Globalization and Border Securitization in International Discourse

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Abstract: International borders have become a growing concern for international security. Because international relations theorists have been concerned primarily with interstate border disputes, IR scholars are missing a central change in global security orientation toward a perceived need for *border control.* We argue that there are important shifts in border-related concerns that can be traced to concerns about non-state rather than interstate threats. This pattern explain an empirical puzzle: though interstate border disputes have declined, states' border anxieties are on the rise. At least in the United Nations, we show that border-related discourse has become more frequent, decentralized, localized, negative, and focused on non-state threats since the 1990s, particularly among wealthier and more democratic states. Our research highlights both the persistent, historical importance of non-state challenges to national and international security, and their growing importance in a shifting and uncertain political world.

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I. Introduction

International borders have become increasingly relevant in popular media. Yet, for realist international relations theorists who stress the connection between territorial settlements and interstate war, the low-grade fever surrounding today's international borders barely merits attention. If, as many researchers have argued, contested international borders are a prime provocation for militarized interstate conflict, there is good news: the average number of official state disputes over territory has declined since about 1970 (Frederick, et al. 2017). From this perspective, states are increasingly solving their border problems.

We argue to the contrary. Perceptions of a broad range of threats have sparked growing concerns for greater border *control.* The United States endured the longest government shut-down in its history over the largely symbolic issue of funding construction of a "border wall." The terms of Brexit and the future of the European Union have foundered in no small part on reconstituting state presence at the Northern Ireland border. Physical markers of state authority in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the once-physically open Middle East have been constructed, violently challenged, and reinforced. During the COVID-19 pandemic, border closures were implemented on a broad scale (Kenwick and Simmons 2020, forthcoming).

Why are states so concerned about their borders and what – if anything – is new about these concerns? Three developments are new: (1) official state attention to interstate borders is demonstrably on the rise, and increasingly localized; (2) borders are increasingly associated with negative sentiments and emotions in official discourse, suggesting what we refer to as growing "border anxiety;" and (3) both of these trends are accompanied by a third that hints at causality: they both coincide with perceived threats from *non-state actors and threats*. These forces have the

potential to challenge the legitimacy of the state itself, prompting anxieties that in turn lead to the "rebordering" of many parts of the world (Andreas and Biersteker 2014).

The goal of this paper is to contextualize, describe and systematically document these three trends from the perspective of state leaders that express them, on a world-wide basis, for the past half century. This is an urgent task because it elucidates a range of empirical phenomena, from the proliferation of border walls and fences (Hassner and Wittenberg 2015) to the rise of the so-called mobility divide (Mau, et al. 2015); from revisionist asylum policies (Paz 2017) to intensifying border policing functions (Andreas 2003). Documenting these anxieties should reorient international relations research from its current focus on interstate border disputes toward perceived legitimacy challenges to the state itself (Brown 2010).

The paper proceeds as follows. Section II theorizes the rise of border anxiety in the context globalized non-state developments. Over the course of the 1990s, market integration, human mobility, terrorism and transnational crime became salient post-Cold War security challenges. These developments set the stage for new ways to detect, filter, and deter threats to states' sovereign territorial jurisdictions. Section III presents a strategy for exploring states' reactions to these changes. We use the United Nations General Assembly Debates as a record of global official discourse. These speeches reveal the growing tensions that many state officials have expressed about their borders: discourse on international borders is becoming more frequent, localized, negative, and increasingly focused on non-state threats rather than traditional concerns such as interstate competition or violence (Andreas and Biersteker 2014).

Our study is the first to systematically examine global official discourse to document states' growing concerns surrounding border issues. The timing and especially the content of this discourse suggests a connection with globalization and mobility patterns. The goal of this paper is

to reveal these patterns. In our conclusion, we call for a research agenda that digs deeper into the causes and consequences of these state concerns, many of which affect the quality of life for millions of people world-wide.

II. Border anxiety in an era of globalization

The Context of Concern

International borders have been sites of international conflict and nation-building for as long as the state system has existed. Modern states depend on territorial control, which supplies the essential resources for the consolidation of state power and solidification of national identities (Wilson and Donnan 1998, Atzili and Kadercan 2017). There is nothing new about the proposition that territorial borders "matter" to the security of nation-states. In fact, a robust research agenda in international relations has established that territorial conflicts – which necessarily involve conflictual understandings of state borders – are the top reason for the escalation of military violence leading to interstate war (Vasquez and Henehan 2001, Senese and Vasquez 2008).

The problem of interstate border conflict has been greatly mitigated by the international norm of state territorial inviolability. Despite the fact that the number of land borders has proliferated of the last century, by one count, about 90 percent of state borders today are defined by *de jure* international agreements (Owsiak, et al. 2018). Legally settled border have been linked to other positive outcomes as well, from peace to economic prosperity and systemic stability (Hurrell 2003, Simmons 2005, Lee and Mitchell 2012, Schultz 2015, Clay and Owsiak 2016). To be sure, there are cases in Africa where incomplete border demarcation contribute to violent conflicts, and states still occasionally contest territorial agreements,[1] as Russia's recent

[1] African Union Peace and Security Council Report, "Silencing the guns in Africa's borderlands." June 22, 2020. Available at https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/silencing-the-guns-in-africas-borderlands.

annexation of the Crimea from Ukraine illustrates. But norms, law and state interests have all reduced the interstate violence around claiming and enforcing international borders in the past seven decades (Zacher 2001).

The breakdown of the Soviet Union and intensification of globalization in the 1990s, however, revealed a more complex reality than the interstate focus on borders described above. Political, economic and social globalization have, by one widely used measure, increased practically every year since the end of the Cold War to the Financial Crisis of 2008-2009, though this trend has flattened since 2015.[2] The 1990s saw soaring trade, a sharp increase in localized civil strife and metastasizing transnational crime.[3] Trade growth was a boon to most of the world, but a handful of dissident economists saw early on that, at the margins, global market integration made "workers across different nations more easily substitutable for each other through outsourcing, trade, and foreign investment" (Rodrik 1998, 84), in turn eroding institutional and social protections and undercutting a sense of economic and social security. Globalizing direct investment flows was associated with deindustrialization in the advanced core, and "premature" deindustrialization in Latin American and Eastern Europe (Rodrik 2016). Manufacturing could be maintained under such conditions, but with significant job losses and a growing sense of economic insecurity. "Open borders" appeared responsible for growing economic insecurity in high- and middle-income countries. In a number of relatively wealthy countries, international trade is blamed for downward wage pressure and mobile capital for "deindustrialization" (van Neuss 2018). In Europe, publics became more nationalist in response to localized import shocks

[2] KOF Globalization Index, available at https://kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/indicators/kof-globalisation-index.html.
[3] In 1995, Presidential Decision Directive-42 (PDD-42), created by President Clinton, recognized Global Organized Crime as a threat to national security. Available at https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/pdd/pdd-42.pdf.

(Colantone and Stanig 2018), suggesting a gathering anxiety about economic threats from without.

Transborder migration also expanded dramatically over the latter part of the 20th century, with similarly complex effects. In 1960, 2.6% of the world's population of 3.03 billion did not live in their birth countries. By 2015, it was 3.3% of a much larger population (7.38 billion). In 2019, across a broad range of 27 destination countries, people were much more likely to say they wanted less immigration than rather than more and that policies were "about right."[4] Although attitudes in destination countries were hardening, push factors have made societies sadly interdependent: about 25.4 million people were forced to flee from their countries and living abroad as refugees in 2017; another 3.1 million were official asylum seekers.[5] Whether or not these movements pose threats, they have become part of a narrative that sees permeable borders as threats to local values, well-being, and security (Stumpf 2006, Adamson 2006, Huysmans 2006).

To the list of border anxieties we must now also add pandemics. Contagious diseases have commonly been "othered" – as was Ebola as "African" (Monson 2017), the coronavirus as "Chinese" (Budhwani and Sun 2020). States have responded to these othering efforts with border policy responses. For example, a remarkable 186 countries responded to the contemporary coronavirus with external border restrictions, targeting travel from an average of 163 countries (Cheng, et al. 2020). Land borders have been particularly focal. By one count, 92 countries had fully or partially closed their land borders by March 24, 2020 (Kenwick and Simmons 2020, forthcoming). Even the internal borders of the European Union saw a return to border controls

[4] See Pew Center research polls at https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/10/many-worldwide-oppose-more-migration-both-into-and-out-of-their-countries/.
[5] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/statistics/unhcrstats/5b27be547/unhcr-global-trends-2017.html. (Accessed 5 August 2018.)

rare since the establishment of the Schengen Zone.[6] Polls conducted in mid-March 2020 across 12 countries and sampling 12,000 people show that significant majorities – some reaching 80% – support border closures as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.[7] Among US residents, that proportion is about as high as support for border restrictions *on migrants* (not citizens) right after the 9/11 attacks (Kenwick and Simmons 2020, forthcoming).

Multilateral Anxieties

Despite the settlement in the 1980s and 1990s of important *interstate* border conflicts – such as that between Iran-Iraq over the Shatt-al Arab River, Chad and Libya over the Azou Strip, and several territorial claims between Argentina and Chile – by the 2000s, borders were back on the multilateral international security agenda with a vengeance. Worries about the security risks associated with permeable borders gave rise to a growing docket addressing transnational non-state threats. In the late 1990s, for the first time, a multilateral transnational crime agreement was negotiated and widely ratified that created obligations not of border settlement and recognition, but of border security, control and management.[8] New kinds of non-state threats were addressed in Security Council debates (Fasulo 2015, 73), eventually producing obligatory border-related resolutions. For example, the UNSC's concerns with non-state actors' possession of weapons of

[6] For a list of notifications, see European Commission, "Temporary Reintroduction of Border Control." Available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/reintroduction-border-control_en.

[7] IPSOS. Available at: *https://www.ipsos.com/en/majority-people-want-borders-closed-fear-about-covid-19-escalates*. Date: March 12-14, 2020.

[8] The 2000 Palermo Convention's smuggling and human trafficking protocols require states to "strengthen border controls as may be necessary to prevent trafficking and detect smuggling, including…denial or revocation of visas for protocol violators…" and to "consider strengthening cooperation among border control agencies by, inter alia, establishing and maintaining direct channels of communication." These provisions are basically identical for both protocols. See Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime1 Adopted 15 November 2000 Entered into force 28 January 2004; available at http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/protection/migration/496323791b/protocol-against-smuggling-migrants-land-sea-air-supplementing-united-nations.html. (Accessed 5 August 2018.)

mass destruction (nuclear, chemical and biological weapons) called on states, for the first time, to *secure* their borders.[9] By 2014, the Security Council required states to prevent terrorist movement across borders by cracking down on fraudulent documents and other evasions.[10] A series of resolutions increasingly called for follow up.[11] Historical context here is useful: the last 40 years of debate and decision-making in the United Nations has shifted from the *legitimation* of specific borders to their security, control and governance (Simmons 2019) (Figure 1).

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was once focused almost exclusively on strategic deterrence, increasingly has a border security vision as well. "NATO is certainly not primarily known as a border security organization," according to Michael Gaul, Senior Adviser at NATO's Emerging Security Challenges Division, "but border security matters for nearly all the asymmetric security challenges which cannot be addressed by purely military means."[12] Some have offered a fairly broad view of what this might include. A NATO Parliamentary Assembly Draft Report considered "an integrated, layered approach to border management is the most efficient option," relevant for Mediterranean maritime borders "and three land border 'hotspots': the US-Mexico border, the Balkans corridor in southeast Europe, and the

[9] Resolution 1540 obligated member states to "Develop and maintain appropriate effective border controls and law enforcement efforts to detect, deter, prevent and combat… the illicit trafficking and brokering in such items [WMD: nuclear, chemical and biological weapons] in accordance with their national legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law." Available at https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/sc1540/.

[10] UNSC resolution 2178 para. 2 provided "all States shall prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers and travel documents, and through measures for preventing counterfeiting, forgery or fraudulent use of identity papers and travel documents…" See also articles 4 and 14. See also UNSCR 2195 (2014).

[11] UNSCR 2396 mandates all UN Member States to step up implementation of Resolution 2178 (2014) and to adopt measures on border control, criminal justice, information sharing and prevent and counter violent extremism that leads to terrorism.

[12] NATO, "Border security in Eastern Europe: lessons for NATO and its partners." June 9, 2016. Available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_134112.htm.

Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the coast of North Africa."[13] These are hardly the priorities NATO would have had under discussion during its Cold War heyday.

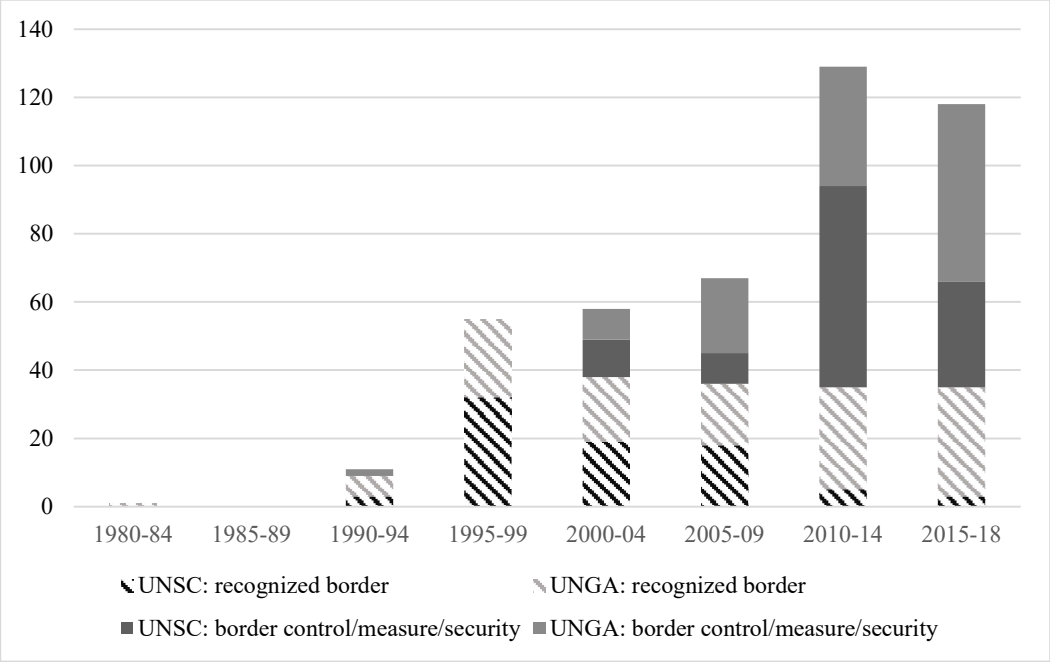

Figure 1 Increasing and Shifting Border Concerns at the United Nations. *References to borders are on the increase, and attention has shifted from a call for 'recognized borders' to aspects of border control and border security. Number of mentions of each phrase in the decisions and resolutions of the Security Council and the General Assembly, by half-decade.*

A Theory of Border Anxiety: legitimacy, threat and the meaning of borders

The conditions described above make it more difficult than ever for the modern state to deliver on security, prosperity, and especially a sense of local governance control. Globalization-driven "unbundling" of territoriality that Ruggie (1993, 165) saw as a gradual concession to the efficient management of transnational problems raises legitimacy questions about the ability of the nation state to live up to its billing as an effective institution of governance. The legitimacy of

[13] NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "NATO nations pressed to share best practices on border security, respect asylum rules." June 2, 2019. Available at: https://www.nato-pa.int/news/nato-nations-pressed-share-best-practices-border-security-respect-asylum-rules

the State, we suggest, has historically been tied to its territorial status (Herz 1957). Territorial jurisdiction defines the space over which states claim the monopoly of the *legitimate* use of physical force (Weber 1919) and in which they legitimately make, administer, and execute law (Baudet 2012, 32). In his sweeping historical account of the territoriality of governance, Maier (2016, 78) writes that "Sovereignty, ownership, and morality came with the territory literally and figuratively."

Territorial governance-as-legitimacy clarifies why state borders are so central to politics at all levels, domestic and international. Borders are the ultimate symbols of sovereignty (Baud and Van Schendel 1997, 226).[14] Indeed, territorial boundedness has become part of the definition of what it means to be a modern nation-state.[15] Exclusive jurisdiction means that the state governs the interior of their territorial space. When it cannot control its borders, for example by filtering the entry and exit of persons, products, violent groups or viruses, this can be seen as a loss of local security as well as a threat to the state itself. Viewed in this way, a "borderless world" (Ohmae 1990) only contributes to a sense of insecurity. The metaphor of a networked world to displace that of a territorialized and politically bordered one (Castells 2000) is a conceptual shift that has not universally been experienced as positive. For those who are not particularly well networked globally, such a reconfiguration implies "ontological" insecurity, or a threat to national, group or individual identity (Mitzen 2006).

From this perspective, the end of the Cold War is significant, not for the shift in polarity it implied, but rather because it eroded the units that defined systemic structure in much of the

[14] In popular political parlance, "Without strong Borders, we don't have a Country" Donald Trump, tweet February 25, 2019. Available at https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/1100017237228949506.
[15] Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. Entered into force December 26, 1934. Article 1(b): "The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a) a permanent population; b) **a defined territory;** c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states." Available at: https://www.ilsa.org/jessup/jessup15/Montevideo%20Convention.pdf.

world. Breakdown of the bipolar system of alliances undermined the relative certainty of major power protection, disturbing expectations about border conflicts and arguably reducing deterrence (Mearsheimer 1990). On the positive side, tragedies such as Vietnam were less likely. But on the negative side, interventions to prevent or contain civil conflict were less likely as well (Posen 2017). International relations scholars speculated that post-conflict states might never be constructed within UN-mandated bordered territorial space (Fearon 2017). In politically unstable parts of the world, non-state challengers abused international borders for their own protection, even while contesting the territorial control of the state (Buhaug and Gates 2002, Gleditsch, et al. 2008, Salehyan 2009). Such challenges undermined the taken-for-granted nature of territorial sovereignty and secure international borders.

The end of the Cold War shifted social purposes as well. Former Communist countries lost their lust to control their populations – the fall of the Berlin wall is iconic – giving rise to new population movements across Europe. These movements contributed to a host of social and criminal problems, real and imagined. Western powers lost their will to "lead" the liberal order (Ikenberry 2011). Realists agreed, in part. "Roles," Charles Krauthammer (1990) noted, "are not invented in the abstract, they are a response to a perceived world structure" Shifting superpower identities left much of the world to wonder about their future security.

Border Anxiety and Official State Discourse

These related developments[16] – market integration, human mobility and global political restructuring – have tended to raise the relative salience of nonstate actors in world politics. We

[16] Whether political polarity or economic globalization are the main contributor to uncertainty and instability are not our main concern, as these are likely to be highly interactive structural changes (political restructuring both responds to and conditions economic pressures and flows).

argue that these shifts have undermined a subjective sense of state sovereignty, security and control (Van Schendel and Abraham 2005, Brown 2010, Vallet and David 2012, Kinnvall and Svensson 2015). Furthermore, these anxieties leave noticeable traces in the *discourse* of state representatives. Leaders, bureaucrats and diplomats experience the structural environment, consider their goals, and express their international concerns in global forums when they have the opportunity to do so.

Our theory of border anxiety can be explored with evidence on global official discourse, discussed below. First, our theory of border anxiety explains both the official output as well as state discourse. For this reason, state discourse will tend to parallel (not "cause") trends in the resolutions displayed in Figure 1 above. Empirically, growing border anxiety portends a growing share of border relevant discourse at the United Nations. We therefore expect border discourse to trend generally upward over time.

Second, border discourse is likely to reflect evolving perceptions of threat. As traditionally IR research suggests, we fully expect the frequency of border discourse to reflect experience with interstate violence (Vasquez and Henehan 2001) and civil violence (Buhaug and Gates 2002, Gleditsch, et al. 2008, Salehyan 2009). But we also expect a stark increase in expressed concerns about non-state (perhaps even non-violent) threats of penetration. The most obvious challenge of this sort is unwanted migration. Concerns about transnational crime, migration, terrorism, and even public health are all expected to be growing border concerns. They all have in common a concern with non-state actors and forces. Relatedly, we expect a relative decline in concern about state-to-state border issues, such as demarcation, settlement, and war.

Finally, we expect growing attention to borders to reflect anxiety rather than equanimity. If our theory of border anxiety is useful, then borders present perceived threats rather than

opportunities. This anxiety should manifest in increasing expressions of negative sentiments and emotions, indicative of anxiety rather than security or satisfaction. In short, global official discourse about international borders, we hypothesize, is (1) intensifying in frequency, (2) associated with new non-state sources of insecurity, and (3) increasingly reflects negative sentiments.

III. Conceptualizing and Measuring Global Official Border Discourse

The United Nations and Global Official Discourse

To explore these trends, we turn to the yearly General Debates of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Utterances at the United Nations represent interpretations of national interests contextualized by international constraints and opportunities. We think of official discourse from state leaders of the world as an important source of political intelligence hidden in plain sight. How leaders speak is an important clue about their priorities, possible policy preferences and constraints. Their words may evidence domestic political trends, since speeches on the floor of the UN often address domestic as well as international audiences.[17] Global official discourse at the UN both contributes to and reflects outcomes of multilateral concern. Moreover, such discourse may be growing in importance. Power decentralization suggests that world events are no longer directed by two states with the ability and incentive to coerce (Goldgeier and McFaul 1992, 468). If ideological labels are less informative, incentives to speak frankly and to take seriously the political communication of a broader set of states increase as well.

[17] We are grateful to Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014-18) for pointing this out.

For these reasons, we assume that political communication has the potential to affect political behavior and policies (De Boef and Kellstedt 2004). In the case of the United Nations, the General Assembly has the authority to forward security concerns to the Security Council for binding legal action.[18] Research shows that debates in the United Nations help to frame international issues, develop consensus, legitimate collective decisions and even influence major powers (Claude 1966, Bearce and Bondanella 2007, Taninchev 2015). While we are not inferring a straight causal arrow between UNGA discussions and specific outcomes, we do view discourse patterns both as evidence of changing organizational agendas about the nature of international threats, as well as grist for consequential decisions such as international agreements, multilateral coordination, foreign aid commitments (Watkins 2017) and unlateral actions of border hardening (Simmons and Kenwick 2020). At a minimum, UNGA discussions help to set expectations as states informally coordinate their self-interested policies.

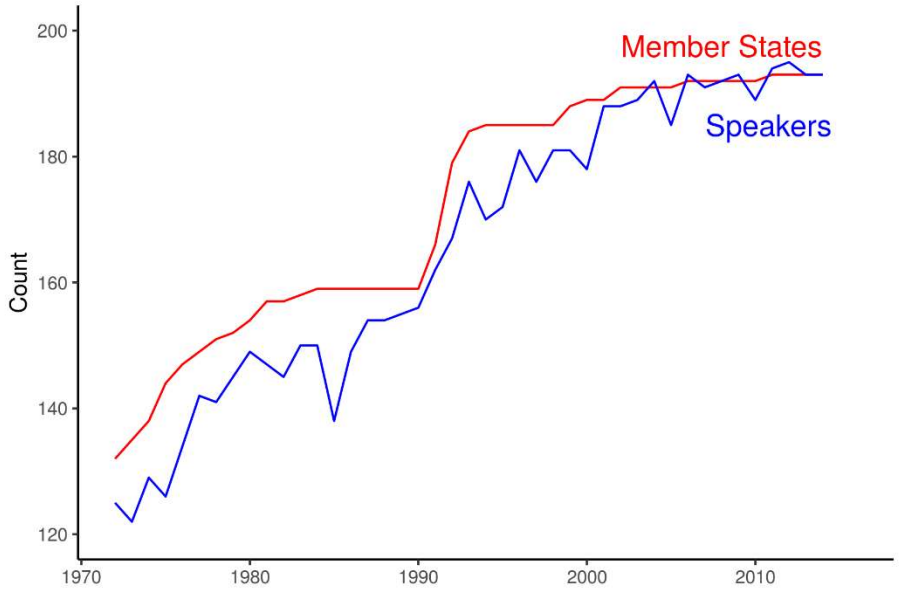

Figure 2: UNGA Speeches and UN member states, by year. *Non-member states and organizations (e.g. the European Union) are occasionally invited to speak at the UNGA. As a result, in a few years there are more speeches than member states*

[18] United Nations Charter, Chapter IV, Art. 11(3).

Global official discourse is therefore a meaningful indicator of important underlying state piorities and preferences. To research such priorities, we would ideally like a world-wide time-series of unfiltered official views about an issue of substantive importance worldwide. The UNGA General Debates constitute evidence of issue salience and associated sentiments (Hecht 2016). Other researchers have used this corpus for more complex tasks, such as the detection of ideological and communicative clusters of countries. For such tasks, researchers similarly assume the UNGA General Debates are on "topics of high salience to the international community" (Gurciullo and Mikhaylov 2017a).

These debates offer a close approximation to an ideal time-series for our purposes. General Debate speeches – which are usually given by the head of state, head of government, or chief foreign minister of each state – are an annual opportunity for every UN member state to articulate policy priorities and preferences in a relatively unfiltered fashion to an international and domestic audience (Luard 1994, 42-43, Kentikelenis and Voeten 2018). The UNGA debates are thus a rare setting in which it is possible, at least in principle, to collect information relatively free from western media filtering (Binder and Heupel 2015) and other biases. Some studies suggest speeches are prepared in advance of delivery, and are thus fairly "independent" (Nicholas 1971, 108) or at least "uncoordinated" (Chelotti, et al. 2018). Because speech contents run the gamut of issues with which the UN deals – from economic development to human security to international stability – it is possible to investigate relative issue salience over time, while avoiding the coordination bias involved in looking only at issues that come to a roll call vote (Häge and Hug 2016, Gurciullo and Mikhaylov 2017b, Pomeroy, et al. 2018). Since states rarely decline the opportunity to provide remarks in the General Debates (see Figure 2), these speeches offer a rare opportunity to identify the priorities and issues that each state would like to place at or near the

top of the international agenda over time. As such, they present a unique opportunity to explore border anxieties as reflected in official state discourse worldwide.

The yearly UNGA General Debates have some clear limitations. These speeches are unfiltered, but they are hardly free from political influences. Even though scripts are prepared well in advance, states may jump on bandwagons by repeating earlier speakers, they may say what they believe their patrons want to hear, and they may coordinate their messages regionally for maximum impact. We do not claim these utterances are free from politics. But no theory of speech action is so compelling in our view as to invalidate the General Debates as a representative source of state concerns over time. We also recognize these are *official* utterances and may or may not reflect mass opinion. Our study is a complement to, not a replacement for, the study of public opinion. Furthermore, we aim to tap broad sentiments and pervasive content, not to prove these become actionable multilaterally. Multilateral action can be studied directly, as in Figure 1. How multilateral agendas are set is an interesting but distinct research question.

Conceptualizing and identifying border-relevant discourse

A study of border discourse requires the researcher to identify which texts are conceptually relevant. Almost any interstate policy issue can be plausibly linked to international borders.[19] This problem is particularly pervasive in the UNGA general debates, in which states are allowed (and even incentivized) to introduce a wide variety of ideas simultaneously. To bound the analysis to relevant discourse, we therefore begin with two key preprocessing steps. Using

[19] For example, any military dispute involving one or more states will likely involve one state's troops or military assets penetrating an international border, or both states' forces entering disputed territory. A "stretched" definition of border relevance might therefore encompass all of these disputes, though few actually involve border security or policy. Any discussion of international trade, international finance, or even international communication and cultural exchange could be categorized as "border-related" using a similarly imprecise definition.

Baturo et al. (2017)'s United Nations General Debates corpus, we segmented all speech transcripts into semantically coherent "pseudo-paragraphs." To do so, we first break each speech transcript into sentences,[20] and use Hearst (1997)'s TextTiling algorithm to merge semantically similar sentences into paragraph-length chunks (n = 135,292).[21]

Next, we identified all border-relevant pseudo-paragraphs. We define a paragraph as *relevant* to international borders if it (1) discusses a *specific* physical, non-metaphorical international border or collection of borders (e.g. a regional border compact), *or* (2) discusses a concrete policy area with a clear impact on a physical, non-metaphorical international border. The presence of either attribute alone is sufficient for inclusion. For example, a document which discusses cross-border cultural initiatives in El Paso/Ciudad Juárez would be included because it clearly discusses a specific border, though the policy issue it discusses does not have a precise physical impact. Similarly, a document which describes Serbia's general interest in building cross-border infrastructure would also be relevant because it clearly discusses a policy issue with a physical border presence, even though a specific border is not mentioned. By contrast, a document which only mentions "transborder" counterterrorism cooperation or the "disappearance" of physical barriers to trade would be excluded, since it neither discusses a specific border nor a policy issue with precise physical consequences.

To identify all documents that meet this definition, we began by identifying all pseudo-paragraphs that contained any of a set of predefined border-relevant keywords, such as "border", "boundary", or "demarcate." Next, we assigned human coders to read approximately 40% of these pseudo-paragraphs and asked coders whether each paragraph met our definition of border-

[20] Using NLTK's sentence tokenizer.
[21] The TextTiling algorithm requires two researcher parameters, which roughly correspond to the average number of sentences in a paragraph and the average number of tokens in a sentence. Here, we use the empirical per-speech averages for both parameters, rounded to the nearest integer.

relevance. We assigned each paragraph to be read by two coders, and eliminated each paragraph in which both coders decided that a paragraph was irrelevant. This process left us with a dataset of some 2,293 annotated paragraphs, of which 1,707 were relevant to borders and 586 were irrelevant. Finally, we used this human-annotated set as training data for a supervised learning model (described in Appendix C), which we used to predict (ir)relevance on the remaining 60% of keyword-filtered documents. This process left us with a total of 4,215 border-relevant pseudo paragraphs, which forms the basis for our analyses in the following sections.

As shown in Figure 3, about 4% of all pseudo paragraphs are border-relevant in most years. While 4% may at first seem like a low proportion of all pseudo-paragraphs, this percentage is significant. First, there are 40 countries in the world that have no land borders at all[22] and may be unlikely to prioritize border discourse. Second, UNGA speeches almost always contain introductory diplomatic content that significantly inflates the total text; the denominator is full of diplomatic language offering "thank yous" and "congratulations." Third, speeches made in the annual UNGA debates resemble US State of the Union Addresses that often feature a long list of issues rather than focus on a single major concern. Content analysis of State of the Union Speeches shows that specific issues like "crime" and "immigration" *together* constituted less than 4% of the content of the State of the Union by 2010 (Rule, et al. 2015), though these issues were hardly unimportant. The list-like quality of the speech itself makes individual issues appear rare.

[22] For a list, see https://www.quora.com/Which-countries-dont-have-borders.

IV. Findings from Border Discourse: Attention, Issues, and Anxiety

Trends in Attention

Identification of border-relevant paragraphs reveals an insistent pattern: states are increasingly talking about specific international borders *as a proportion* of all communication in the annual General Debates (Figure 3). The uptick during the 1970s and 1980s and since the mid-2000s is especially strong. This trend echoes the upward swing in the official decisions in Figure 1, suggesting both trends may reflect genuine underlying interests and concerns.

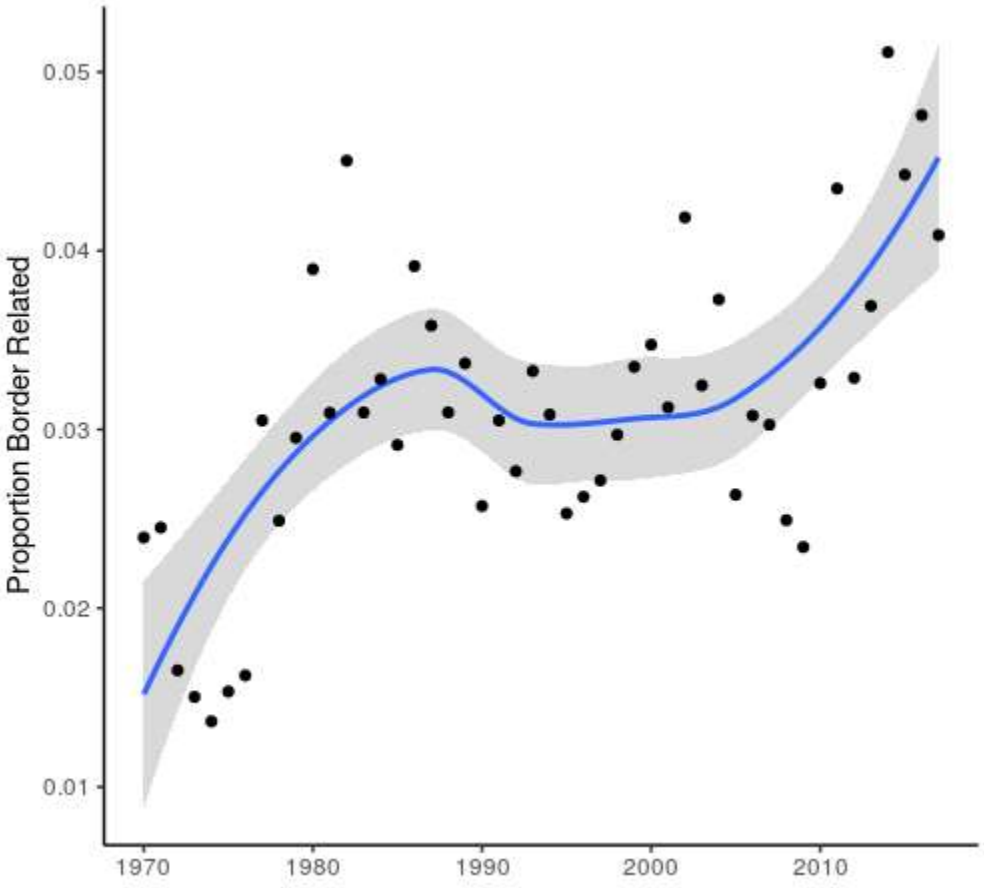

Figure 3: Proportion of border-relevant pseudo paragraphs *in all speeches made by United Nations member states from 1970-2017 during the UNGA's yearly General Debate.,* ***by year.*** *The denominator is the total number of pseudo paragraphs yearly. Shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

This pattern raises the questions: who is so concerned with border issues, and why? Taking *border mentions* as the dependent variable, we explore how a country's context influences the probability that its General Debate speech in a given year contains at least one border-relevant pseudo-paragraph. The framework developed above suggests that economic globalization,[23] security threats such as ongoing civil and interstate dispute,[24] and net migration,[25] are all associated with border mentions. Finally, we include controls for country size and wealth, as well as an indicator variable for the post-Cold War period to capture systemic changes in attention to border issues following the breakup of the Soviet Union (full results are reported in Appendix A).

Unsurprisingly, involvement in an interstate dispute is strongly, positive correlated with border mentions. Interstate disputes often involve border-related discussion, even if interstate borders are incidental to the conflict. More populous countries are also more likely to discuss borders, perhaps because these countries are likely to possess more territory and therefore more opportunities for border-related conflict. Economic globalization is also positively associated with border mention, although not quite at standards levels of statistical significance. Surprisingly, however, we found no relationship with a civil conflict in the speaking country, which may reflect the interstate focus of United Nations discourse. We also found a null relationship between logged GDP and border mentions, though the coefficient estimate points in the expected (positive) direction.

A more interesting explanation for border mentions, however, is the conditional role of net migration in the speaking country. We interacted net migration with regime type to capture the

[23] In particular, the de-facto globalization scores in the KOF Globalization Index, available at https://kof.ethz.ch/en/forecasts-and-indicators/indicators/kof-globalisation-index.html.
[24] As measured by the Polity IV project (Marshall et al. 2002).
[25] Normalized by country population, using estimated net migration flows drawn from the World Bank. Since estimates are only available at five year intervals, we interpolated migration values for off-years. Here, we use a linear interpolation, but all values are consistent with a piecewise constant interpolation.

idea that democracies may be more sensitive to net inward migration. The interaction term is indeed strongly positive. As Figure 4 shows, in democracies, increases in net migration are associated with a statistically significant increase in the probability of a border mention. For countries with the highest levels of democratic consolidation, the size of this effect is substantial. For example, in Norway – a country with the highest polity score (10) – a one standard-deviation change in year-on-year net migration is associated with an increase in the probability of at least one border mention that is approximately 33% of the magnitude of the corresponding increase associated with an additional interstate conflict. Of course, for less democratically consolidated states, this relationship is less strong; for example, in the United States (with a score of 8 on the -10 to 10 Polity scale), a corresponding increase in net migration is only associated with an increase in the probability of border mention that is 10% the size of a the value associated with a new interstate conflict. Given the attention to interstate disputes in international relations, this conditional effect of migration in democracies is substantial. In addition, international borders become an issue for autocracies when they experience net migration *outflows*; that is, when they are *losing* population (Figure 4). These results are suggestive that net migration – human mobility in and out – interact with regime type to influence border mentions on the world stage.

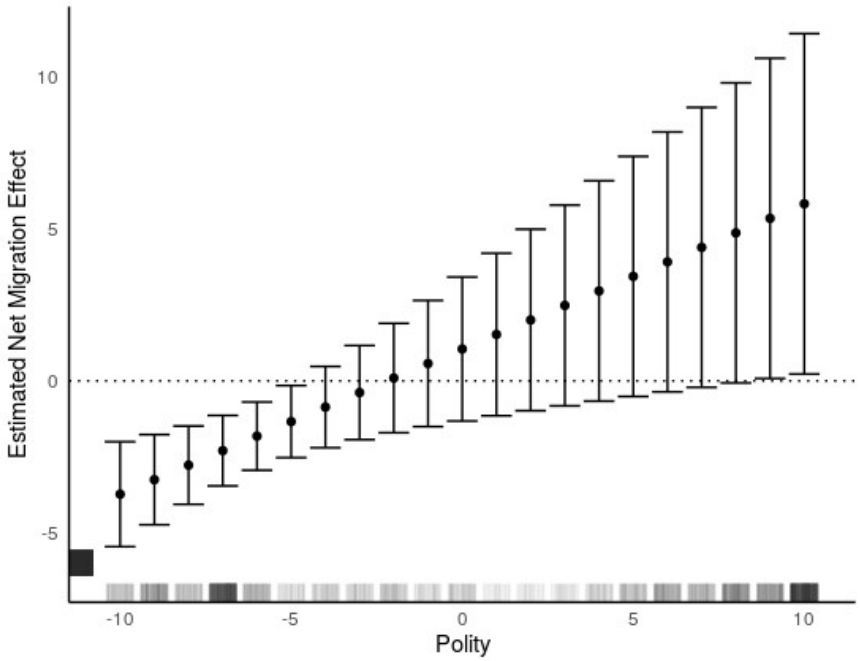

***Figure 4: Correlates of border mention**s (based on model in Appendix A) Illustrating the interaction between net migration flows and regime type in explaining the likelihood of a border mention at the UNGA. The figure suggests a sensitivity of autocracies (below -5 on the -10 to 10 polity sale) to outflows and a sensitivity of democracies (higher than 5 on the -10 to 10 polity sale) to inflows. Hash marks along the X-axis indicate the density of the data for each polity score. Bars represent 95% confidence intervals.*

Evolution in Issues:

As borders have become more salient in global official discourse, we expect its contents to evolve as well. The bipolar world order of the Cold War period reflected fewer but very intense border rivalries in which major powers staked public positions that minor power had an incentive to express, even when such conflicts were far afield. Post-Cold War, border concerns should "telescope" as states become increasingly concerned with cross border challenges in their region and especially at their own borders. If geographic distance between speaker and subject shrinks, this signifies growing concerns about borders at or near home.

To explore this possibility, we first needed to identify the locations mentioned in border-relevant texts. Using a pre-trained entity recognition model, followed up with manual extraction and quality control, we identified 8,408 location mentions, which included some 533 unique locations.[26]

Figure 5 displays some unexpected ups and downs in the distance associated with border mentions. However, following the end of the Cold War, the average distance between speaker and the locality mentioned declined by approximately 25% (the full model is presented in Appendix B). This is largely attributable to a decline in the prevalence of "epic" border conflicts, which had attracted substantial attention from across the international community during the Cold War (e.g., the Khmer Rouge genocide and the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia during the 1970s and

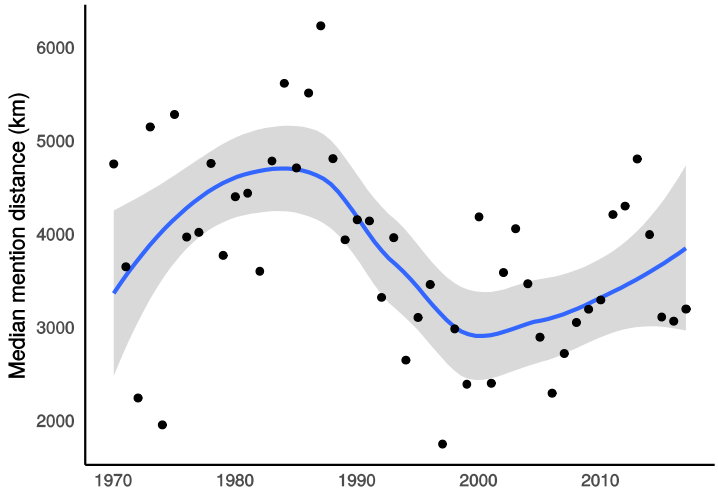

Figure 5: Median distance (km) between speaker country and mentioned location, over time. *For both speaker and mentioned countries, the point location of that country is the country's capital. For all other non-point locations, the point location is the centroid. Shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

[26] First, using the GPE entity type as identified in spaCy, we used a pre-trained named entity recognition model to identify all "geopolitical entities" from our dataset of border-relevant paragraphs. Here, "geopolitical entities" refer to named political entities with a clear geographic location, such as cities (e.g. "Jerusalem"; "Ciudad Juárez"), federal units ("Texas"; "Punjab"), states ("USA"; "Cambodia"), or regions ("Sinai Peninsula"; "Crimea"). Second, we associated each unique entity with a latitude/longitude point and a country using the Google Maps API. For instances in which the named entity was a country, we use the location of the country's capital as the point location. Otherwise, we used the centroid of the identified place name as the point location. Third, we manually checked each extracted entity, and removed entities that were either erroneously identified as "geopolitical" or associated with clearly erroneous location data by Google Maps. Fourth, we supplemented this list by manually adding location data for defunct or outdated country names (e.g. "Yugoslavia"; "Soviet Union").

1980s). By the 2000s, distance between speaker and border target was decidedly down, but increased again somewhat after 2000.

To investigate these patterns more systematically, we fit a conditional logistic regression model to a binarized version of the locations data, with fixed effects corresponding to the speaker and target country.[27] Our unit of analysis in these models is the directed dyad-year, with our dependent variable coded one if the speaker state mentioned a place contained in a target state in a given year, and zero otherwise. Conflict (civil and interstate), and distance are interacted by time-period, since they are theoretically sensitive to Cold War polarity. Since states are always theorized to be sensitive to net migration conditions, these are not interacted.[28]

The evidence by period suggests that the post-Cold War strategic environment has shifted some traditional security related border concerns systematically (Figure 6). States have always commented more on borders nearer to home, but this relationship becomes noticeably stronger following the end of the Cold War (the coefficient on distance shifts more strongly negative post-Cold War). States have always commented more on the borders of other states involved in conflict than on those where peace prevails, but there has been a significant shift toward commenting on borders in civil conflicts in the post-Cold War period relative to mentions of international conflicts in targeted states. These results fit a narrative that the end of the Cold War reduced the orchestration of international affairs around the global interests of the superpowers, and to some extent shifted conflict pressures from interstate to civil war.

[27] This set up accounts for unmodeled time-constant speaker- and target-country characteristics. For example, Israel is a frequently-mentioned country throughout the dataset because of the ongoing salience of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Effects like these should be captured by target-country fixed effects.

[28] We also control for relative GDP and population (both measures of size) and shared colonial history (potentially a marker of cultural and/or political salience), which are positive predictors of a border-relevant mention, but not reported here. See Appendix B for full results.

All four measures of migration status tell the same story: if the status of the speaker and subject are any indication, human mobility has been a border concern for most of the past 50 years. The negative relationship for raw immigration flows indicates that the larger a country's net migration *inflows*, the less likely its borders will be mentioned by any speaker; the larger the net *outflows*, the greater that likelihood. The next three migration variables test for the immigration status of the speaker-target dyad. We coded states as "receivers" and "senders" by dichotomizing the net migration data for each country-year. The pattern is clear and consistent: net receivers of migrants are especially likely to mention a border of countries with net human outflows compared to the borders of other net receivers. If both speaker and target have net negative outflows, the target's border is similarly unlikely to be mentioned. Senders are least likely to mention the borders of net migration receivers. These result reveal that human mobility may have been a major border concern for the whole of the period under investigation. The relationship is robust even when controlling for civil conflicts, which often spark involuntary movements. This finding suggests a general anxiety among destination countries about the porous borders of net human exporters.

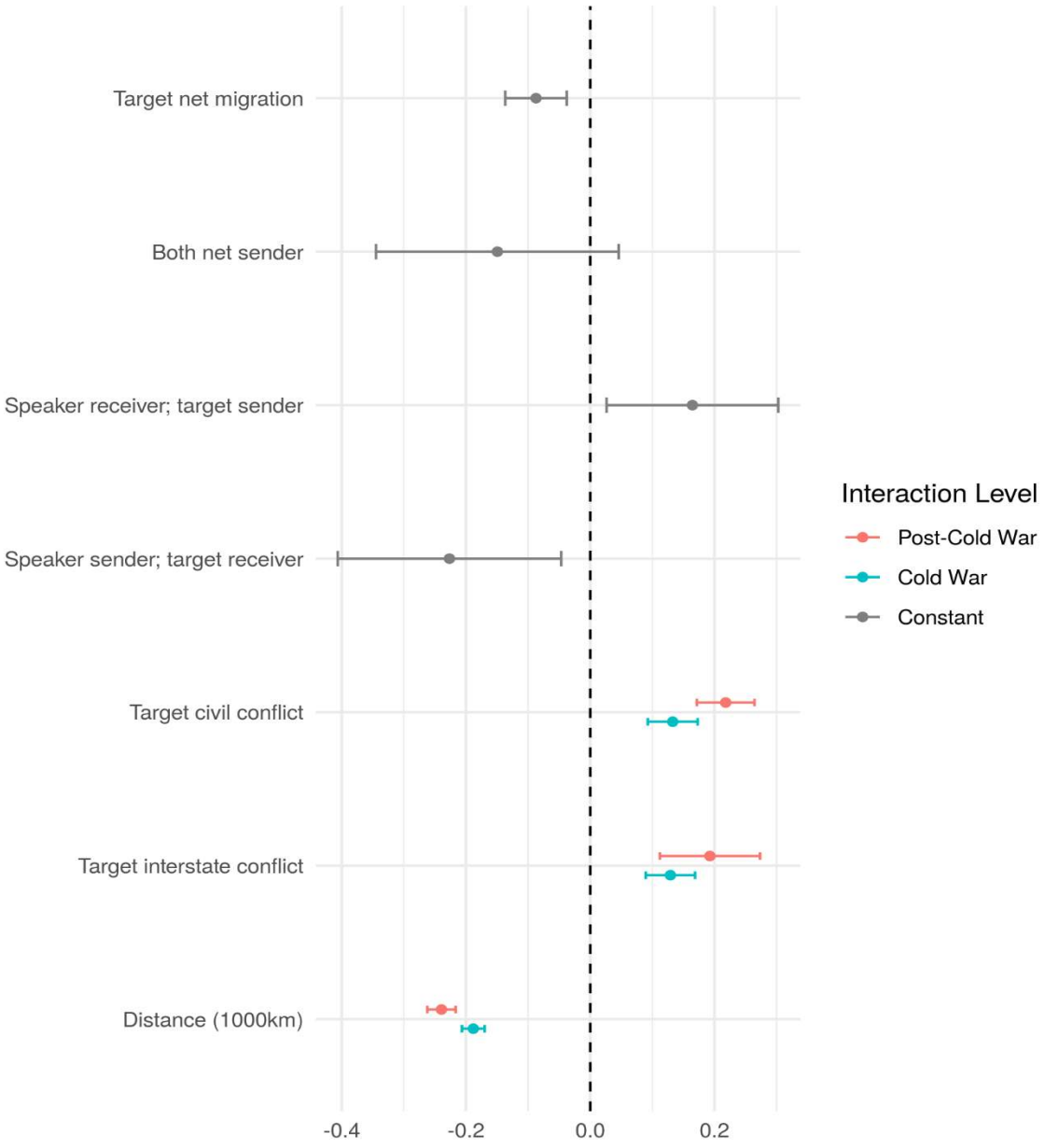

Figure 6: Likelihood that a Speaking State will mention a subject state in a border relevant paragraph. *Coefficient plots, directed dyad-year binary mentions. Dots represent point estimates, while lines represent 95% confidence intervals from a conditional logistic regression model. Speaker/target country, and year fixed effects estimated but not shown. Model includes controls for speaker/target GDP ratio, population ratio, common colonial heritage (all are positive). Full results are shown in Appendix B.*

A strategy of inferring concerns from who speaks about whom is suggestive, but the discourse itself speaks even more directly to official border concerns. We have identified a set of word stems that are associated with key border-related policy concerns – such as "crime"[29], "terrorism", "migration" and "disease"[30]– and track their prevalence in border-relevant pseudo-paragraphs relative to a set of "standard" international relations terms (e.g. "state", "international", or "war"). As shown in Figure 7, since 1970 terms associated with a variety on non-state threats are largely on the rise. Unsurprisingly, "terrorism" increases markedly in usage following the 9/11 attacks, while "migration" became substantially more common following the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis, and "disease words" show a steady upward climb with spikes for the SARS epidemic of the mid-2000s and the Ebola outbreak of 2014. Moreover, "traditional" international relations words like "state", "war", "settle" and "international" broadly *decline* in relative usage over the same time-period. Combined with the dyadic speaker-subject data, border discourse seems increasingly to do with concerns about non-state actors. Border concerns increasingly not about locating the jurisdictional line; they represent some of the most serious governing challenges for sovereign states under intensifying globalization.

Border Anxieties: Evidence from Sentiments and Emotions

Global official discourse is increasingly relevant to international borders. Dyadic analysis shows that references are more localized over time. The patterns of speaker and subject strongly suggest that border concerns are both civil and international. Discourse analysis also provides substantive clues that state-related border issues are common but declining, while non-state

[29] "Crime words" include "crime", "smuggl", and "traffick".
[30] "Disease words" include "disease," "pandemic," "infection," "health," "vaccine," and "virus."

threats, while somewhat less common, are distinctly on the rise in border relevant discussions in the General Assembly.

An additional way to characterize the content of a corpus is to focus on its *affective* content. Affective dynamics are important because they influence actors' beliefs, judgments and preferences, even if they are experienced at low intensities (Hall and Ross 2015). Repeated exposure to a phenomenon can produce low intensity emotive responses that over time can inform actors' preferences (Kunst-Wilson and Zajonc 1980). Even subtle suggestions of fear or anxiety associated with a place or condition can influence the sense of risk associated with it (Kahneman 2011). Importantly for deliberation in an international organization, emotive signals are demonstrably contagious to some degree (Iacoboni 2009).

Sentiment analysis focuses on the positive or negative "tone" of global official discourse. We are especially interested in sentiments of (dis)satisfaction related to some kind of (dis)utility the speaker associates with international borders – for example, that they are legitimate and stable (ensuring a secure sense of state sovereignty and control) or that they are contestable and dangerous (threatening the state and/or society in some way). Sentiment analysis is typically performed on expressions made by individuals,[31] but here we conceptualize UN representatives' speech as a signifier for a "corporate" attitude or opinion. That is, we assume the sentiment reflected is that of a relatively broad swath of politically-relevant official actors, and not merely the diplomat him/herself. We are primarily interested in changes in positive versus negative sentiments over time.

[31] Sentiments are "a psychological state that relates to the opinion holder's satisfaction and dissatisfaction with some aspect of the topic in question"(Li and Hovy 2017).

In most studies, scholars research sentiment patterns using dictionaries of positive or negative words (Young and Soroka 2012) or general-purpose algorithms trained on "emotive" documents like movie or restaurant reviews.[32] We employ such a Google-generated measure to compare border-relevant paragraphs to the entire corpus of UNGA speeches. The results are striking. Between 1970 and 2010, border-relevant paragraphs are less positive than are sentiment scores for the corpus as a whole (Figure 8), but they tend to track each other closely, and for the

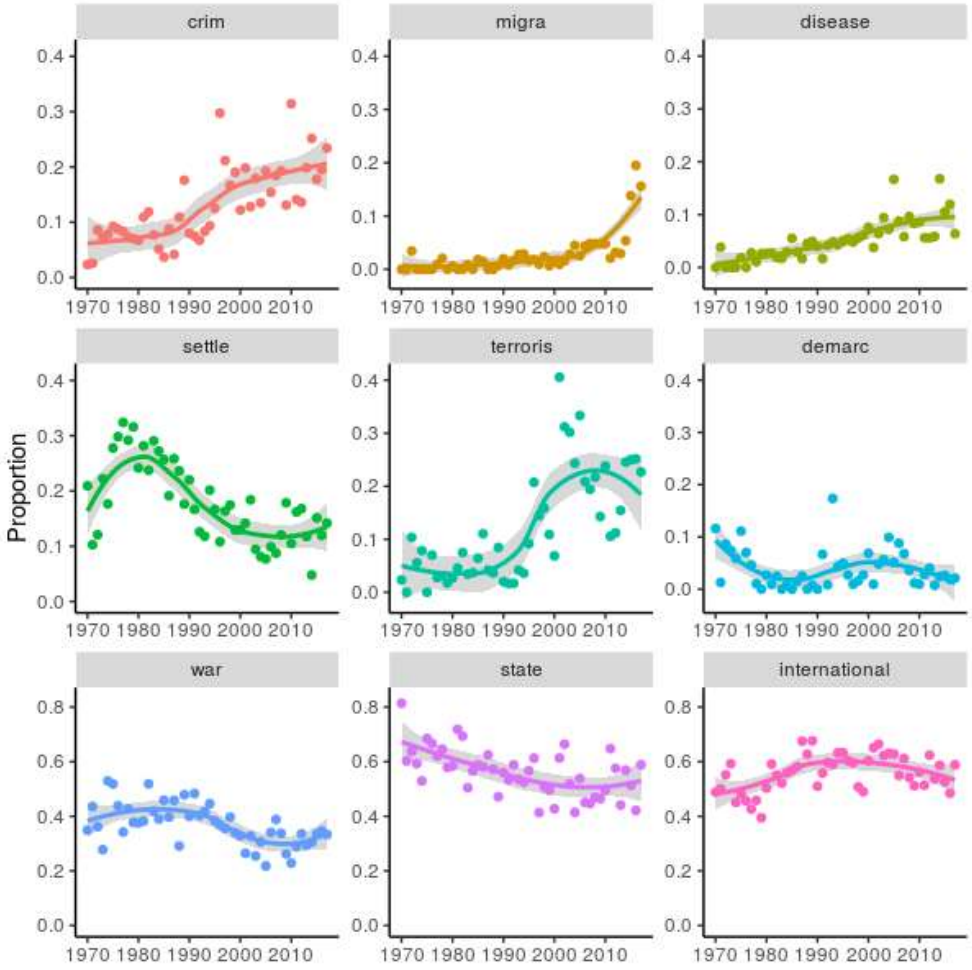

Figure 7: Proportion of pseudo-paragraphs that mention specified issues, 1970-2017. *The top panel highlights growth in problem frames that tend to involve non-state actors: migration, terrorism, and disease, while the bottom panels suggests state-to-state relationship (demarca-, settle-, state, international, war)*

[32] For example, the Google Sentiment tool available through the Google AI API.

years between 1992 and 2010 are indistinguishable. After 2010, border sentiments deteriorate drastically while sentiments associated with the rest of the corpus trend suddenly positive. Even though UNGA speeches are getting more positive overall, border topics in the past decade are an exception.

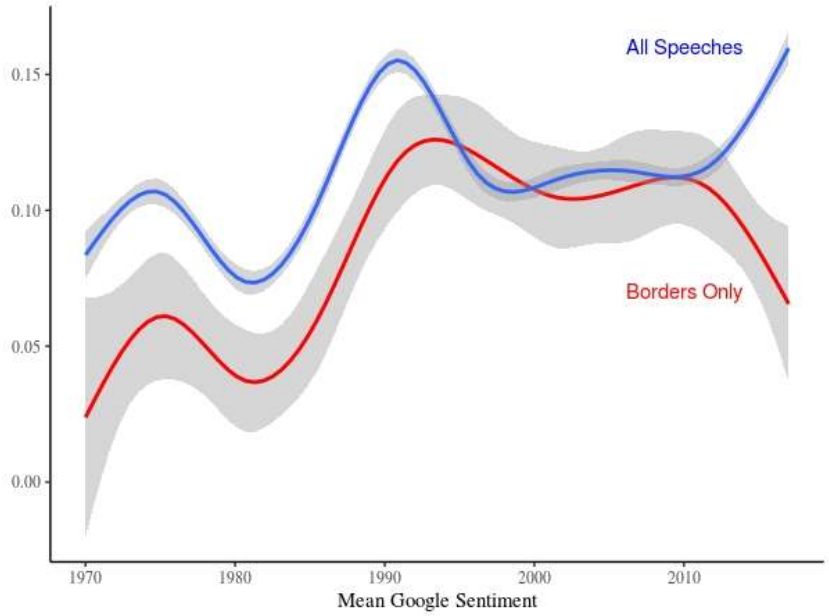

Figure 8: Google *sentiments scores, aggregated by year and country, comparing sentiments associated with border relevant paragraphs with all other paragraphs in UNGA General Debates. Shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

However, for a number of reasons ready-made dictionaries are not ideal for diplomatic contexts. First, diplomats communicate in code, which is intended to signal meanings to other diplomats who know the code. To the general public (or to a general-purpose algorithm), diplomatic language may therefore sound ambiguous (Jönsson and Aggestam 1999). Second, compared to ordinary language or movie/restaurant reviews, diplomatic language is moderate. It generally expresses "hostility with courtesy, indifference with interest, and friendship with prudence" (Satow 2009). It may seem monotone compared to the extremes in ordinary and

especially online communication. Third, diplomatic language is likely biased toward positive sentiment, since it "promotes mutual cooperation over conflict and divisiveness" (Burhanudeen 2006). These characteristics suggest it may be wise to develop a meaningful scale for detecting sentiments in diplomatic language.

Supervised machine learning addresses these concerns. To develop a "ground-truth" dataset, we asked human workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk to code sentiment values for approximately 20% of our corpus (n = 1124).[33] Because rating paragraphs on an abstract sentiment scale is cognitively demanding, we presented MTurk workers with a pair of paragraphs at a time, and asked them to indicate which document was more "optimistic" regarding the international border issue it discussed.[34] Each unique document was presented in twenty total comparisons, for a total of 11,214 comparisons. We then used these rankings to fit a Bayesian latent variable model, which allows us to infer a continuous human-generated sentiment score for each individual document. This score formed the training set in our subsequent modeling work.

Using this ground-truth dataset, we trained a custom machine learning model to predict document sentiment given that document's text. We used two types of features as predictors in this model. First, we used a series of off-the-shelf sentiment analysis dictionaries and algorithms to extract unsupervised sentiment scores for each document. Second, we augmented these dictionary sentiment values with a document-level vector embedding designed to capture the overall substantive themes present in each document.[35]

[33] Before participating, we required all workers to pass a 10-15 minute training and testing. A total of 61 workers participated in the task, of which 4 were banned for low inter-coder reliability.
[34] Throughout this process, we followed the pairwise comparison procedure proposed by Carlson and Montgomery (2017). To incentivize careful reading, we paid workers relatively well at $0.07 per paragraph-length comparison.
[35] As shown in Appendix D, we experimented with a variety of models and feature combinations, but found that a simple ridge-penalized linear model trained with all features performed best out-of-sample.

The results are shown in Figure 9, which distinguishes sentiment of the Global North from the Global South. This customized measure confirms that sentiments associated with borders have generally improved worldwide since 1970. In particular, the 1980s saw steeply improving sentiments in the Global South, which then dipped in the 1990s. Sentiments in the Global North trend positive for most of the period. However, starting in the late 2000s, this pattern began to reverse, with a noticeable decline from approximately 2010 to the present. This decline was sharp and sudden in the Global North, which coincides with increased anxiety regarding economic recessions, immigration, and the rise of far-right populist movements in the United States and Europe during the period.

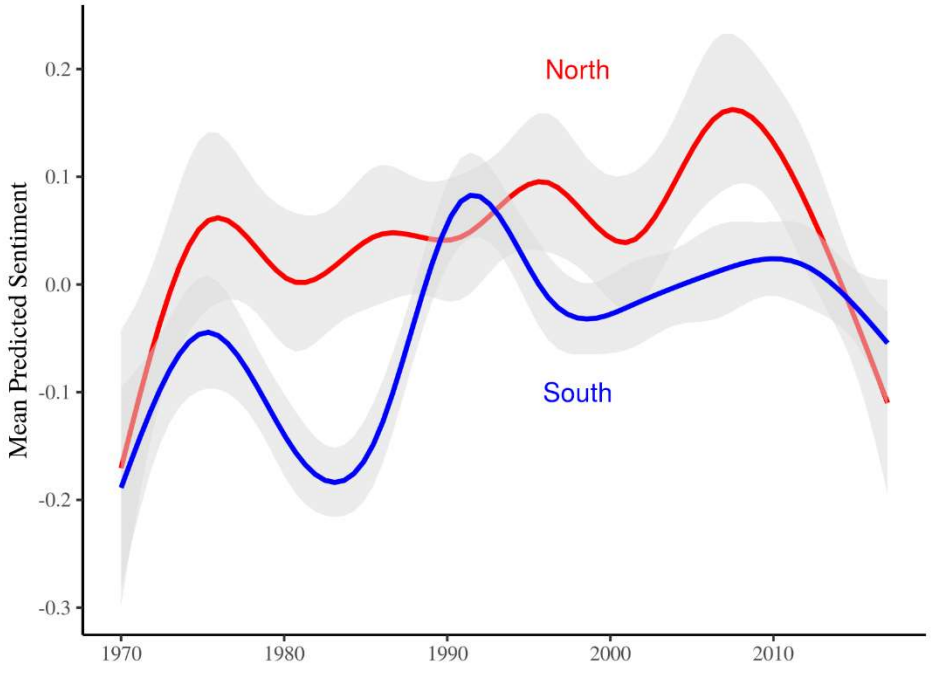

Figure 9: Model-predicted sentiment, *aggregated by year and country and split by Global North and Global South; shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

Notable differences in sentiment seem to apply to state-centered border concerns compared to non-state concerns. Above we demonstrated that traditional border terms connoting *interstate* relations – including demarcate-, settle, state, international and war – are generally on the decline, while those connoting *non-state threats* (crime, smuggling and/or trafficking, migration and terrorism) are on the rise. Strikingly, non-state challenges are both increasingly frequent and are addressed using comparatively negative sentiments in diplomatic discourse, as Figure 10 demonstrates.

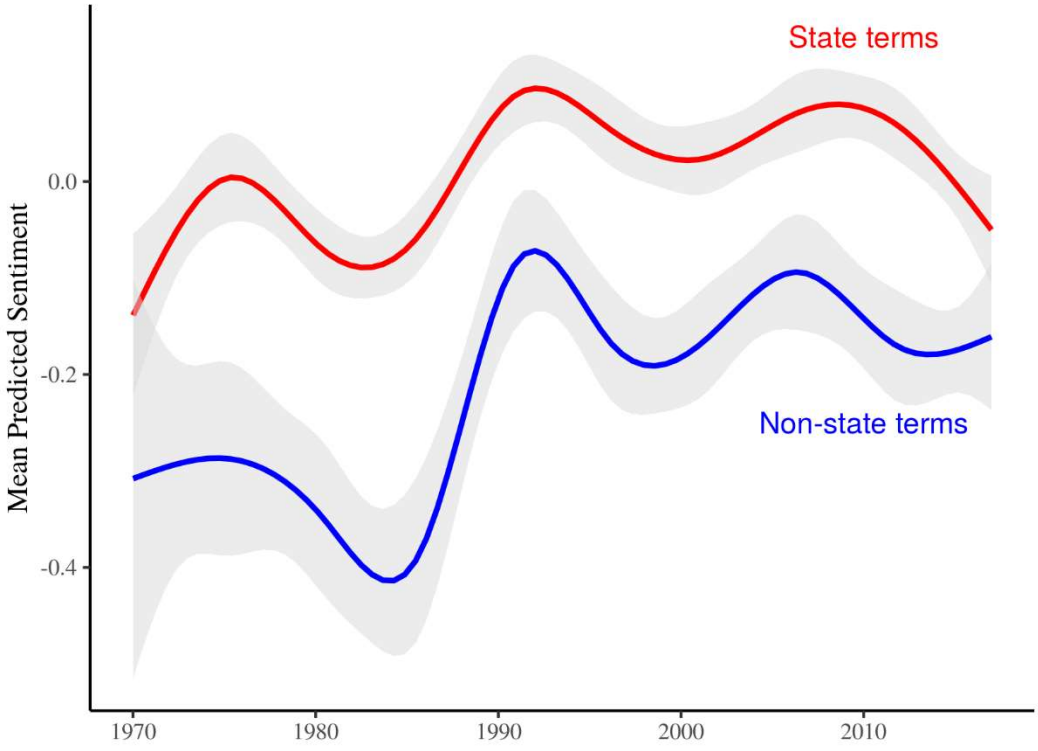

Figure 10: ***Model-predicted sentiment,*** *comparing pseudo-paragraphs containing state-related terms and border-related terms (see Figure 13 and in-text for a full term list). Shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

Sentiments are measured on a unidimensional positive/negative scale. Specific emotions can also be gleaned from UNGA discourse, which sheds light on the quality of speakers' affect when discussing border-relevant issues. Here we are interested not only in detection, but also emotion classification into pre-defined categories (Yadollahi, et al. 2017, 3). The emotions

surrounding border-relevant discussions provide important clues to why diplomats are motivated to speak about border issues in the first place. Moreover, they are part of both the expressive and persuasive climate in which state officials discuss their concerns. Anger, fear and trust are discrete emotions that may affect behavior by shaping the way people search for information, how they interpret their social environment, and how they perceive the motives of others (Skitka, et al. 2006, Ross 2013). The importance of describing the underlying emotions associated with international borders and expressed in official discourse world-wide is a useful starting point for understanding modern expressions of insecurity.

To extract information on emotional content in UN speeches, we rely on the NRC emotion lexicon (Mohammad and Turney 2013). The NRC emotion lexicon is a crowd-sourced emotion dictionary, which uses workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk to code presence/absence of eight non-exclusive emotion labels (Plutchik 1994) to all words in *Roget's Thesaurus* that occur at least 120,000 times in Google's N-gram corpus. To extract the prevalence of these emotions from UN speeches, we first tokenized and stemmed all speeches. We then counted the number of words with each emotion label in border-relevant sections of each speech and divided those counts by the total number of words in border-relevant speeches to create final per-year emotion prevalence scores.

The findings are reported in Figure 11. Four negative emotions and four positive emotions are graphed in the upper and lower panels of the figure, distinguishing border relevant paragraphs from all other paragraphs in the UNGA debates for the past 50 years. The most common emotion we were able to classify in these documents was "trust." "Surprise" and "disgust" are rarely found in UNGA speeches. This is hardly surprising, since these paragraphs represent generally polite diplomatic language.

The most consistent finding from Figure 11 is that all four negative emotions arrayed across the top panel show higher scores for border-relevant paragraphs, while the positive emotions in the lower panel are stronger, if anything for non-border related discourse. Anger and fear are the most notable: other than trust, they are the most frequently detected emotions in the UNGA debates. Moreover, they begin the period nearly indistinguishable, but a statistically significant gap opens up between border and non-border discourse over time. All four negative emotions become more prevalent over time, especially for the border-relevant passages.

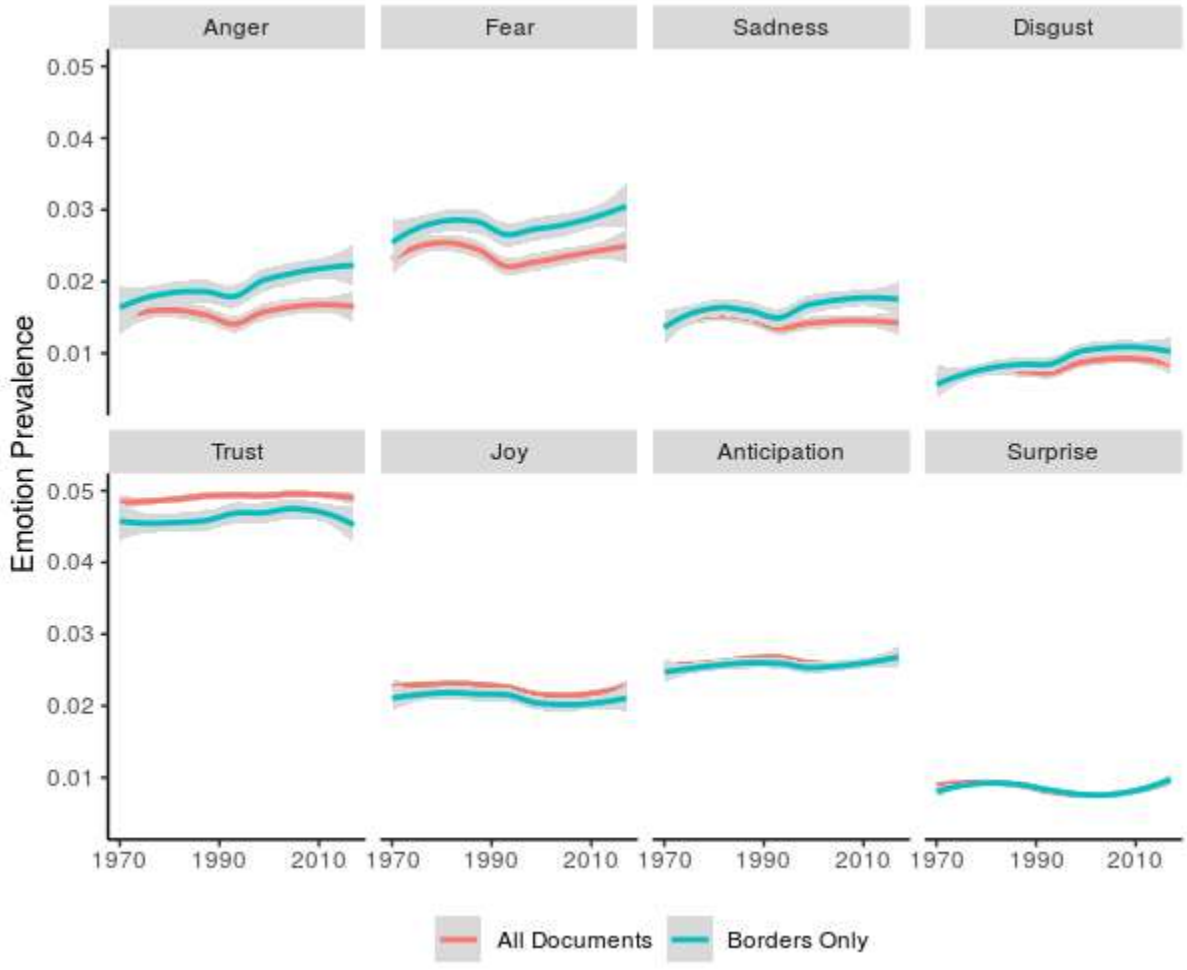

Figure 11: Word-level emotion prevalence *in border-relevant paragraphs, aggregated by year. Shading represents 95% confidence intervals.*

VII. Conclusions

Important changes are taking place in perceptions associated with the peaceful maintenance of territorial sovereignty. Over the past several decades, a growing and diverse set of states have increasingly devoted floor time on the world stage to discuss international borders. Their speeches are not merely abstract references to "inviolable borders" or other general principles; they signify obsession with specific and concrete policy problems with clear geospatial referents. This finding alone is important: the so-called age of globalization has demonstrably been accompanied by a discourse of border security.

The evidence suggests that concerns have shifted from the epic interstate conflicts and rivalries of the Cold War to the more local and widespread problems sovereign states face governing porous jurisdictional perimeters. The promise of the UN Charter – that peace and security can be realized through states' mutual recognition of sovereign and inviolable territorial jurisdiction – has not put anxieties fully to rest. Even though states have agreed to formal treaties delimiting some 90% of their shared borders, mentions of borders are on the rise, and sentiments and emotions have recently trended negative in official border-relevant discourse for a fairly clear reason. While the salience of interstate border threats appears to have waned, challenges from a host of non-state agents and forces are believed to be on the rise. These perceptions may help explain why the Security Council's business is recently less concerned with "legitimate borders" and has increasingly obligated sovereign members states to secure, control and manage their borders under Chapter VII of the Charter; that is, in the name of international peace and security.

These findings should prod a reorientation in border research among scholars of international relations. Clearly, the findings in this article are revelatory rather than causal. We document new concerns, sentiments and emotions that demand explanation. We suggest a

research agenda that complements and moves beyond the comforting symbols of security – territorial settlement, conclusion of formal border treaties, legalized interstate arbitration (Huth, et al. 2011, Owsiak 2012, Schultz 2014) – to the no less contentious and complex problems of policing (Andreas 2003) migration management (Andrijasevic and Walters 2010) and most recently health policy (Kenwick and Simmons 2020, forthcoming). This is a complex and ongoing problem that will clearly engage domestic as well as international audiences. New approaches to research are needed that embraces the range of concerns states and societies attached to international borders. International relations research should develop mid-range theories for the complex threats to sovereignty and security that are increasingly being voiced in the uncertain post-Cold War climate. As economies have integrated and humanity has become far more mobile (often involuntarily), interstate relations will increasingly be about filtering non-state actors and activities. For while it is clear that borders delineate states, they also create incentives and opportunities for nonstate actors to challenge state authority. These challenges are now firmly nearing the top of the security agenda for much of the international society of states.

This focus on global official discourse is meant to stimulate thinking about states' publicly expressed priorities and concerns. By no means have we exhausted the possibilities for exposing these concerns, but at least we have mined a corpus representing the broadest possible range of state priorities, concerns and aspirations. The record of UNGA speeches is a trove of data on global sentiments ready for researchers to analyze. Features like location mentions, sentiment, and content all point to policy relevant attitudes. Examining patterns within these features offers insights into state anxieties about their security environment. Clearly, this research strategy should be complemented with a variety of different tools and approaches. But we believe that systematic textual discourse of positions taken on the world stage offers a promising direction.

International relations research should redouble its effort to address evolving anxieties of states and societies in this complex and uncertain global environment.

Several research agendas may grow from this description of border sentiments. One agenda is to understand how border sentiments expressed at the United Nations reflect and reverberate in national politics. Some leaders may use their time on the world stage to whip up or to quell domestic sentiments regarding international borders. Others may bring genuine local concerns to the international table. What is the relationship between global official discourse and mass opinion? Does the latter lead the former? A second agenda should explore the diffusion of sentiments among global elites. Do concerns about international borders spread among elites? Does fear, anger and anxiety spark generalized assessments of intensified security risks at the border?

Most importantly, research on how global official discourse links to concrete policy developments will be crucial. The positive emotion of trust seems to imply possibilities for cooperative multilateral endeavors; for example, to coordinate policies with respect to migration, refugees, and public health. However, the even stronger increase in negative emotions suggests that in many parts of the world, defensive unilateral efforts will prevail. Such sentiments may well presage a growing determination unilaterally to filter non-state actors at the border. The trends documented here strongly suggest that border anxieties are not unique to a handful of states; rather, border issues and sentiments appear to be of growing concern to state officials world-wide. The implications of these findings should inform a new agenda for border research that moves beyond territorial disputes to a much broader range of contemporary policies.

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