



# Borders, Boundaries, Frontiers, Limits

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## Abstract

This article delves into the intricacies of the uses of the words and concepts of borders, boundaries, frontiers, and limits, to address epistemological difficulties related to linguistic and philosophical confusions, sometimes used to target migrants populations. These confusions accordingly can and should be ended to coherently pose and sufficiently address social and ecological difficulties whose interrelatedness is increasingly acknowledged. This objective can be attained by criticizing the confusion of borders as frontiers and borders as outlines, which tends to lead to conceiving of (unrestrictive) limits as (restrictive) boundaries and inversely. Assumptions about languages (as English, French, Turkish, etc.) according to which some languages could somehow be as such inherently provided with expressive resources that could somehow be as such inherently lacking within other languages are necessarily misled and misleading: expressive resources necessary and sufficient to account for interrelated uses of the mentioned concepts are available in and across different languages. The establishment of such availability suffices to cast into doubt the projection of an inherent lack of such expressive resources on other languages. Analysis of language uses can manifest that distinctions between applications of the mentioned concepts can be achieved without a one-to-one correlation of concepts and words within and across languages.

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**Keywords:** Border, Boundary, Limit, Outline

**Summary:** Introduction: A Philosophical, Ordinary, and Human Problem; I. Linguistic and Philosophical Elucidations about Uses of “Borders”, “Boundaries”, “Frontiers”, and “Limits”; II. Borders and Migration; Conclusion.

## Introduction: A Philosophical, Ordinary, and Human Problem

This article has for objective to address and solve epistemological difficulties which can be encountered in some works of anthropology, philosophy, political

sciences, sociology, also in mediatized discourses, and which have not been related and studied in their interrelations. These difficulties are related to some accounts and explanations provided of languages (so-called “natural languages”, or more simply, languages, such as English, French, Turkish, etc.) in answer to two concerns. The first is about (the status) of the existence of limits, and the second about the sufficiency of languages to make conceptual distinctions with linguistic uses which involve the words “boundaries”, “borders”, “frontiers”, and “limits”. Epistemological questions can indeed be raised with respect to our uses of the word of limit. Indeed, in some cases both the existence and the functioning of limits as such involve human actions (as in cases of borders of countries with border-posts). Although such actions can, at least, seem not to be involved in other cases (as in cases of mountains and seas presented as limits of adjacent inhabited areas). Further epistemological questions can be raised about the status of the existence of limits. Some cases (notably involved by mathematics, by grammatical paradigms, but also by cases involving what are sometimes called “fuzzy borders”) indeed do not involve demarcations as in earlier mentioned cases of some borders of countries.

One philosophical concern is thus about the status of the existence of limits: to think and account for the existence of borders, boundaries, and frontiers involves some implicit or explicit use of the concept of limit. But as not every limit involves demarcation in the earlier mentioned sense, there might seem to be some unavoidable tension, some intrinsic contradiction involved by the very existence of limits. One correlative conception that might seem adequate to solve this difficulty is the conception according to which a one-to-one correlation of words and concepts is both necessary and sufficient to pose and address the issue. That is to say, if distinct words stand for distinct concepts, then we might use distinct words to apply distinct concepts without mistakes (as with English, and the words “boundaries”, “borders”, “frontiers”, and “limits”). Such conception is advantageous (notably internally to one language) as – to use an image – using distinct tools to achieve distinct tasks is likely to contribute to better achievements of the distinct tasks for which the distinct tools have been conceived. But such conception could not turn out necessarily (and even less, unavoidably) adequate, and tends to generate difficulties when *several* languages are considered. The absence of a one-to-one correlation of distinct words with distinct concepts in a language by contrast with another language, can indeed (wrongly or delusively) be assumed to be indicative of an eventual lack of a concept in a language. Remarkable is that such can *unproblematically* be the case: some languages contain concepts that both testify of earlier made distinctions and nuances, and render achievable

experiential distinctions which are adapted to determinate forms of life (one well-known example are the numerous words for and arguably *concepts* of snow present for example in Inuit, which are correlated to practical differences (See Krupnik and Müller-Wille 2010). But such can also be *problematically* the case, especially if it is supposed that a lack of a concept could be *as such* inherent to a language, and therefore definitive.

Such remarks about languages might seem to be *just* about languages, conceived in a narrow sense, as activities related to *only* inherently linguistic units (as morphemes, letters, words, sentences). Nevertheless, the earlier preconceptions about languages also have (un)social and (un)ecological consequences and are thusly correlated with other difficulties. Let us use an image, a comparison to render clear these difficulties. Borders as frontiers are like doors which are open and closed under different descriptions, open to those who can cross the border-doors and closed to those who cannot cross the border-doors. This image can serve to explicit two different ranges of considerations: (i) The first concerns security and trust: members of a political unit (whether that of a country or a supranational union of countries as Europe) might want to exert some control with respect to persons who are allowed or not to cross the borders of these political units. (ii) The second concerns unity and identity: borders (frontiers) are, in some sense, constitutive of countries and political units composed of countries. Countries (not imaginary ones) have borders. To be identifiable as a citizen of (at least) one country involves the existence of borders (frontiers). Borders (frontiers) cannot without mistake be considered as (imaginary) lines under each and every description we can provide of these. Even if one claims, and arguably legitimately, that borders (frontiers) are unnecessary, one does need to account for the intelligibility of the fact that for some reasons, eventually right or wrong, some are allowed and some are not allowed to cross borders (frontiers). Less than claims, such remarks do express implicit aspects of practices and uses.

This article draws attention to an issue that can be characterized as a ‘vicious circle’, and proposes ways to, so to speak, ‘reverse’ a common tendency. This issue can be expressed as follows: (Un)human catastrophes (e.g. fatal “push-backs” of migrants) related to the hardening of border (frontiers) policies would be unwanted by everyone. Nevertheless, retractive and hardening moves with respect to migration and border (frontiers) policies provoke or augment the probabilities of the happening of such (un)human catastrophes. Such catastrophes can nevertheless be (illegitimately) used in further attempts to pseudo-justify further retractive moves within discourses, among which, political discourses. As a result, the probabilities of the happening of migration related catastrophes, as a

direct consequence of climate catastrophes, or as an indirect consequence of the functioning of extractivisms, i.e. of massive and interrelated structures of extraction and exchange of natural resources (see Gudynas 2017; Gudynas 2020; Arsel & Pellegrini 2022), keep increasing. Such increase is partially correlated to the increase of pressures related to wars for natural resources, and to labor exploitation. Yet the benefits of migration to countries is recurrently established and basic to social sciences. This article has for objective to contribute to ending such a ‘vicious circle’ by addressing epistemological difficulties that are involved by problematic instrumentalizations which are directly or indirectly involved by the happening of the mentioned catastrophes. To achieve this objective, the first part of the article presents linguistic and philosophical clarifications concerning the uses of the concepts and the words “borders”, “boundaries”, “frontiers”, and “limits”. The second part of the article presents some facts about borders and relations of migration and border policies, analyzed with basic elements and distinctions from contemporary philosophy of action. The article then concludes with elements of an adequate response to the earlier mentioned problematic tendency.

## **I. Linguistic and Philosophical Elucidations about Uses of “Borders”, “Boundaries”, “Frontiers”, and “Limits”**

The approach proposed in this article does not rely on universalism or universalistic assumptions concerning languages and does not assume a requisite of compatibility with universalism. As a matter of fact, uneasiness and confusion can sometimes arise from the use of the same words to express different concepts within a language (as the word “limite” in Spanish, or “sınır” in Turkish which can serve to express both a boundary or a limit), or from the expression of the same concepts by utilizing different words (as “frontier” can be expressed by “border” or “boundary” in English, or “sınır” by “sınır çizgisi” or even “çevre çizgisi” in Turkish). Such uneasiness probably constitutes a motive for which the reality of borders (frontiers) has been conceived as eventually inherently contradictory (Anderson and O’Dowd 1999, 595), or, as a mere counterpart of human activities (Fernández-Götz and Langer 2020, 41). Nevertheless, the epistemological need for such conceptions of borders arguably should be contested for independent reasons. First, suppose that our conceptions of our correlated uses of words and concepts of “borders”, “boundaries”, “frontiers” and “limits” cannot account for the available variety of uses made of these words and concepts by language users. Then the burden

of the elucidation arguably befalls on us rather than on linguistic users unconcerned with epistemological questions concerning our uses and applications of these words and concepts. Such an account necessarily needs to be able to be compatible – without reductionism – with the variety of such uses to turn out adequate. Second, if it is hardly deniable that the reality of the functioning of some borders (frontiers) as such does involve human activities, another quite contestable move is to conceive of borders as mere counterparts of human activities (as although some seas and mountains have been instituted as borders, it would be misleading to assume that such landscapes would have resulted from human activities or that such landscapes were not likely to be instituted as borders for practical reasons). One central difficulty is to this extent to account for the compatibility of the relative dependence and independence of borders (frontiers) to human activities. Although the presentation of landscapes as borders arguably involves past human actions, among which notably the past institution of a border as such, borders (frontiers) are dependent and independent from human actions in different senses which require to be elucidated as such.

Two distinctions present central significance to elucidate the variety of linguistic uses of the words and concepts of borders, boundaries, frontiers, and limits within and across (some) languages without misconceptions about the expressive resources of languages. The first distinction is between boundaries (or restrictive limits), and limits (or non-restrictive limits). And the second distinction is between borders as edges or outlines and borders as frontiers. The first (conceptual) distinction is between *boundaries or restrictive limits*, that is, limits that involve a contrast between *that* which can be expressed or done and *that* which cannot be expressed or done. To take uncontroversial examples “women cannot drive” is an expression of misogyny and “blacks cannot enter” is an expression of racism. The eventual (and necessarily contestable) normativity such expressions can present or have presented in some places at some times (women were formally forbidden to drive in Saudi Arabia until June 2018; the last of the Oregon black exclusion laws was abolished in 1926), involves the intelligibility of such expressions which in turn involves that we can represent to ourselves the realization of the actions forbidden by these *grammatically well-formed* and yet *meaningless strings of signs*. By contrast, limits, that is, non-restrictive limits, do not involve (but neither exclude) a contrast between *that* which can be expressed or done and *that* which cannot. Linguistic paradigms such as grammatical forms, or mathematical limits are constitutive of the possibilities of expression or action thereby rendered conceivable (see Uçan 2023, 66-70). The importance of this first distinction is

thus related to the fact that contrarily to a quite common assumption which may seem intuitive, it is not the case that each and every limit unavoidably could have involved or unavoidably involves restriction. Correlatively such a remark could not imply that each limit that does not involve restriction involves permission. Rather is remarkable that limits that constitute possibilities of expressions and actions could not be, as such, *oppositive*.

The second distinction which presents central importance for our account, is the distinction between *borders as edges or outlines* (or *contour*) and *borders as frontiers*. Borders as edges, or outlines, or contours, could not conceivably imply a restriction: the visual outline of an object could no more restrict the considered object than the outline of the shapes of a coloring game could restrict the activity of coloring these shapes. While borders as frontiers sometimes (and arguably should not) involve crossing-restrictions according to nationalities, citizenships, material conditions (such as income (see Ip 2020)), laws, and systems of laws. That is to say, and that is an implicit aspect of some contemporary accounts and conceptions of borders as *boundaries*, borders (frontiers) are limits which are distinct in that the functionings of such instituted limits do involve the *possibilities* for border-crossers to be prevented from crossing the considered borders. However, could such remark necessarily or unavoidably have involved that we cannot but conceive of borders (frontiers) as *boundaries*, and further, that we should thusly conceive borders (frontiers) as *boundaries*? A correct reply is, I shall attempt to elucidate, negative. For several reasons: first, even in the case in which one wants to argue in favor of open borders, and even eventually against the necessity of borders, one needs to account for the fact that the functioning of borders as such could not be inherently restrictive: restrictions concerning border-crossings are involved only when persons are unduly prevented from crossing borders. But who is not prevented from crossing a border, and does not undergo unfair treatment while crossing a border (see Reed-Sandoval 2022), could not be, strictly speaking restrictively limited, as such, by a border. But secondly, and arguably more importantly, a further examination of distinct cases involved by the modalities of border-crossing can render conceivable both to better understand and criticize rhetorical strategies which lead to the happening of the mentioned (un)human catastrophes. Borders as frontiers (and not contours or outlines) indeed provide us with a *limit-case* when considered *with* the distinction of restrictive limits or boundaries, and unrestrictive limits or limits.

Borders are indeed crossed, for motives and reasons which are eventually assessable as right or wrong, both legally and illegally, and legitimately and illegitimately. (i) *Illegal* and *illegitimate* are cases of border crossing, for

example, by a person or group of persons intending to use violence and terror, fear of violence, to enforce political change. Although the gravity of such cases is arguably explanatory of the attention provided by media to this range of cases, mediatic sensationalism tends to provide to such cases disproportionate attention. In this sense, at best unclear is whether we should call attention to this range of cases in comparison with the others. (ii) The existence of *legal* and *illegitimate* cases of border crossing, at least of the borders of the country or of the countries of which a human person is a citizen, is by contrast contestable. Thereby is meant, *without legalism*, that cases in which the legitimacy of such border-crossings can be relevantly contested cannot be primary. Persons do cross the borders (frontiers) of their countries. (iii) Cases of *legal* and *legitimate* crossing of borders are of the central and unproblematic range of cases that could and arguably should be broadened. Such modalities of border crossings are indeed more easily surveyable and less likely to result in human rights violations. (iv) Finally, cases of *illegal* and yet *legitimate* border crossings are the central range of cases to which attention is to be provided to think, account, and make cease, real, and (un)human catastrophes which are related to, and aggravated by actual migration and border control policies.

Such analysis of some of the modalities of border-crossing suffices to bring out what can be called the ‘trick’ of repressive politics (simplistic and short-termist conceptions according to which we could not but have to resort to repression and violent means to make political changes). Such a trick is to suggest that we could understand *illegal* and *legitimate* cases of migration (notably cases due to wars and climate catastrophes) *as illegal* and *illegitimate* cases. Such presentation of illegal and legitimate cases of migration as illegal and illegitimate ultimately amounts to a fallacy, a failure, a deceptive and untruthful presentation of relations of facts and events (Cases related to what are sometimes called “fake-news”; On this see Read and Uçan, 2019, 7-9). One central, philosophical, and linguistic argument to clarify that such presentation of relations of facts and events is delusory, consists in recalling that confusion does not present a dimension of successfulness. That is to say, that such confusion was ever (successfully) *achieved* is contestable. A confusion, rather, results from the *neglect* of a distinction, of a difference, and could not consist in an achievement. The eventually intentional aspect of neglect (which is not *necessarily* problematic: contextual neglect of variations *in order to* account for other variations are commonly involved by practices that are both scientific and social) could not, as such, imply its successfulness. But by contrast, a neglect that does not render conceivable the discerning of further distinctions is not *achieved*, inasmuch as such neglect could not, strictly speaking, be intended.



What is hardly deniable is that the disseminated presence of hate speeches, xenophobic, racist, sexist, and supremacist speeches in our societies do have pragmatic effects, which hopefully enough can also be pragmatically defused. The relevance of linguistic clarifications derives from this point, as these serve to make confusions cease in satisfactory ways.

The table which follows presents words and concept uses of “Border”, “Boundary”, “Frontier”, “Limit” and “Edge” in five different languages (German, English, French, Spanish, and Turkish). As remarked previously, same words can be used to express different concepts in a language, and same concepts can be expressed by means of different words. Further, same or different words can be used to express same or different concepts in a language (as “borne”, “boundary”, “sınır çizgisi”). And some concepts and words are common to some languages (peculiarly the distinction between boundaries and limits, and also the Turkish word “kontur” which comes from the word “contour” in French).

Deutsch	English	Español	Français	Türkçe
Grenzlinie	Boundary	Limite, Frontera	Borne	Sınır (çizgisi), Hudut
Rand, Schneide	Border, Edge	Frontera	Frontière, Contour	Sınır, Çevre çizgisi, Hudut
Grenze	Limit	Limite	Limite	Sınır, Hudut
Grenze	Frontier	Frontera	Frontière	Sınır (çizgisi), Hudut
Höhenlinie	Edge, Contour	Contorno	Contour	Çevre (çizgisi), Hudut, Kontur

Two points present central significance for our account: the first is that there is no such thing as an (intrinsic) impossibility of translatability of words and concepts from a language to another, although we might have to use several words in a language to translate a word from another language. Contrary to the earlier mentioned conceptions, this involves that the absence of a concept-word does not involve the absence of a concept in a language, and even less the impossibility of forming a concept in a language which is equivalent to a concept available in another language. The same word can be contextually used to express different concepts, such that language users could not be necessarily and conceptually restrictively limited by the absence of a concept-word in a language. Indeed, and this is related to the second central point, which is that in each of these languages the distinction between restrictive and unrestrictive



limits can be expressed. As rendered manifest by the expressive resources whose means are shown and displayed by the table, there is no such thing as an unavoidable entailment from limits to restrictive limits involved. Limits and boundaries can be imaginary: cases of delusions in which a boundary that does not exist is assumed to exist, but also cases of liberatory and eventually aesthetic uses of our imaginations (as imaginary limits of imaginary countries) are both conceivable.

The absence of a one-to-one correlation between concepts and words (*among* languages and within each language) can, contrarily to what could have been assumed, thus be understood as a clarificatory, therapeutical and eventually liberatory point. The single word through which a restrictive limitation can be expressed (“borne”, “boundary”) can also be used to express non-restrictive limitation. For example, the word “borne” in French can be thusly used. Learning that you are at, say, km 5 of a road using a milestone (“borne”) could not have implied, as such, any restriction whatsoever. This precision is slightly different from the elucidation earlier made: *unsubstantially* conceived, meanings could not be, so to speak, imposed by words. Contextual attention to linguistic uses often suffices to avoid such confusion. As a corollary, *occurrences of words* are to be distinguished from *occurrences of concepts* and conversely. A sentence in the grammatical sense such as “These limits of the river are some limits of two (or more) countries across which we are allowed to travel” can also be expressed with “The contours of the river we now see are parts of the borders of two (or more) countries across which we are allowed to travel” and can be expressed in Turkish with “Çevre çizgileri görülen nehir, seyahatlerimizi sınırlamayan iki (veya daha fazla) ülkenin sınırlarıdır”. The central difficulty which requires focus is the necessarily problematic assumption according to which unrestrictive limits could be understood as restrictive limits and inversely. Indeed, we studied that a language, as such, could not unavoidably imply such assumption and correlative confusion. And we also studied that the confusion of restrictive limits with non-restrictive limits, and inversely, can occur independently from other facts. But we yet did not consider that such confusions, frequently undeliberately realized, are also sometimes deliberately realized by individual or collective persons with discriminatory aims, independently from texts as national or international laws or agreements, which are constitutive of the rights of migrants. To this extent, the results of the philosophy of language and of the philosophy of action might seem at odd. However, the elucidation that limits that constitute possibilities of expressions and actions could not be, as such, *opposite*, can serve to elucidate the circumstantial necessity of opposite uses that can be made of linguistic

expressions in case of human right violations. Thus, inasmuch as migration related catastrophes are considered, the results of the philosophical analyses of language and action are mutually integrative.

## II. Borders and Migration

One of the most striking aspects of the (un)human catastrophes, which happened and continue to happen at the borders of Europe is the deaths of migrants, especially when considering the scale and the modalities of these deaths. The International Organization for Migration of the United Nations reports that “more than 20,000 migrant deaths recorded on the Central Mediterranean Route since 2014” (International Organization for Migration, 2023). Two central and correlated elements from contemporary philosophy of action are relevant to the analyses, accounts, and explanations of the internal relations of such events (On this see Anscombe 2000, §5; Davidson 1963; Sartre 2003, 455-503). The first is the distinction between causes and reasons, and the second is the concept of (intentional) action. These two elements are interrelated in that distinguishing between causes and reasons and expressing a concept of action, strictly speaking, of intentional action, are achievements that are mutually implicative of each other. To distinguish a cause from a reason inversely involves to distinguish cases of literal or non-metaphorical actions (such as the action of walking) from cases of metaphorical or non-literal actions (such as the action of a solvent over the surface of an object). Although studyable and explainable independently (as different solvents act differently on different surfaces), the causal action of a solvent over the surface of an object is derivative from the realization of an action by a person for a reason (for example, that of using the solvent for maintenance purpose). A solvent acts once someone has acted (by contrast with the erosion of limestone by rainwater). The distinction of causes and reasons thusly involves the intelligibility of (non-metaphorical) action. And conversely, the expression of the concept of action involves a distinction between causes and reasons. While misleading would be to expect a dissolution not to happen consequently to the application of some solvent over the surface of some object by a person, misleading would be to expect the application of some solvent to the surface of an object to merely result from its availability to a person. The exact and precise ways in which these mutual implications should be philosophically conceived, and whether reasons and causes cannot at least sometimes be relevantly equated are contemporarily debated. However, such considerations and distinctions present

uncontroversial aspects that are relevant to think, analyze, and conceive ways for deaths related to migrations to cease.

Persons do attempt to cross the borders of Europe for *reasons*, as notably, escaping from wars, from climate catastrophes (this is clear right from p. 2 of the 2022 annual report of the International Organization for Migration). Such cases of migration are cases in which the motives of the actions of the persons are *reasons*: persons deliberately decide to escape areas in which for motives independent from their wills, living is rendered impossible or quasi-impossible. To this extent, such cases are cases of *forced* migrations. Actions and interactions of persons could not conceivably be reducible to merely causal relations. That someone decides to escape from an area plagued by war is not explainable as the movements of the leaves of a tree by the (causal) action of the wind. That an action can be realized by a person strictly implies that it is conceivable for that person to not realize that action and inversely (On this see Sartre 2003, 455). But such remark could not conceivably imply the inconceivability of *forced* or *constrained* realizations of actions, and is peculiarly important to evaluate both contemporary migrations, and the consequences of the hardening of border policies and controls over migrants. As previously mentioned, such migrations are not the result of merely pleasure-related considerations. In some weak sense, decisions to escape from areas plagued by war or affected by climate catastrophes are *freely* taken: these really are decisions, but the optionable aspect of the choices involved by such decisions is nevertheless to be contested. Consideration of the opposite possibility often suffices to render clear its unreasonableness. These first remarks about human actions in their relations to migrations consisted in an attempt to clarify that the happening of catastrophic events related both to extractivist wars and to the causal results of the would-be imperative of the functioning of extractivist structures (On this see Arsel & Pellegrini 2022; Gudynas 2020) over climates suffice to explain the forced realization of some migrations. But what about the consequences of the hardening of border controls and policies?

Two ranges of cases are peculiarly relevant to think and account for such consequences: (i) persons died as a result of the modalities of “push-backs” (as recently: see Beake, N., G. Wright, and P. Kirby 2023) which in some cases involved the destruction of the vehicles they have been using to attempt to cross the frontiers of Europe. (ii) Persons also have been killed both intentionally and premeditatedly (cases of third-degree murders) during their attempts to cross the frontiers of Europe, as attests cases of persons whose hands were tied and whose bodies were found underwater (On this see Son Dakika 2021; Stockholm

Center for Freedom 2021; Middle East Monitor 2021). Reminding these cases is not necessarily expressive of sensationalism: a better understanding of the (un)humanity of the catastrophes which result from actual border control and migration policies is required. However conceived, there could *not* be *any* justification for the realization of such actions. Such actions cannot be understood as applications of border policies – *there is no such thing as legal murder of migrants*. But the hardening of border controls and policies over migrants who cannot count on the support of the institutions of the countries they had to leave, not only renders more difficult their access to conditions under which they can claim for their rights (notably of asylum, see United Nations 1948; 2010), but also tend to deteriorate the conditions under which their attempts to cross borders are controlled, notably by the organization of such controls in areas such as international waters, thereby indirectly augmenting the probabilities for the happening of human rights violations.

Further difficulties which concern discriminations (not in the unproblematic sense of the distinction or differentiation of different things or persons, but in the problematic sense of the application of unfair treatment to one or several persons) realized at borders (frontiers), notably of Europe, can be expressed. There are remarkable and unjustifiable differences in the amounts of persons allowed both legitimately and legally to cross the borders of Europe, according to their countries of origin, their religious beliefs, and their skin color, independently from their rights. The undeniably desirable help provided to Ukrainian refugees by Europe following the invasion of Ukraine by Russia should also be constructively criticized by consideration of the treatments reserved for other migrants, especially from Syria, but also from other countries. The difficulty is not reducible to psychological or anthropological considerations. Not only that human rights, among which the right to asylum, are insufficiently applied, but also, a criticism of coherence can and should be addressed to countries (such as France, See European Union Agency for Asylum 2021, 245-256) which do not even fulfil the publicly established allowance quotas of migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers.

Such remarks raise the problematic of the relations between what can be called *refugees-outstocking* and *refugees-blackmailing*. Indeed, while as mentioned some countries do not fulfil allowance quotas of migrants, misleading declarations have been made in other countries (host countries of massive migrations, such as Turkey (see International Organization for Migration 2024) according to which the help provided to migrants could be stopped and that they could be (unilaterally) allowed to cross borders (for example and notably, those of Europe), although such cannot be the case. Such

a situation involves problematic asymmetries which leaves migrants at the mercy of smugglers. While migrants have to use the illegal activities of smugglers to attempt to illegally cross borders (such as the borders of Europe) to legitimately claim for their rights for asylum, some countries do benefit from the results of selective migration organized from peripheral areas and countries as areas in which refugees are outstocked. One central objection to such an argument is that such outstocking is not literally organized by countries towards which fluxes of migration are directed. Yet misleading and mislead would be to attempt to deny that the organization of literally the outstocking of migrants exists. Since violations of human rights are involved, the problematic is really that of the indiscernibility of the situation in which migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers are maintained, with a situation of metaphorical outstocking (See Emmanouilidou 2023; Human Rights Watch 2024). Indeed, arguments such as those in favor of the fairness of what is sometimes called “cherry picking” selective migration, or which propose a reflexion about the conditions under which selective migration can become fair (notably from the liberal tradition), do often neglect the (*ultra*-liberal) reality of the *market* in which smuggling consists. Even if – conceptually – reflexions about the conditions under which migrations ought to be securely organized can really contribute to the fairness and the security of some migrations, such reflections yet need to be broadened. Indeed, even if the scope of the argument is reduced to economic considerations, a problematic tension can be discerned: if migration fluxes from economically poorer countries are related to the application of short-termist and (un)ecological models of development by economically richer countries, those countries cannot without problematic discrimination both neglect their commitments to migration quotas and benefit from selective migration. Further, discourses in favor of political retractions and hardening of border controls and policies, and misleading and misled presentations of forced legitimate migrations as merely illegal and undesirable migrations, are often expressed by persons and groups of persons who suppose that racism and xenophobia could be argued in favor of. The attractiveness of such discourses to persons can arguably be partially explained as resulting from the degradation of their own conditions of life in the circumstance of climate change. However, the inversion of such a ‘vicious circle’ involves as a necessary condition the satisfaction of a requirement of coherence (which is not equivalent with a defense of coherentism). (i) Forced migrations should not be impeded by intervention at the end of what is sometimes called *causal chains* at the borders of host-countries, but by modifications of the relations between the countries from which migrants migrate with the countries to which they migrate. Such

modifications could make vanish the conditions under which forced migrations happen, and thusly impede the happening of the mentioned catastrophes. (ii) Until such modifications are realized, countries towards which fluxes of migrants are directed have the obligation to satisfy, and even extend migrants allowances. If any use of the concept of intuition seemed to be required, such a claim might seem counter-intuitive. Nevertheless, that is one central difficulty which needs to be faced. Xenophobic and racist discourses and policies tend to present some sort of attractivity to traditionally non-xenophobic and non-racist populations within our societies due to degradation of living conditions. But discourses and policies which involve the confusion of restrictive limits and non-restrictive limits cannot but lead to necessarily unhelpful isolationism.

## Conclusion

This article proposed a dissolution of epistemological difficulties related to our accounts of interrelated uses of the concepts and words of “border”, “boundary”, “frontier”, and “limit” within and across languages. The establishment of the translatability and sufficiency of the expressive resources of some languages to discern restrictive and non-restrictive limits has been achieved non-universalistically. The supposition that some languages could be, as such, inherently more apt and precise than others, eventually conjoined with a condition of the inclusion of a one-to-one correlation of concepts and words is satisfied, expresses a preconception about language. There is no such one-to-one correlation in each and every language, and yet distinctions between restrictive limits (boundaries) and non-restrictive limits (limits) are expressible within and between languages which do not involve such correlation. Further, contrarily to the eventually expected, this criticism does not concern or apply only to language conceived in a narrow sense, as concerned with only inherently linguistic elements such as morphemes, letters, words, sentences. Such criticism does also concern peculiar conceptions of borders involved by some discourses, among which political discourses, whose applications within our societies lead to the happening or augment the probability of the happening of (un)human catastrophes. Unavoidably restrictive limitations internal to our words, concepts, and languages could not exist. To this extent, dissolving the mentioned interrelated epistemological difficulties renders conceivable the interrelatedness of problems concerning forms of life, migrations, and borders, which too often are considered not only distinct but also unrelated. Social and ecological progress can be achieved if we consider the compatibility of the reasons for which some persons are

sometimes unacceptably forced to migrate with the reasons for which persons want to somewhere live. Border-doors are to remain open or to be opened.

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