recovering from the economic losses they might have suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Photo: Canva

Floating market in Bangkok, Thailand

By entering the RCEP Agreement the members could boost their economies through free-trade across intra-regional borders

Voices against the RCEP Agreement

There are also those who have raised their voices against joining the RCEP. The Philippines, for example, chose to sign the agreement in 2020, but decided not to ratify it after the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) in the Philippines published a position paper where they warned that the rules that the RCEP proposed will significantly obstruct the implementation and effectiveness of trade remedies. India opted out of the agreement in 2019 due to, amongst others, the risk posed by imports to national industries.



Camilia El Sayed

Camilia graduated from Lund University with a masters in Asian studies in June 2021. Her interests include women's rights, sexual minority rights, inequality, and also recently developmental issues.

Blockchain Technology in Development: New Opportunities and Challenges

A Chronicle by Grayden Prince

Photo: Canva

Blockchain technologies, such as cryptocurrencies, promise greater transparency and efficiency for development actors and interventions. While this is an attractive promise, the potential harm of this technology has yet to be widely discussed and understood.

In 2018 the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, highlighted an urgent need in the development sector to better understand disruptive technologies and how they may be utilised to support achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. One such “frontier” technology is called blockchain, which has stood out in particular in recent years due to its touted potential for improving transparency, aid efficiency, and agency in the development sector.

To this end, multiple actors in the humanitarian and development sector have initiated pilot projects using block-

chain technology. For example, both the World Food Program and the International Federation of the Red Cross have evaluated the use of blockchain technology in digital cash transfer projects for poverty alleviation.

Although blockchain is more well-known as the foundational technology for cryptocurrencies, there is much more that this complex technology can offer. Blockchain technology possesses the potential to address recurrent issues in the development sector, by contributing to greater decentralisation, scalability, and transparency of activities

and funding, according to a [recent report](#) by the Overseas Development Institute*. Thus, it is important for development actors to consider how blockchain technology could increase efficiency, address accountability issues, and contribute to more impactful outcomes. However, we first need to ask: does this technology deliver on the aforementioned promises?

Development practitioners need to be cautious when attempting the design innovation interventions with blockchain technology, according to [an article](#) in the Gender and Development journal. Academics and development actors note that blockchain technology could exacerbate existing inequalities when used in development interventions, especially regarding the risk of widening knowledge and digitalisation gaps.

Some have even pointed out that states may utilise blockchain technology to recentralise power at the expense of its population. For example, El Salvador's recent move to legalise Bitcoin as a currency has been criticised despite the government's promises of greater economic empowerment.



Blockchain technology could exacerbate existing inequalities when used in development interventions, especially regarding the risk of widening knowledge and digitalisation gaps





Where does power sit in interventions supported by blockchain technology, and in what way is it being redistributed, if at all?

In light of development actors' often limited understanding of blockchain technology and the idealistic promises that accompany it, we must take a step back and reflect. How is this technology being used, by whom, and for whom? Where does power sit in interventions supported by blockchain technology, and in what way is it being redistributed, if at all? These are just some poignant questions, with many more to still be discovered along the path to better understanding this technology.



Grayden Prince

Grayden is studying a Master's in International Development and Management (LUMID) at Lund University. He is particularly interested in the intersection of conflict and development, gender in development, decolonizing research, and innovation in the development sector.



Photo: Mercy Corps/Flickr

Belleus Pierre uses the mobile money programme T-Cash to sell food supplies in St. Marc, Haiti

Language Gap Keeps the Digital Door Locked

A Chronicle by Emily Elderfield

Digital technologies are becoming more commonplace in development programming. Yet language barriers keep the digital door locked for millions of people.

As we move through a globalised and digitised 21st century, traditional borders are dissolving, and development organisations seek to leverage the power of digital tech.

However, the digital space is not accessible for everyone. Significant age, gender and location gaps persist, even as organisations strive to increase

access for women, older adults, and rural populations. Yet, another gap is shutting people out – the language gap.

If you're reading this, chances are you have a good level of literacy, you speak English well, and your language can be typed using a keyboard. The same is not true for billions of people around the world.

Machine translators like Google Translate have transformed multilingual communication. At the touch of a button, you can translate entire documents or web pages – if you speak the right language. Of approximately 7,000 languages globally, only 108 are supported by Google Translate in March 2022. The vast majority of these are dominant or colonial languages such as English, Chinese and Spanish.

“
*Of approximately
7,000 languages
globally, only 108 are
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Translate*
”

Wikipedia, perhaps the biggest repository of open-access information, has numerous multilingual versions. Yet, while there are 6.5 million articles in English and 2.6 million in Swedish,

a Chewa speaker in Malawi or a Tigrinya speaker in Ethiopia will find fewer than 1,000 articles in their native language. If content isn't available in your language, you cannot learn about it – and you also cannot share what you want to say with the world.

Technology privileges the Global North in other less obvious ways. Keyboards might seem fairly innocuous, but they too reveal how marginalised language speakers face inequity. Keyboards were first designed for European languages with around 30 letters. But what about everyone else? What about alphabets too big to fit on a regular keyboard? And what about languages that don't have a written script at all?

Of course, people find creative ways to make tech work for them. For example, the overwhelming majority of messages sent on social media platforms in Cambodia are audio, not text.





Keyboards were first designed for European languages with around 30 letters. But what about everyone else? What about alphabets too big to fit on a regular keyboard?

Khmer's alphabet is 74 letters long – and tech simply wasn't designed with that type of language in mind. Building text and speech corpora, such as Masakhane's project working with marginalised languages from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, also helps close the digital language gap by providing data to build translation tools and voice-based tech.

As our world becomes more digitised, we must keep the door open for everyone, no matter the language they speak.



Emily Elderfield

Emily is studying a Master's Programme in International Development & Management (LUMID). Her development interests include reproductive justice and gender equity in vulnerable healthcare settings.

Contemporary Conflicts are Changing the Meaning of Borders

A Chronicle by Elianne Kjellman

Photo: Christian Lue/ Unsplash

The significance of borders in times of conflict has during the last century become increasingly elusive. War no longer solely involves two actors on either side of a frontier. This invites us to rethink our notion of borders in the context of conflict. What have they become, if more than a line drawn in the sand?

Geopolitical conflict unfolds differently today than it did 100 years ago. As our world has become increasingly global, international relations have changed. Bonds have been established and conflicts have been enabled between states that were previously not likely to interact much. Military alliances such as NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization) alter borders, not in physical form but in allegiance. Even conflicts between neighboring countries have far-reaching consequences. Local conflicts have global implications in terms of economic turbulence, forced displacement, etc.

The war currently being waged on Ukraine by Russia exemplifies this, as the Russian invasion of Ukrainian borders significantly escalated the conflict. However, involvement of the outside world through sanctions and aid also has international impacts, such as rising oil and gas prices. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has emphasized how the conflict concerns not just the border between Russia and Ukraine, but between Russia and the whole of Europe. The border is now not only one of geography, but one of ideology. In this regard, borders have come to entail something

much more complicated than a physical boundary or nationality. International borders are now being drawn by cultural values, trade relations and political cooperation.

Still, this leaves us with the questions; Have borders become more or less meaningful in times of conflict? Is state sovereignty sacrificing its superiority, or do national borders simply no longer automatically imply inescapable self-reliance? Perhaps there is some truth to both alternatives. While the expansion of collective borders ensures members' security, it could simultaneously undermine their capability to act in self-interest. The national border is no longer the sole, or maybe even the most relevant, component of understanding a conflict.



Have borders become more or less meaningful in times of conflict?

The international borders of tomorrow will not just be the result of a re-drawn map, but of the conflicts and partnerships of today. A changing world brings changing borders. What these will be and what significance they will have is something only time will tell. The only absolute is, they will not remain the same.



A changing world brings changing borders



Elianne Kjellman

Elianne is currently pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Development Studies at Lund University. Her main topics of interest are international relations and the direct implications of foreign policy.



Photo: Joe Brusky/ Flickr

Artificial Barriers: The Imposition of State Borders on Indigenous Lands

A Chronicle by Ivette Nogués

Indigenous Peoples inhabited the Earth long before the formation of modern states, yet they were utterly ignored when these arose and the subsequent imposition of state borders took place. As a result of this, thousands of Indigenous Peoples were separated from their families and forced to change their lifestyles.

Indigenous Peoples have faced innumerable challenges over the centuries to preserve their livelihoods, territories, and heritage. Artificial borderlines have compromised many of their traditional practices, as well as their sacred ceremonies and migratory patterns. Their lands have been affected by human-induced climate change, as well as heavily polluted by extractive industries. Uncountable indigenous lands all over the world have been affected by a rapid process of globalisation, which has led to many Indigenous Peoples being forced to leave behind their traditional ways of life in order to make a living in the contemporary world. The establishment of state borders played a big role in many of the challenges that the Indigenous communities have had to face, yet the Peoples whose lands were most affected by these seemingly arbitrary barriers were never consulted nor properly taken into account during the agreements.

Among other things, the creation of borders has had negative environmental impacts, including but not limited to, the ecological damage of building barriers and border patrol operations on indigenous lands. It has also put at risk sacred areas and impeded access to places that were previously used for cultural or spiritual practices. Furthermore, border enforcement and

militarisation compromised the free interaction between Indigenous Peoples across states and in turn affected the possibility to maintain social relationships between the different communities or family members that resided on the other side of the border.



Uncountable indigenous lands all over the world have been affected by a rapid process of globalisation, which has led to many Indigenous Peoples being forced to leave behind their traditional ways of life in order to make a living in the contemporary world.

These issues have received some attention from international entities, such as the United Nations, which highlighted the right of Indigenous Peoples to preserve their ties with their native lands and communities across international borders in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The UNDRIP, however, has

proven to be hard to implement in many countries with a prominent indigenous population.

On a similar note, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) was promoted to improve border protection while enabling easier admission into the United States for U.S. citizens and lawful international visitors. One of the goals of this initiative was to facilitate border crossing for Indigenous Peoples on the U.S.-Mexico border. However, no clear regulations or written processes have been specified for those who wish to cross the border for cultural, social, or ceremonial purposes, which has been pointed out as one of the main shortcomings of the initiative.

In spite of some of the progress that has been made on a global scale over the years, Indigenous Peoples are still facing serious discrimination and struggling to protect their collective rights in a world where they often lack recognition and legal protection. They are considered one of the most vulnerable groups facing the consequences of climate change and environmental degradation, as well as extreme poverty and the violation of their human rights. Indigenous women and girls are especially vulnerable, and it is estimated that they are about three times

more likely to suffer from some sort of sexual violence compared to non-indigenous women. This all adds to the struggle of Indigenous Peoples, who also need to fight the non-physical barriers that came with the imposition of modern state borders: from poor access to health and education to low employment opportunities, it all leads to further exclusion and discrimination of Indigenous Peoples.



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Indigenous rights are human rights and that is why Indigenous Peoples must be taken into account in global discussions and included in decision-making processes. Until then, climate change mitigation strategies, social justice policies, and initiatives to protect women's rights will all dismiss the core aspect of the issue and, more importantly, a key element of the solution. Until Indigenous Peoples' voices are heard, it will not be possible to successfully achieve climate justice, social fairness, and gender equality.



Ivette Nogués

Ivette is an undergraduate student of Development Studies at Lund University with a special interest in environmental and indigenous-related issues



Xenophobia penetrates an unrecognizably warm welcome

A Chronicle by Louise Ekelund

The fact that settled countries with high levels of security need to open up for people fleeing for their lives is not new, but seems to be of more importance now than just a few weeks ago. Immense actions are taken by world leaders to support vulnerable people in the east of Europe. Actions which look remarkably different compared to other situations when they are usually conspicuous by their absence.

– *The Iraq war did happen. What the refugee crisis has done is force the Western European public to think. Whether they can force their governments to act and bring about a solution is another question,* wrote the journalist Imran Khan in Al Jazeera in 2015.

Poland has since the 27th of february 2022 received a flood of terrified Ukrainian citizens attempting to save their families from Russian missiles and violent infringements. The EU has decided to grant Ukrainian nationals and permanent residents the right to live and work

registered within the union for one year without requirement to apply or go through any asylum procedures. A status that further can be extended for two more years, depending on the security situation in the home country.

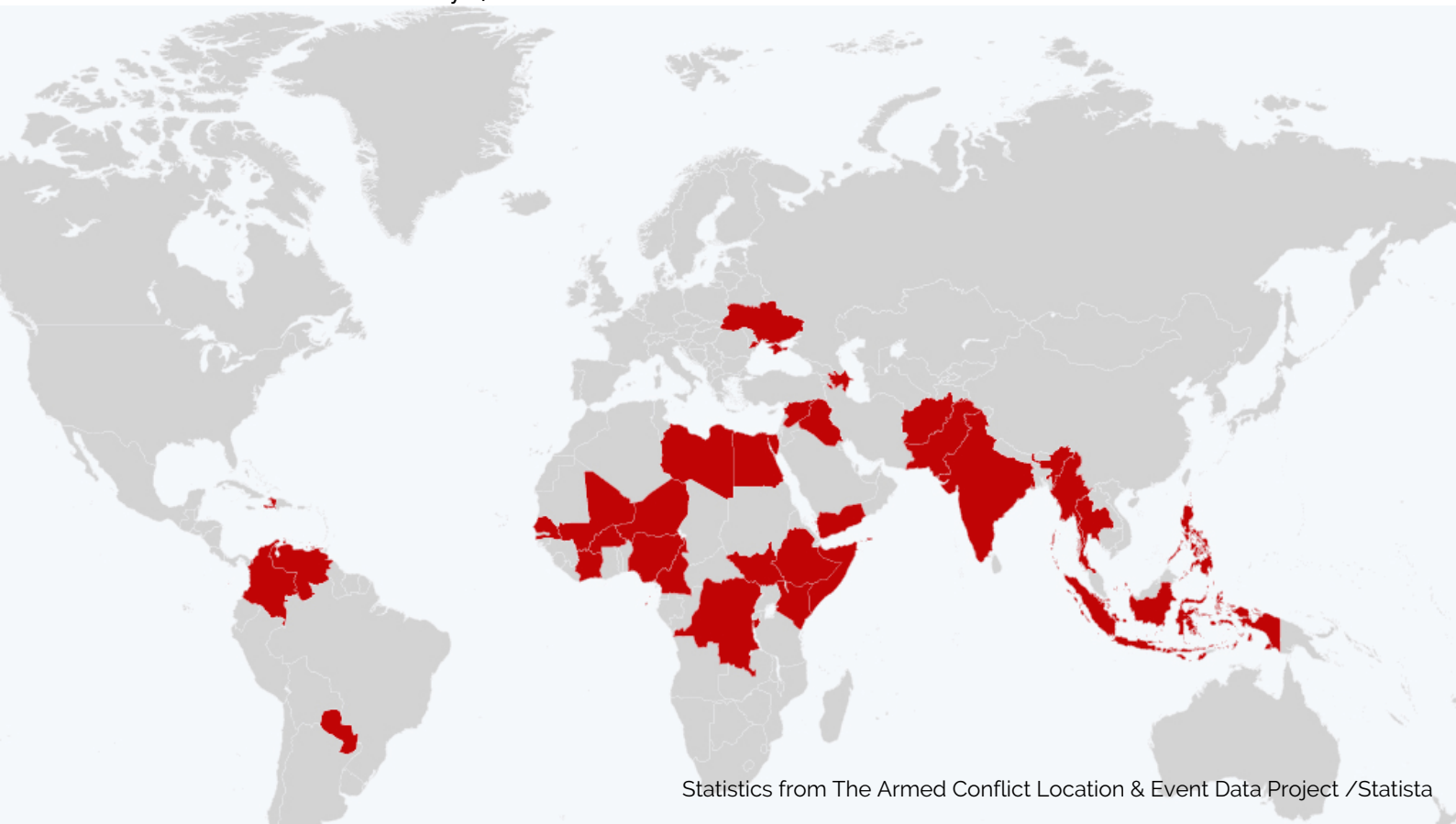
– *Europe stands by those in need of protection*, expresses the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, in a statement that outlined the upcoming plans.

People without Ukrainian permanent residence do on the other hand not get the same invitation to stay in the territory of the EU.

According to UNHCR, globally there were already 82 million people on the run from their homes when the first Ukrainians fled their country. Including over 6 million Syrians who have been uprooted for over 10 years now. Not to mention, almost 48 million people who have been forced from their homes and are living internally displaced within their own countries' borders due to violent conflicts in Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, just to name a few.

Moreover, Western media's analysis of the Russian invasion has received some criticism. For instance, the CBS journalist Charlie D'Agata gave a greatly criticised

Countries in which armed clashes between state forces and/or rebels were reported in 2022. * As of February 4th 2022



statement while broadcasting live from Kiev. In his statement the senior foreign correspondent compared the current location of ongoing conflict with Iraq and Afghanistan:

– This is not a place, with all due respect, like Iraq or Afghanistan that has seen conflict raging for decades. This is a relatively civilised, relatively European – I have to choose those words carefully too – city, where you would not expect that or hope that it is going to happen.

Many argue that a consequence of the 9/11 terror attacks in 2001 was that policy makers seriously began to reconsider immigration from less developed countries, as concerns with migrants threatening national security emerged. Migration and criminality have been interlinked throughout academic debates and among political influencers in recent decades. Current political debates can be considered insufficient when it comes to discussions on whether crime is an imported issue which ‘resettle’ together with immigrants, or if the increase in crime is a product of social exclusion and racial profiling in receiving countries.

Statements made by various European politicians have included claims that Ukrainian refugees are ‘intelligent’, ‘educated’ and ‘Christians, whites, Europeans, who are from us, come from us’. In contrast to ‘refugees we are used to’, referring to refugees from countries exposed to violent conflicts in Africa and the Middle East.

All in all, the activist Nattalie Ström Bunpuckdee specifies in a post on Instagram that getting involved and paying attention to the fearful happenings in the eastern Europe is merely the right thing to do. Although, to prioritize refugees immune from dehumanization (read white) is selective politics at its peak and must invite discussion regarding whether Europe stands by those in need of protection or not.



According to UNHCR, globally there were already 82 million people on the run from their homes when the first Ukrainians fled their country.



Drawings covering a wall in one of Turkey's refugee camps as a response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

Louise Ekelund

Louise is a current student at the Bachelor programme in Development Studies at Lund University. She has a broad interest within the evaluation of the causes of the world's actual unequal schedules, as well as how they behave in the media.





Magazine

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