

Bordering Iberia, globalizing borders: topics for the enhancement of a transnational heritage

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This paper examines the tangible and intangible heritage of bordering processes in the Portuguese-Spanish borderlands in the Iberian Peninsula and Brazil-Uruguay/ Argentina. It also describes some heritage assets, like fortresses and hybrid cultural manifestations, that reveal the construction of “border identities” and, consequently, unique features that can be enhanced from the point of view of Global Studies.

Borders can be examined from the point of view of Global History. On the one hand, this perspective focuses on interconnections and the formation of multicultural societies. On the other hand, it focuses on the dissemination of processes at a global level. Our case-studies have these main features.

Firstly, border communities are culturally unique as results of flows triggered by the separations created by states. For example, from the point of view of language, there are several confluences between Portuguese in Spanish, both in the Iberian Peninsula and South America, called officially “portuñol” in Brazil – Uruguay, and unofficially between Spain and Portugal. Moreover, other cross-borders social activities are known in these territories, like the Smuggling Festival in Alcoutim (Portugal) and Sanlúcar de Guadiana (Spain), or the Carnival Festival in Chuí-Chuy (Brazil – Uruguay), which are telling examples of community building in these contexts.

Secondly, there are several treaties signed between Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms that defined territorial limits, at least since 1297 (Treaty of Alcañices), which contributed to the construction of a unique cultural landscape in Iberian borderlands, particularly in the Lower Guadiana Basin (Portugal and Spain), that partially separated the two countries. Portuguese and Spanish kings stimulated human settlement along that river, a fact that explains the existence of small towns like Ayamonte and Castro Marim, located at river’s mouth, and Alcoutim and Sanlúcar de Guadiana in the hinterland. All these towns have castles and fortresses, which reflects political concerns of surveillance and defence. This is a common feature in the Portuguese-Spanish border, as seen, e.g., in the MS titled *Book of Fortresses (Livro das Fortalezas)*, signed by Duarte d’Armas (1509 – 1510), ordered by the Portuguese king D. Manuel.

Militar architecture is also visible in the borderlands of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay, which is a consequence of the same treaties that delimited the sovereignties' territories in Iberia in the Modern Era. In 1750 and 1777, the Treaties of Madrid and San Ildefonso, respectively, gave an end to several border disputes that resulted from the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. However,

in contrast to the Iberian Peninsula, where most fortresses were built in the Portuguese side, most fortresses were built in the Uruguayan or Spanish side. Their most interesting feature is that these fortresses were inspired in the Iberian buildings.

In our presentation we discuss some of these heritage assets, like the fortresses built in Brazil and Uruguay and settlements that belonged to Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms alternatively, leaving behind hybrid social and cultural realities that can be enhanced as intangible heritage and cross-border identities.

In Portugal and Spain, smuggling is an example of interactions that take place between individuals from each country by virtue of the separations created by the states. It is outstanding the way both smuggling and police surveillance disappeared with the integration of the Iberian countries in Schengen Area, and the contacts between both sides decayed significantly. However, smuggling activities explain why in these regions we can find a mixed vocabulary with the introduction of Spanish words in Portuguese language is and vice-versa. These loans and confluences are not properly enhanced in Iberian border settlements (“Oliventine Portuguese” from Olivenza and “Barranquinho from Barrancos are exceptions). By contrast, the aforementioned “Portuñol”, a mixture of Portuguese, Spanish and Guarani languages, is by now enlisted in World Heritage for its uniqueness as a phenomenon that can only take place in border contexts.

Then, it seems evident that the protection and surveillance of sovereignties limits explain the building of fortresses along the dividing line, but these processes also trigger legal and illegal flows between the communities from each side. This means that interconnections and mutual influences allow us to examine how global processes affect local contexts or how local processes can be examined in global contexts. In South America, in the last 150 years, settlements have been founded for the surveillance of borders, but it also facilitates the communication and commerce with neighbouring countries (e.g., Santa Elena de Uairén, in Venezuela, Pacaraima and Boa Vista and Brazil, as well as Uruguayana between Uruguay and Brazil).

This proposal can be a steppingstone to a global examination of bordering processes and its consequences for the formation of unique cultural features that manifest themselves in tangible and intangible heritage. In this context, a micro-historical analysis is critical for the evaluation of local reactions, and to promote an emancipation from the monolithic perception of countries as territorial entities delimited by borders without contact to the other side. In other words, as territories perceived as ruptures.

This perception moves from an image of *border-fortresses* toward an idea of *border-cooperation*, which is crucial for the definition of new topics for the interpretation of a transnational heritage and the enhancement of cultural diversity in borderlands, both in Iberia and Latin American countries. As political inventions, borders are dividing lines that not always separate peoples, cultures or languages. They can unite, especially in non-conflictive periods, which is the case of the territories examined in this presentation.

To summarise, the Spanish-Portuguese border is a unique case-study. It is the largest and the oldest political border in Europe and was replicated in America and the Pacific Ocean between

the 16th and the 18th centuries. As a global phenomenon, considering all the features these borders have in common, bordering created unique identities that provided inspiration for the creation of interlocal initiatives for community building. Consequently, borders and border heritage, as historical entities, are an opportunity for the promotion of sustainable territorial, social and economic development, considering the fact that these shared landscapes are containers of common historical and cultural inheritances, which reflect themselves in their heritage.