The Local Politics of Border Control: Transnational Communities and Resistance

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ABSTRACT

States are increasingly hardening borders. Scholars have dedicated substantial attention to this phenomenon, but little is known about its local politics. This study takes up the challenge of theorizing borderlands as unique geopolitical spaces and the communities therein as central actors. Transnational communities with cross-border ties depend on mobility, which disposes them to contest border hardening. This theory is tested and expanded via a mixed-methods design leveraging the coronavirus pandemic context in which most states closed their borders. Global quantitative analysis finds that transnationality predicts local protest against border closures. Interviews in two outlier communities that are highly transnational but did not resist a border closure show that its accommodation of border-related industries forestalled discontent. This indicates that selective border hardening, which accounts for local flows, is less likely to spark conflict. The findings point to local communities as a key actor in border politics deserving more attention.

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Introduction

International politics is undergoing a profound transformation in how borders are governed. Most visibly, states are rapidly building new infrastructures at borders. This includes at least 100 walls since 1990 but also expanded ports of entry, patrols, and surveillance capacities (Simmons and Kenwick, 2022; Carter and Poast, 2017; Hassner and Wittenberg, 2015). These investments are often accompanied by new types of collaborative co-governance between neighboring states (Longo, 2017; Andreas, 2003; Agbiboa, 2017). Alongside these changes in the physical environment is a discourse throughout international institutions and domestic political contexts that characterizes borders as sites of threat and vulnerability (Simmons and Shaffer, 2024; Brown, 2010). Concern about borders is one element of the global rise of populism and backlash against globalization (Simmons and Goemans, 2021).

The normative stakes of these processes are high. Border governance affects not only individuals seeking to cross borders but broader domains of politics such as security and economic exchange. Research on border hardening is crucial for identifying how states can manage the perennial challenge of facilitating beneficial flows while limiting harmful ones.

To that end, scholars have devoted substantial attention to the phenomenon, especially walling. Theories explaining hardening generally emphasize functionalist motivations to reduce unwanted entry by making it more costly or state actors' political motivations to perform action for national audiences anxious about insecurity (Carter and Poast, 2017; Hassner and Wittenberg, 2015; Avdan, 2018; Brown, 2010; Andreas, 2010; Linebarger and Braithwaite, 2022; Simmons and Kenwick, 2022). Other work continues to unpack whether and how hardening actually impacts cross-border flows, spanning from migration to terrorism (Avdan and Gelpi, 2017; Carter and Poast, 2020; Carter, Donahue and Williams, 2024; Getmanski, Grossman and Wright, 2019; Schon and Leblang, 2021; Kim and Tajima, 2022; Linebarger and Braithwaite, 2020).

The literature has advanced significantly from documenting the global trend of hardening borders toward uncovering the variety of pressures that drive it and equivocal support for efficacy. Yet, scholars know much less about the politics of bordering "on-the-ground." Scattered studies assess how border hardening affects local civilians' welfare in civil conflicts (Blair, 2024), how public opinion about restrictions varies by geography (Cortina, 2019; Gravelle, 2018; Whitaker, 2023), and how empowering local authorities changes the security outcomes of border control efforts (Gavrilis, 2008). But a series of important questions oriented toward the local-level remain unanswered: to what degree is border hardening actually salient to local communities? When do they support or oppose it? And how do these dynamics vary across and within different contexts and border hardening strategies? This deficit in knowledge is striking given that more than 1.2 billion people (16% of the human population) live within 50 kilometers of a land border.[1] It has long been asserted that border areas are unique (Baud and van Schendel, 1997), but more knowledge

[1]This calculation used population data from LandScan Global Data 2021 (Sims et al., 2022) and the borders data from this study.

is needed on how this matters for the politics of border hardening. Understanding the ways in which local communities are affected by and politically engage with this border hardening is critical given its ever-growing prominence in politics.

I address this gap by taking up the challenge of showing, first, exactly how borderlands are unique geopolitical spaces and, second, how the communities therein are central actors in border politics. My framework problematizes both the local community and the nature of bordering. The theory focuses on transnationality, defined here as the extent to which a community in a borderland is economically and socially connected to society across the border. The more transnational a borderland community, the more that local life depends on open mobility. Border control is salient for communities whose way of life revolves around interaction and exchange across borders. In the face of disruption, such communities are disposed to challenge the state, even over hardening strategies that receive broad support at the national level. Yet, the more a given strategy selectively accommodates transnational practices, the less likely conflict is to emerge.

I evaluate and develop this general theory via a mixed-methods design leveraging the coronavirus context. Virtually all states with land borders closed them during the pandemic, with robust public support (Lindholt et al., 2021; Chilton et al., 2023; Bricker, 2020). This setting provides an opportunity to compare local reactions to a broadly uncontroversial form of border hardening whose impetus was comparatively exogenous to typical confounders like regime and leadership type.

The design includes two components. The first is a deductive global quantitative analysis of transnationality, captured with an original geospatial measure, and hand-coded events data derived from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. The key finding is that transnationality predicts local protests/riots against pandemic border closures. This result holds across a variety of measurement specifications, modeling approaches, and subgroup analyses based on state capacity.

The second design component is case study analysis of two communities in the U.S. that are highly transnational but did not resist pandemic border hardening. Studying these "deviant cases" (Levy, 2008), or "off-the-line" observations (Lieberman, 2005), is an opportunity to refine the theory. Fieldwork interviews with local stakeholders indicate that the closure's economic impact was substantially mitigated because it made exceptions for flows associated with key industries, suggesting that such accommodations ultimately forestalled conflict.

This study makes four contributions to the study of border politics. The first is advancing a theory for the macro-level-oriented literature to explain how local communities engage with border politics. Theorizing transnationality as a feature of life for some borderland communities is essential for understanding the varying contexts in which border control strategies are being enacted. Borderland communities are agentic actors with a comparatively pragmatic approach to border politics. Communities with transnational ties approach the governance of borders from a distinct set of interests, which shapes whether they contest state policies.

On that front, the second contribution is to spotlight an under-recognized tension in the politics of border hardening. I demonstrate that transnationality drove some borderland communities to mobilize against pandemic border hardening that received

robust national support. This divergence suggests that, for local populations, border hardening does not necessarily tap into the anxieties that scholars have emphasized in national sentiments (Brown, 2010; Andreas, 2010; Linebarger and Braithwaite, 2022). Border hardening driven by perceived threats and vulnerabilities in the interior clashes with local transnational communities invested in openness and mobility. The proliferation of border control should thus be understood as a point of tension not only with the liberal international order (Simmons and Goemans, 2021). but with peripheral populations in domestic politics.

The third contribution, addressing how to navigate that clash, is to highlight the phenomenon of selective bordering. This innovative concept is useful for identifying variation within border hardening strategies that matters for understanding their effects on local populations and broader flows. The case study findings support the notion that the effects of hardening are conditional, complimenting recent work (Kim and Tajima, 2022; Linebarger and Braithwaite, 2020). Which exact flows a given strategy does and does not target influences which interests it potentially threatens. In turn, making exceptions for key flows associated with transnationality reduces disruption. The selective bordering approach is important because it can preempt political discontent, ultimately mitigating tension between transnational communities and states. Research on the impact of border hardening strategies should account for the degree and nature of selectivity to more precisely specify their ramifications.

Finally, I demonstrate the value of mixed-method design and micro-level data for the study of border politics. Much can be learned from analyzing the relationships between international- and national-level phenomena. However, moving down in scale and using other data sources like interviews in borderland contexts is necessary for measuring and assessing local dynamics and their implications for individuals' well-being. Deploying this approach for both theory-testing and theory-building broadens the types of questions that border politics research can answer.

In what follows, I outline the concept of transnationality before linking it to the politics of border hardening. The subsequent sections present the two empirical tests. After reviewing the findings, I conclude by returning to broader implications for the study of border politics.

Theory

Conceptualizing Transnationality

The theoretical framework adopted here centers borderlands as a unique geopolitical space and the communities therein as central protagonists in the politics of bordering. Systematically defined concepts are needed to organize thinking around these units of analysis. Answering the call for political science to specify border effects (Braun and Kienitz, 2022), I conceptualize what distinguishes life in borderlands, how this varies across communities, and why this matters for the politics of border control.

This effort hinges on the concept of transnationality, defined as *the extent to which a borderland community is connected to society across the border.* The concept focuses

on communities located in borderlands, which are the geographic areas that are both proximate to and bisected by an international land border (Baud and van Schendel, 1997; Braun and Kienitz, 2022). Borderlands include two national spaces, one on each side of a border, although it is possible for multiple borderlands to overlap.

The distinctiveness of borderlands, relative to country interiors, is physical proximity to a border. This proximity creates unique opportunities for local populations to interact and exchange with people and institutions on the other side of the border. People who reside outside of borderlands do have some opportunity for cross-border exchange and interaction via travel, digital communication, and consumption. However, people who are physically proximate to a border have a deeper opportunity that can be more embedded in day-to-day life and personal experiences like encountering people and physically crossing the border (Mirwaldt, 2010). These dynamics influence the broader way of life characterizing communities and their political interests.

There are two dimensions to transnationality. The economic dimension encompasses activities like formal and informal trade, the smuggling of illicit goods, work, and shopping. The social dimension of transnationality encompasses linkages of family, ethnic kin, friends, religion, and more. The more that these types of connection prevail among a borderland community, the more transnational it is. Yet, the two dimensions are not intrinsically bundled; a community can be highly connected along one dimension but not the other.

All borderland communities share an opportunity for having ties across borders. But the extent to which transnationality actually characterizes communities varies substantially (Idler, 2019; Martínez, 1994; Wilson and Donnan, 1998). This variation manifests both within and across borderlands.

For example, extremely high transnationality in both economic and social dimensions characterizes many communities in the United States (U.S.)–Mexico borderland. This involves regularized patterns of authorized crossing in both directions by people who live in the borderland going to work, attending school, shopping, acquiring medical care, and visiting friends and kin (Castañeda Pérez, 2020; Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey, 2020). In such sites, residents often articulate the notion of a borderland identity that is explicitly rooted in the interconnected way of life (Dear, 2020; Stea, Zech and Gray, 2010). There are also substantial illicit flows, including drug smuggling, human trafficking, and unauthorized migration, that involve external actors but also people and criminal groups inside the borderland.

Conversely, most communities on the Botswana side of the Botswana-Zimbabwe borderland exemplify low transnationality. Although Kalanga people live on both sides of the borderland (The New Humanitarian, 2005), the communities on the Botswana side do not have substantial transnational ties. Most movement across this border during the past few decades has been transitory and one-sided in the form of Zimbabweans migrating to the interior of Botswana for work and physical security. In fact, xenophobia against Zimbabweans is widespread throughout Botswana, including in the border region (Campbell and Crush, 2015; Campbell, 2003)

The transnationality of a borderland community is an enduring trait, but one that evolves over time. The diversity of forces that contribute to these shifts underscores how transnationality is distinct from other forms of exchange and interaction across

borders that have developed, for example, through globalization. High transnationality can emerge separately from or alongside state efforts to foster trade.[2]

From the top-down, state actions can shape transnationality. For example, states can manipulate the demographics of citizen populations in borderlands through displacement and other forms of violence to eliminate the ethnic basis of social ties (McNamee and Zhang, 2019; Müller-Crepon, Schvitz and Cederman, 2025). This phenomenon represents when transnationality is seen as a threat undermining the security or integrity of the national state. Yet, states can also contribute to transnationality. The predominant way this occurs is via the construction of transportation infrastructure to facilitate trade, which can indiectly stimulate a new economy for local communities. Sometimes, this process is an attempt to formalize pre-existing smuggling institutions under the national state, in which case a state-created trade corridor follows transnationality rather than the inverse (Su, 2022).

As for bottom-up forces, local actors can use their agency to shape transnationality. Communities may pursue cross-border economic linkages such as formal or informal trade to stimulate development, which can be especially important for what often are otherwise peripheral areas (Idler, 2019; Gallien, 2020; Matanzima, Helliker and Pophiwa, 2023; Miggelbrink, 2014; Su, 2022). This was the origin of Euroregions, or binational zones of institutional cooperation along borders between local and regional governments within the European Union, although national states have found over time that they benefit from supporting these (Markusse, 2011). People in borderlands may also pursue linkages across borders on the basis of social identities they value and share with others. This is especially significant for minnority ethnic groups whose existence predates but was fractured by the establishment of a border such as via colonialism (Ghosh, 2011; Musoni, 2020; Moyo, 2016)

Overall, transnationality is a dynamic characteristic of borderland communities. Populations in these areas vary in their degree and form of cross-border ties over space and time. These evolve for a variety of reasons both related and unrelated to other processes like globalization. In highlighting cross-cutting linkages, the concept of transnationality speaks to the significance of territory in contemporary politics. The spatial delineation of ethnic groups has been identified as a key historical motivation for where elites and political entrepreneurs sought to locate borders, specifically in Europe and Asia (Müller-Crepon, Schvitz and Cederman, 2024). However, the prevalence of transnationality throughout some borderlands underscores the incomplete nature of such ethnonationalist projects.

Resistance Against Border Hardening

Transnationality is an important force in border politics because it shapes how local communities engage with state efforts to harden borders. Communities being highly transnational leads them to value open mobility as the basis on which local life depends. In turn, they are more likely than other borderland communities to challenge

[2]The conceptualization here is distinct from other areas like migration studies that use transnationality to refer to long-term ties held by migrants with their home countries (Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007).

disruptions to cross-border exchange and interaction. This dynamic is not captured in existing theories that tend to homogenize national public support for border hardening as driven by a shared sense of threat (Brown, 2010; Andreas, 2010; Linebarger and Braithwaite, 2022).

The starting of the logic is that transnationality consists of regular interaction and exchange across a border (Martínez, 1994; Castañeda Pérez, 2020). Such repeated and beneficial interaction, in the framework of contact theory, fuels positive perceptions of people across the border (Mirwaldt, 2010). This interaction and exchange creates dependency on open mobility for citizens, firms, and elites. The benefits encompass both economic and social activities including the revenue yielded through trade, smuggling, or labor, and the value of social relationships. Thus, the more transnational a borderland community, the more that open mobility is the status quo.

Further, people in highly transnational communities often conceive of themselves as having border-related identities. The development of modern technologies like the printing press and maps have profulgated national and territorial conceptions of polities (Anderson, 2006; Branch, 2014; Uttal, 2000; Parellada, Carretero and Rodríguez-Moneo, 2021). However, these notions are not necessarily prominent in borderlands. Living in a highly transnational borderland community where cross-border interaction is prevalent often engenders conceptions of a cohesive social world (Ghosh, 2011; Idler, 2019; Mirwaldt, 2010; Dear, 2020). People in such transnational settings often recognize either a blending of multiple identities or a single, coherent identity that extends beyond the border. Transnational identity in this kind of context is often predicated on belonging to the borderland as its own space without the limits of national borders.

Overall, highly transnational borderland communities are broadly invested in maintaining the interconnected way of life. However, this interest can clash with the turn to border hardening. The fundamental concern is that long-standing patterns of interaction and exchange will be obstructed, harming borderland communities' needs.

In the first dimension of economic ties, citizens, elites, and criminal actors in highly transnational borderland communities fear losing economic revenue gained from cross-border mobility. The concern is that border hardening will decrease formal trade, informal trade, and/or smuggling flows by slowing down or entirely inhibiting traffic from across the border through ports of entry (Blair, 2023; Carter and Poast, 2020). This would threaten livelihoods and the provision of goods.

In the second dimension of social ties, citizens and elites in highly transnational borderland communities are similarly more likely to oppose border hardening. The fear is that reductions in the entry of people from across the border limits the ability of these communities to sustain social relationships. This concern involves ties of family, friends, ethnicity, religion, and/or other kinds of social ties. Nationally oriented border hardening is seen as imposing an inflexible national identity over local, potentially more fluid, conceptions (Cortina, 2019; Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey, 2020; Dear, 2020).

I argue that the political interests associated with transnationality drive political resistance to border hardening. Resistance is multidmensional, and this theory is

agnostic about the exact mobilization processes. But the exemplary form is social movements in which, drawing on shared purpose and identity, people organize to collectively confront a state through strategies like boycotts, petitions, demonstrations, strikes, and legal action (Tarrow, 2011). Scholarship finds that social movements emerge through the convergence of three factors: political opportunity, availability of resources for mobilization structures to take shape, and framing processes of grievance that make an issue salient (e.g., McAdam, 2017; Tarrow, 2011). The initiation of a border hardening strategy is the dramatic event for transnational borderland communities that fuels grievances.

Protests and riots demand that the state reduce the severity of restrictions. Borderland community elites who share the views and/or wish to maintain the support of local constituencies could amplify citizen-level actions by encouraging action (Ying, 2021), refusing to punish illegal actions (Garfias and Sellars, 2022), and directly making demands of higher-level authorities. In these dynamics, the notion of a victimized borderland population provides a frame of reference around which to organize.

In sum, my claim is that the degree to which a borderland community is transnational shapes how it politically responds to border hardening. Comparatively more transnational communities are more likely to resist threats to local mobility across the border. The observable implication is:

> **Transnational Resistance Hypothesis:** *The more transnational a borderland community, the more likely it is to resist border hardening.*

Learning from Pandemic Bordering

I test the general theory developed above in the context of the coronavirus pandemic that began in 2020. The setting is convenient for testing the relationship between transnationality and local resistance against border hardening. The threat of virus transmission across borders prompted most states to restrict movement into their territories (Hale et al., 2021). Border closures were an especially prevalent strategy. These were implemented by nearly all states with land borders, even in settings like the Schengen Area where intensive border control is otherwise rarely seen. While not perfectly exogenous, the adoption of border closures was uniquely prevalent and driven by the same external shock of the pandemic. This provides an opportunity to learn how local communities politically engage with broadly targeted border restrictions.

Notably, closing borders was politically popular at the national-level. Survey evidence indicates majority support across a variety of countries (Lindholt et al., 2021; Chilton et al., 2023; Bricker, 2020).[3] The strategy constituted a direct and highly visible step that states could take to project an image of proactive action in the low-information, fear-ridden environment (Kenwick and Simmons, 2020).

[3]Experimental evidence suggests that this attitude can be shaped by the provision of information, but it remains the case that border closures typically receive strong public support during pandemics (Kobayashi et al., 2024).

Given this well of support, it is striking that some borderland communities actually opposed coronavirus border hardening. Protests in border areas took place across approximately 70 countries, as the data presented below shows. In fact, not only did political mobilization about closures take place primarily within border areas, but the majority of this action opposed rather than supported the strategy. 86% of such events took place near borders, and 93% of this set were opposed to border closures. There thus was a substantial gap in the politics of coronavirus border hardening on two axes: between national publics and borderland communities, and between borderland communities themselves. In this way, the pandemic provides an opportunity to investigate the local politics of a form of bordering that was not only common but, for national publics and political elites, uncontroversial.

Leveraging this context, my mixed-method design consists of two elements. The first is a global quantitative analysis of transnationality and resistance events against coronavirus border closures, which deductively tests the **Transnational Resistance Hypothesis**. The second component is a pair of inductive case studies investigating two borderland communities that deviated from the theory. I use fieldwork interview data to explain these outliers and inductively expand the theory via the concept of selective bordering, which helps to specify a condition under which border hardening does not spark resistance by transnational communities.

Quantitative Evidence

The phenomena of interest are the transnationality of borderland communities and whether they politically resisted border restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic. In order to quantitatively evaluate the relationship between the two, I create an original measure of *Transnationality* and hand-code existing political events data.

Measuring Transnationality

The measure of Transnationality that I develop here is geospatial and cross-sectional. The first task was to establish where borderlands are, which is difficult because perceptions of them are socially constructed across locales. One option is administrative districts contiguous with borders, but variation in their size and number is shaped by political factors. I opt to treat borderlands as zones within a standardized distance of a border. This approach cannot account for contextual conceptions, but it does provide a consistent means of capturing all areas in the world that are reasonably proximate to borders. I started this step by generating all contemporary international land borders as where country shapes intersect, using the CShapes 2.0 dataset (Schvitz et al., 2022). Borderlands were then generated with round-ended buffers as landmass areas within 50 miles, or approximately 80 kilometers (KM), of borderlines. I then split each borderland shape into two sides based on the borderline, which generated 612 unique shapes.

Communities in borderlands are the primary unit of analysis, yet there is no obvious way to identify them. Using officially designated settlements or subnational

districts potentially introduces bias. I opt to use the grid cell, which is unaffected by politics, to approximate human communities. Overlaying the borderland side shapes with rasterized population data from LandScan divided each borderland side into 1x1 KM grid cells (Rose et al., 2020). Only cells containing more than one person are included since, by definition, transnationality cannot characterize a place without groups of people.

The ideal type of information for measuring the relative transnationality of these communities would be hyper-local data with global coverage on phenomena such as the frequency of crossings by local residents as well as their reasons for crossing for all borders. However, this data simply does not exist. So, my measurement approach is to identify, per community grid cell, its proximity to observable phenomena that reflect variation in ties across borders. The four items described below are chosen because they reflect some form of economic and/or social interconnection between local communities across borders as well as because there is global, geolocated information on them. I then aggregate this information to construct the Transnationality measure.

The first item is road connectivity. Roads are sites of infrastructural connection that facilitate the movement of both people and goods, so communities that are closer to a border-reaching road can be treated as more transnational in both the economic and social senses. I use the Global Roads Inventory Project to extract the 17,948 roads that intersect borders (Meijer et al., 2018).[4] I then calculate the distance from each cell to the nearest border-associated road.

The next item is ethnic kin. When the members of an ethnic group occupy both sides of a borderland, enduring forms of both social and economic interaction and exchange can emerge. For example, shared ethnic identity reduces the transaction costs of cross-border trade (Aker et al., 2014). It is thus plausible to treat communities closer to an ethnic homeland that extends across a border as more transnational.[5] The data source is the Ethnic Power Relations-Transborder Ethnic Kin (EPR-TEK 2021) dataset, which contains one historic homeland shape per ethnic group and an identifier for its broader TEK unit (Vogt et al., 2015). I calculate the distance from each cell to the nearest relevant TEK-combined shape that falls within that same cell's side of the borderland.[6]

The third item is railroad connectivity. As with roads, the presence of a railroad indicates the movement of people and goods between distant places. Railroads are especially useful for capturing where international trade is taking place, which can involve nearby communities in the economic exchange. I use Natural Earth data to extract the 537 railroads that geographically intersect borders (Natural Earth, 2017).

[4]The data harmonizes information from numerous sources to capture all documented roads that existed by 2015. The data does contain information on road type, but I treat all types equally as applying universal categories across diverse settings is problematic, especially when the qualities of roads themselves change over time in ways that may not be reflected in the type classifications.

[5]Treating ethnic homelands as a manifestation of transnationality by no means suggests that there are spaces where people do or do not "truly" belong or that all individuals in such areas hold identical identities.

[6]I use the TEK identifiers to aggregate individual group shapes into 167 TEK shapes.

I then then calculate how far each grid cell is from the nearest railroad intersecting the border with which that cell is associated.

The final item is "sister cities." These are pairs of human settlements that officially engage in substantive economic and/or cultural exchange such as the import/export of local goods, tourism, and student programs. Modern people-to-people diplomacy via sister cities emerged as a post-World War Two reconciliation effort but has since spread worldwide (Cremer, de Bruin and Dupuis, 2001). Sister city designations fulfill important functions such as attracting foreign direct investment via the provision of information to foreign companies (Hu, Natarajan and Delios, 2021). While many sister city pairings exist between non-bordering countries, it is a common phenomenon for interconnected communities split by a border to establish this type of designation. Borderland communities with or proximate to a cross-border sister city pairing are thus more transnational. I operationalize sister cities using a previously webscraped list of 15,225 geolocated sister city pairs gathered from Wikipedia (Kaltenbrunner et al., 2014).[7] I calculate the distance of each cell to the nearest sister city on its side of the border that is paired across that border.[8]

Combining the four items yields 612 raster grids, one per borderland side, with information on the distance from each cell to transnationality-relevant roads, ethnic homelands, railroads, and sister cities. To better ensure that the measure captures meaningful differences between neighboring cells, I aggregate cell size from 1x1 KM to 30x30 KM.[9] The end result is 66,570 grid cell observations. Note that using an alternative grid cell size of either 20x20 KM or 40x40 KM, motivated by concern about the modifiable areal unit problem, yields substantively similar results for all of the analyses presented in this study (see Appendices C and D).

I then combine the items into an additive index measuring Transnationality per cell.[10] Constructing the additive index first involves converting all of the raw distance values into a six-point ordinal scale, with larger values indicating closer proximity.[11]

[7]To my knowledge, there is no other global dataset on sister city pairings. The original data source is English Wikipedia, which potentially has biased regional coverage favoring English-speaking Western countries. However, the dataset does capture sister cities across 209 countries, suggesting wide coverage. These include, for example, Russia, Guatemala, Venezuela, India, Japan, Liberia, and Papua New Guinea.

[8]There are 3396 sister cities part of a pairing in which at least one member is located within a borderland.

[9]I choose this size because 30 KM is considered the distance that an able-bodied person can reasonably walk twice in a day as part of a roundtrip (Lamarque, 2023). This does not capture walkability for every person in every setting. But, for the purposes of a global measure, 30 KM is a useful reference point for capturing the extent of space over which people could reasonably reach each other. The aggregation function for the distance measures takes, per item, the mean distance of each cell set being aggregated.

[10]The simple additive index is appropriate over other approaches like item response theory or principal components analysis because, first, the expected relationships between the items and the index are simple and, second, because there are only four items and the alternative approaches perform better with a large number of items.

[11]The intention is to create ordinal categories that theoretically capture different degrees of connection based on meaningful differences in proximity. These categories should range from no proximity to immediate proximity. Therefore, the continuous distance values are recoded into ordinal cate-

Using an ordinal rather than continuous measure of distance is necessary given that communities on the side of a borderland with no item present thus have no meaningful distance from that item.[12] After ordinalization, I score each cell by summing its values on the four items and dividing that result by the number of items (four). The output is a scale with 21 unique values between 0 (low transnationality) and 5 (high transnationality). The final values thus score each community grid cell on its relative level of transnationality. It is worth noting that each individual item meaningfully contributes to the overall index scores. The item-total correlations indicate that each item has a moderate-to-strong association with the overall index, with ethnic homelands and railroads having the strongest correlations (see Figure 1).

See Figures 2, 3, 4, and 5 for visualizations of each measurement step. These illustrate the measure with the example of the Czechia side of the Czechia—Poland borderland, which varies in both the items that are present as well as where they are located throughout the borderland side.

A series of validity tests provide evidence that the measure meaningfully operationalizes the concept of transnationality (Adcock and Collier, 2001). First, given the premise that transnationality goes beyond borderland-interior differences to describe variation within borderlands, the measure should be different from communities' border proximity. Affirming this distinction, transnationality and distance from the border are weakly correlated ($\rho = -0.33$). Further, altering the measure by excluding the sister cities item yields substantively similar results for all analyses in this study (see Appendix E). Next, testing nomological validity entails assuming the truth of a reasonable hypothesis and empirically evaluating it with the measure. Finding results aligned with the hypothesis provides evidence of validity. Two such hypotheses are used here. First, transnationality should predict greater wealth among borderland communities since it encompasses cross-border economic ties. Second, travel to borders should be more efficient from comparatively more transnational communities since they have established infrastructural and other types of linkages to the border. This relationship should hold when accounting for actual distance from the border. In line with these assumed hypotheses, the nomological tests detailed in Appendix A provide evidence for measurement validity. See Appendices B, C, D, and E for robustness checks of all validity tests, along with those of other analyses.

Measuring Resistance

The data for measuring *Resistance* against coronavirus border closures is derived from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). This widely used

gories as follows: 0 for when the item is not present in the borderland side at all, 1 for when the item is 100 or more KM away, 2 for when the item is between 50 and less than 100 KM away, 3 for when the item is between 15 and less than 50 KM away, 4 for when the item is between 5 and less than 15 KM away, and 5 for when the item is less than 5 KM away.

[12]It would not be sensible to compare the distance of all cells to a border-intersecting road, for example, when only some borderland sides have such a road in the first place. Using an ordinal measure of distance makes it possible to situate all communities on their relative proximity to a given item, whether or not that item exists in a particular borderland side.

Figure 1: Item-Total Correlations of the Transnationality Index

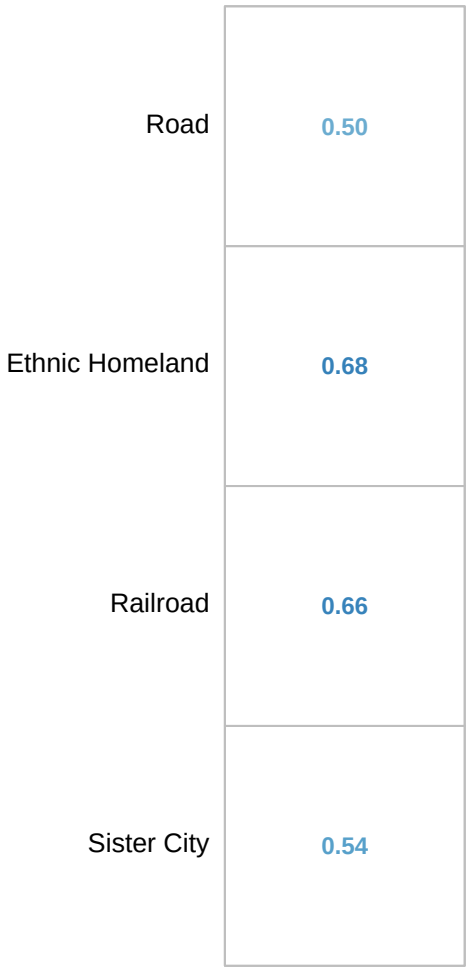


Figure 2: Creating Borderlands

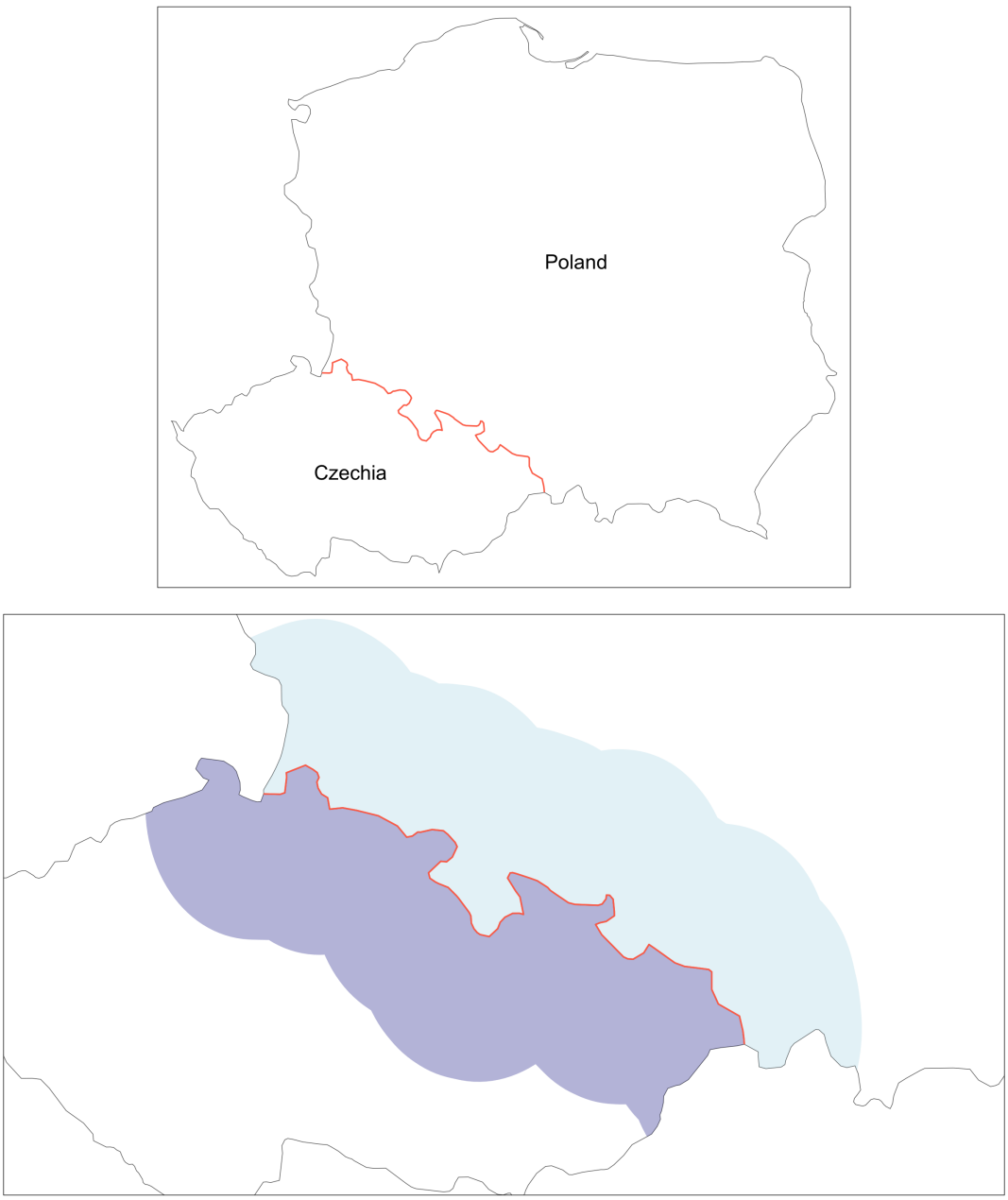


Figure 3: Items at 1x1KM Cell Size

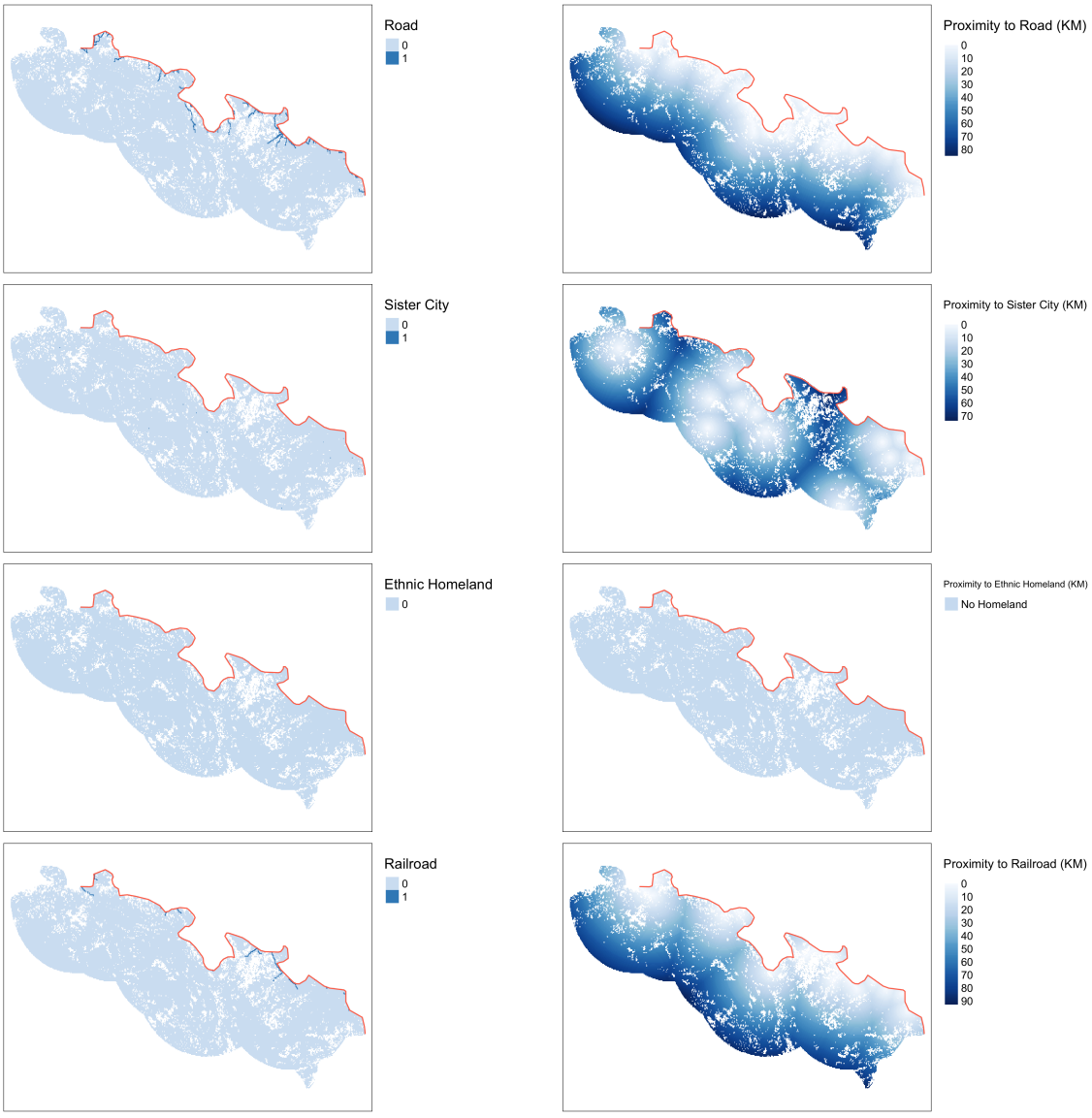


Figure 4: Items after Aggregation to 30x30KM Cell Size and Ordinalization

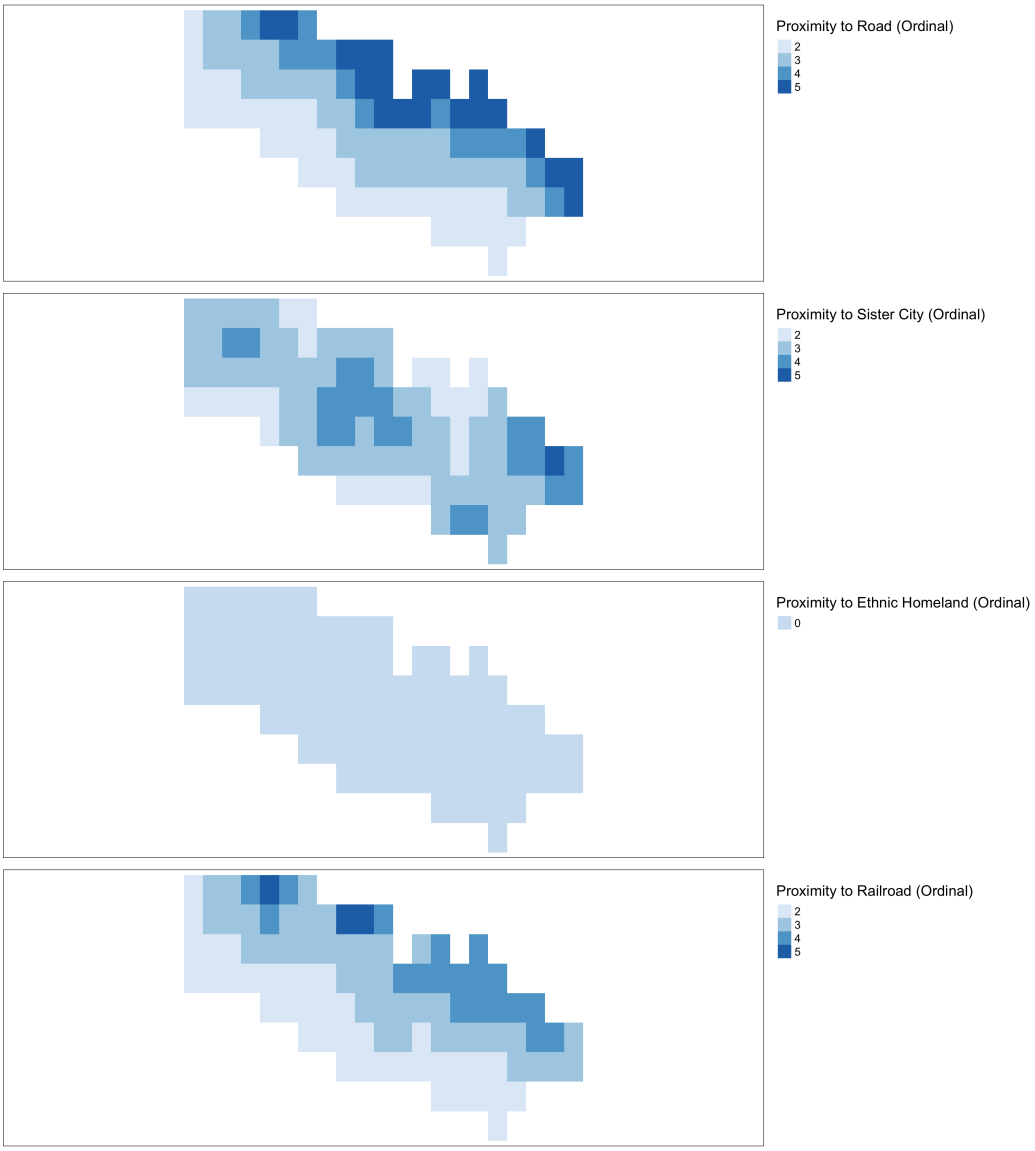
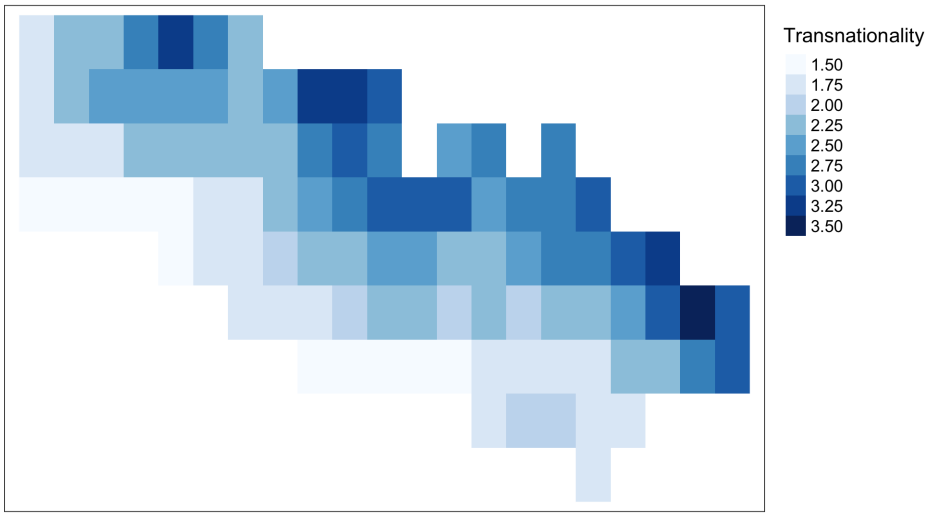


Figure 5: Transnationality Index Values



source produced a COVID-19 Disorder Tracker identifying which events captured by ACLED were related to any aspect of the pandemic (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, 2025). The dataset includes approximately 63,000 geolocated events, which are accompanied by brief qualitative descriptions.

Scholars have identified biases in such media-sourced data concerning consistency and constancy of reporting both within and between contexts (Parkinson, 2024). Nevertheless, using the COVID-19 Disorder Tracker here has an advantage: demand by policymakers and publics for coverage of the coronavirus pandemic was extremely high. This motivated broad data collection, as indicated by ACLED beginning to cover many countries for the first time during the pandemic, including throughout Europe, the U.S., some parts of Asia, and other regions.[13]

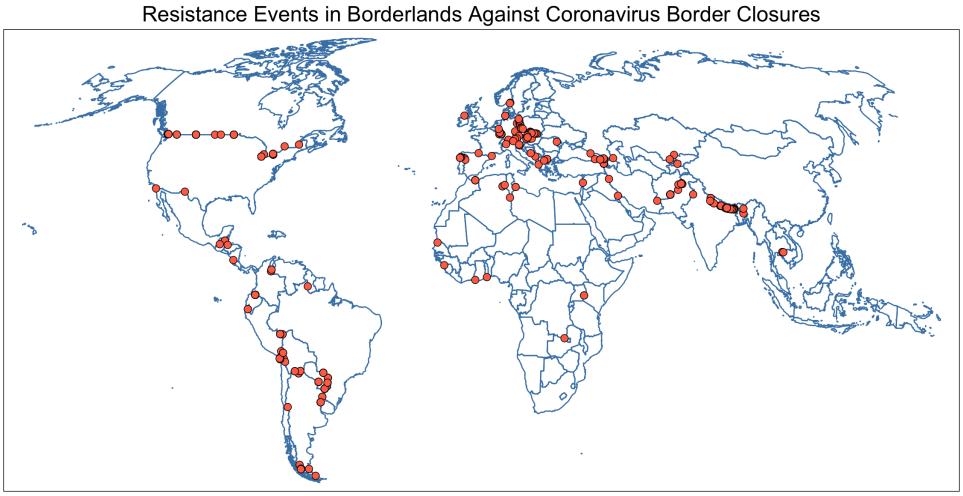
To measure Resistance, I first extracted protest- and riot-type events and used border-related keywords to identify potentially relevant events. I then hand-coded these events alongside undergraduate research assistants to confirm relevance and position (see codebook in Appendix H.).[14] An example of an event that was both relevant and opposed is: "... workers protested in Vinhais, demanding the Portuguese-Spanish border's reopening - closed to coronavirus-related restrictions."

[13]Canada and Papau New Guineau, which ACLED began to include in data collection in January 2021, were the only two countries with land borders whose coverage did not encompass the entire pandemic. See https://acleddata.com/knowledge-base/country-time-period-coverage/.

[14]The keyword list included "[Bb]order*", "[Bb]oundar*", "[Cc]rossing*", "[Cc]heckpoint*", "[Ii]nternational [Bb]ridge*", and "[Ff]rontier*". This step shrunk the dataset to 950 events before hand-coding.

The coding process identified 541 unique events about border closures between January 2020 and January 2023 across approximately 70 countries. Notably, most political mobilization about closures (86%) took place within borderlands. Further, most of these events opposed (93%) rather than supported closures. The locations of opposed events in borderlands are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Resistance Map



Sample and Models

To ensure that the sample is theoretically relevant, I include only community grid cells in borderlands affected by border closures enacted by their own government. If a country's land borders were not shut down, there was no closure for communities to potentially resist. Further, the theoretical focus is on communities resisting their own state's actions.[15]

The data source for identifying borderlands impacted by closures is the COVID Border Accountability Project, which tracked the number and content of restrictions by all countries from 2020 to 2021 (Shiraef et al., 2022). The dataset identifies "complete" closures, which encompassed land borders by definition alongside other measures, and "partial" closures specifically of land borders. Of the 152 countries in the world with land borders, 136 (approximately 89%) closed them at least once during the pandemic. Limiting the sample to grid cells among these countries results in 61,142 observations.

Using the hand-coded resistance data, each grid cell is coded for whether at least one event opposed to border closures took place within the cell between 2020 and

[15]While the underlying theoretical logic might explain behavior by any community, the most significant type of resistance is where communities can directly challenge the state enacting a border control measure. Being within its territorial domain grants access to any relevant legal systems, to elites part of the political system, and to the physical places where hardening takes place.

2021. This aligns with the temporal scope of the closure data. 239 cells experienced one or more events, indicating that resistance was rare.

Resistance is modeled as a function of Transnationality and other variables in a series of logistic regression models. To account for unobserved confounding, the model specifications variously include fixed effects for the borderland side in which the cell is located (Models 1-2), borderland regardless of side (Models 3-4), and country (Models 5-6).[16] All models also include as controls a continuous variable for *Population* (Rose et al., 2020); a continuous variable for terrain *Ruggedness* (Shaver, Carter and Shawa, 2019), which has been found to associate with contention in state-society relations;[17] and a dichotomous variable for the presence of *Natural Resources* since this might reduce communities' economic vulnerability (Denly et al., 2022). Additional specifications include a spatial lag in the form of a dichotomous variable *Proximate Event* for whether a resistance event occurred in an adjacent grid cell, which accounts for potential spatial diffusion (Models 2, 4, and 6).

Finally, following established practice, all of the independent variables are rescaled to ensure that they are on a common scale (Gelman, 2008).[18] This means that each coefficient represents the change in the log odds of the outcome when the independent variable increases by two standard deviations.

Results

The expectation is that more transnational borderland communities were more likely than other borderland communities to resist coronavirus border closures. Overall, the results displayed in Table 1 indicate a positive association between Transnationality and Resistance. This finding supports the **Transnational Resistance Hypothesis**.

Across all of these models, Transnationality positively and significantly associates with Resistance. This finding holds when accounting for Population, Natural Resources, and Ruggedness (Models 1-6). Further, the result holds when accounting for time-invariant characteristics of the borderland side (Models 1-2), the borderland (Models 3-4), and country (Models 5-6), which variously encompass other factors like regime type. The result also holds when accounting for the spatial diffusion of resistance via Proximate Event (Models 2, 4, and 6).

For a substantive interpretation of the effects, Figure 7 displays the predicted probabilities of Resistance at different values of Transnationality, holding other covariates at observed values. Each sub-figure corresponds to a particular model, varying by

[16] Note that these fixed effects specifications result in the models dropping observations from units that do not vary on the Resistance outcome, which is a rare event. See the subsequent discussion of an alternative linear probability modeling approach that produces the same finding.

[17] Ruggedness may be highly correlated with Transnationality, as the roads and railroads items may be less likely to be present in areas with rugged terrain, contributing to a potential multicollinearity problem. However, assuaging this concern, Transnationality and Ruggedness do not correlate ($\rho = -0.01$). Similarly, road connectivity and Ruggedness ($\rho = 0.02$) as well as railroad connectivity and Ruggedness ($\rho = -0.01$) do not correlate.

[18] Rescaling entailed de-meaning each variable and then dividing the continuous variables by two standard deviations.

Table 1: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.20***	1.00***	1.05***	0.80***	1.09***	0.92***
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.15)
Population	0.32***	0.24***	0.28***	0.21***	0.27***	0.21***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Natural Resources	1.25***	0.61**	1.27***	0.66**	1.40***	0.66**
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.24)	(0.27)
Ruggedness	−0.33**	−0.44***	−0.22*	−0.37**	−0.01	−0.32*
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.06***		4.33***		4.73***
		(0.16)		(0.15)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	15,998	15,998	22,015	22,015	30,454	30,454

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.

fixed effects specification. In each plot, moderately and highly transnational communities become meaningfully more likely to challenge coronavirus border closures.

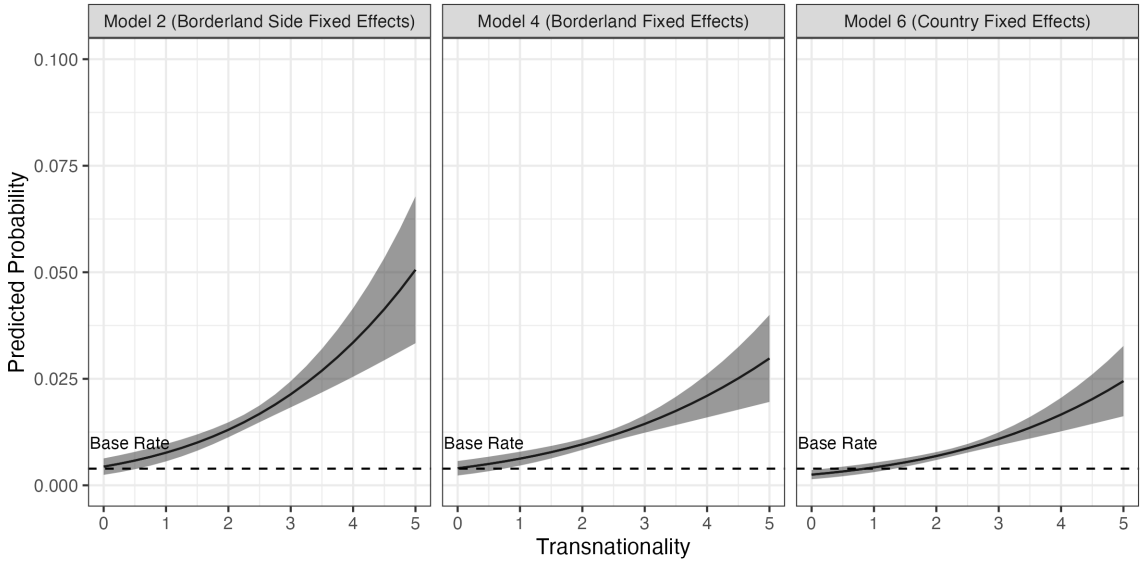


Figure 7: Predicted Probability of Resisting Coronavirus Border Closures

Resistance events were rare, with a base rate of 0.004 represented by the dotted line. The predicted probability of resistance is effectively 0 at the low end of the transnationality measure. However, resistance becomes substantially more probable for moderately to highly transnational communities. In each model, the predicted probability of Resistance begins to exceed the base rate approximately at transna-

tionality values between 1 and 1.5. For example, in Model 2 using borderland side fixed effects, the predicted probability of resistance at moderate transnationality of 2.5 increases to 0.02 [95% CI: 0.01,0.02] and at extremely high transnationality of 5 to 0.05 [95% CI: 0.03,0.07]. The probability of resistance by the most transnational communities is thus approximately 500% higher than for minimally transnational communities.

Similar results emerge from the other models. In the borderland and country fixed effects models, the predicted probabilities of resistance at high transnationality of 5 reaches approximately 0.03 [95% CI: 0.02,0.04] and 0.02 [95% CI: 0.02,0.03], respectively. These represent increases of approximately 300% and 200%, relative to communities with low transnationality. The effect sizes are relatively smaller than in the borderland side fixed effects model, which suggests that the influence of Transnationality within a shared borderland context or country context was relatively more constrained by contextual factors, such as interstate relations or regime type, than when comparing communities located in the same borderland side. Nevertheless, the effect is still meaningful given the extremely low base rate of Resistance.

A series of robustness checks reinforces the evidence for the relationship between Transnationality and Resistance demonstrated here. Altering the Transnationality measure by using an alternative ordinalization scheme for the underlying items, by using different grid cell sizes to test for bias driven by the modifiable areal unit problem, and by removing the sister cities item yields substantively equivalent results (see Appendices B, C, D, and E). The finding also holds when using linear probability models (see Appendix F). This is an established alternative approach to modeling rare binary events data with fixed effects, as logit models necessarily drop observations from units that do not vary on the outcome (Timoneda, 2021). The models above are limited in this regard, as local resistance events against pandemic border closures were rare. But modeling the relationship with ordinary least squares models on the full sample yields the same finding that more transnational borderland communities were more likely to have resisted border closures.

It is also worth considering how the relationship between transnationality and resistance might vary as a function of state capacity. States differ dramatically in their ability to assert governance authority throughout the entirety of their territories, an issue which can be especially pronounced in borderlands that are exposed to foreign subversion or distant from power centers (Lee, 2018; O'Donnell, 1993; Scott, 2009). The story presented here thus might be limited to industrialized, high-capacity states that can effectively enact restrictions at borders. However, my argument is not scoped to only this type of setting. In a series of subgroup analyses using the same models but among the subsamples of either all cells in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries or all cells outside of OECD countries, Transnationality consistently holds a positive and significant association with Resistance (see Appendix G). Thus, even highly transnational communities in lower capacity states organized against border hardening during the pandemic.

Overall, the consistent results across different measurement and modeling approaches underscore the centrality of transnationality to local resistance against pandemic-era border hardening. In the absence of meaningful transnational ties, resistance es-

sentially never took place. Transnationality was a key factor driving the resistance that transpired.

Qualitative Evidence

The evidence presented thus far points toward a relationship between transnationality and resistance. More transnational borderland communities, compared to other borderland communities, were more likely to resist coronavirus border closures on foreign travel. This finding indicates that hardening borders can be a point of conflict between borderland communities and states, even as states take action against what others would consider an "obvious" threat. The way of life concerning cross-border ties shapes whether local communities challenge border hardening.

However, there are exceptions to the pattern. For example, like many countries, the U.S. closed the border with Mexico for nearly two years during the pandemic (Department of Homeland Security, 2020; Federal Register, 2021). But no local protests/riots took place despite there being highly transnational U.S. communities in the area.

These outliers suggest limits to the theory. Why would highly transnational borderland communities facing restrictions not have taken political action? In other words, under what conditions does border hardening not result in conflict? I investigate this anomaly by collective qualitative evidence from within such communities. Investigating "deviant cases" (Levy, 2008) or "off-the-line" observations (Lieberman, 2005) is an established practice for assessing and in turn refining a theory. Explaining why the general theory does not hold in a particular context sheds light on the scope conditions of that theory.

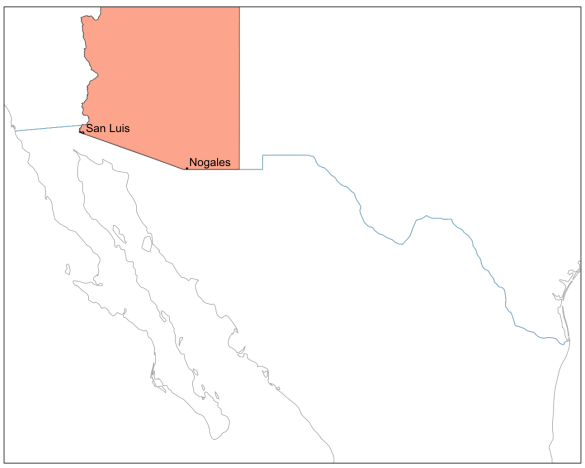
Cases and Interviewee Sampling

I examine Nogales and San Luis in Arizona, two small cities on the border with Mexico (see Figure 8). These communities were selected because they exemplify the type of cross-border connection that scholars have long recognized as characterizing much life in this borderland (Martínez, 1994; Díaz-Barriga and Dorsey, 2020). The quantitative transnationality measure used above scores Nogales and San Luis as 3.75 and 4, respectively, on the 21-point scale ranging from 0 to 5. Therefore, the theory would have expected resistance in these communities to pandemic border restrictions.

I conducted semi-structured interviews in these communities to directly access the perspectives and knowledge of local stakeholders. These took place during a fieldwork trip of approximately three weeks across Nogales and San Luis, as well as Phoenix the state capitol and the nearby city of Yuma, in October-November 2024.[19] The best sampling strategy was a mix of purposive and snowball sampling for individuals in public and private sectors with the requisite knowledge and experience about border issues (Kapiszewski, 2015). This entailed identifying and contacting

[19]The discussion below does not personally identify any interviewees in order to protect their anonymity. Most interviews were in-person, but two took place via videoconferencing software.

Figure 8: Fieldwork Research Sites



relevant individuals, sometimes with the assistance of an interlocutor at a border policy lobbying firm, as well as asking participants to suggest other interviewees.

It is possible that insular social networks would have led to interviewees generally holding similar views, beliefs, and experiences that may not reflect the broader array of stakeholders in the communities. This concern is mitigated by two factors. First, the firm interlocutor worked with all stakeholders in border issues across many segments of the communities, including the port authorities, local governments, and industry leaders. Second, it became evident in the course of the research that interviewees held a range of political affiliations and beliefs.

The sampling process produced an interview pool of 18 individuals across Nogales and San Luis as well as Yuma (see Table 2 for categories). Most work in local government, while others are members of the the Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority and the Greater Yuma Port Authority, businessowners,[20] and activists involved in humanitarian work with migrants or farmworkers.

The semi-structured interviews entailed asking a set of open-ended questions from pre-written questionnaires while allowing for natural divergences in conversation. This approach both generates comparable data across interviews and permits the opportunity for unexpected topics and perspectives. My questions concerned a variety of issues related to border politics, including the type and depth of local cross-border ties, the advantages and disadvantages of border hardening, and the coronavirus pandemic situation. The questionnaires, one each for government officials, businesspeople, and activists, are shared in Appendix I. See Appendix J for ethical considerations.

Findings

First, it is confirmed that the selected communities of Nogales and San Luis are highly transnational in both economic and social terms and that there were no public

[20]These include a shelter company for manufacturing in Mexico, a customs broker, a produce import/export company, and downtown retail stores.

Table 2: Interview Data Sample

Category	Number
Mayor	2
City Administration	2
City Council	1
Port Authority Member	6
County Supervisor	2
State Agency	1
State Congressperson (Former)	1
Businessperson	5
Activist	3

Note: Some individuals in the 18-person sample overlap multiple categories.

instances of political resistance to pandemic-related border restrictions. Second, interviewees recounted decades of bottom-up work to advocate for their ports of entries in the face of deficiencies in federal/state border policy, which rules out inefficacy as an explanation for the lack of resistance to the pandemic border closure. Third, pandemic-era restrictions made exceptions for a substantial breadth of entry related to the local economy, which minimized the overall closure's impact.

The takeaway is that accommodations the state made for key flows preempted discontent that otherwise could have fueled mobilization. The notion of selective bordering helps to explain this. Border control varies not only across strategies but within them. The more narrow the set of actors and flows a given strategy targets, the more selective it is. Comparatively selective bordering imposes fewer costs on local populations dependent on transnational interaction and exchange, forestalling a clash of interests and conflict.

We live, die, and breathe everything associated with the border

Confirming the case selection premise, the manner in which essentially every interviewee characterized local life reflects the concept of transnationality. They consistently chronicled facts and stories of deep and long-lasting cross-border ties. Exemplifying the general idea, one long-time city government employee and official in Nogales asserted that "We live, die, and breathe everything associated with the border."[21]

On the economic dimension, the local economies significantly depend on cross-border exchange. This dependence takes multiple forms. The first concerns downtown businesses. As the member of one longtime business family in Nogales related, many shops have existed for nearly 100 years primarily because of cross-border shoppers.[22] The local population in the communities are too small to comprise a sustainable customer base, such that shoppers from Mexico are needed.

[21]Interview 3, 10/28/2024.
[22]Interview 8, 10/31/2024.

Second, the most significant source of government revenue for both cities is sales tax generated predominantly by shoppers crossing from Mexico.[23] Some goods and services can be found at cheaper prices on the U.S. side, which incentivizes people to cross over even if doing so consumes more time. The sales tax revenue from this activity is so significant that neither community has a property tax. These dynamics are why, in the words of a Port Authority member in Nogales, the community "needs the border" to survive.[24] Expressing a similar sentiment, another local official declared, "If the border wasn't here, you'd have nothing."[25]

Finally, a tremendous amount of international trade flows through the ports of both communities. For example, nearly $29 billion USD in imports and exports passed through Nogales in in 2022 (Greater Nogales Santa Cruz County Port Authority, 2024). Interviewees consistently referred to such trade as critical, saying for example that "All of our existence supports or is related to cross-border trade."[26]

Like Nogales, San Luis depends on cross-border shoppers in terms of local businesses and sales tax revenue as well as trade.[27] However, it also has a substantial agriculture industry whose workforce primarily consists of *campesinos*, or Mexican seasonal and migrant farmworkers. Some thousands of people cross over daily for much of the year to work on fields in the local area or nearby in California.[28] The San Luis economy is "entirely dependent" on this movement.[29]

As for the social dimension of transnationality, interviewees consistently described their communities as part of a bifurcated yet collective social world. Visiting family or friends is one of the common reasons that people on either side cross the border.[30] As one of the mayors put it, "We're the same people."[31] This sense, rooted in the history of the area formerly belonging to Mexico, undergirds why Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Sonora, for example, have long been articulated as being part of a broader *Ambos Nogales* ("both Nogales").[32] These ties are one of the primary benefits that interviewees repeatedly ascribed to border proximity. They variously referred not only to economic gains but to "cultural benefits,"[33] "being binational,"[34] "culture and diversity,"[35] being "one community,"[36] a "culture of the border,"[37] and "cultural interconnectedness."[38]

[23]Interview 3, 10/28/2024; Interview 9, 11/01/2024; Interview 12, 11/05/2024; Interview 15, 11/07/2024.
[24]Interview 5, 10/29/2024.
[25]Interview 9, 11/01/2024.
[26]Interview 3, 10/28/2024.
[27]Interview 15, 11/07/2024.
[28]Interview 12, 11/05/2024; Interview 16, 11/07/2024.
[29]Interview 11, 11/04/2024.
[30]Inteview 5, 10/29/2024.
[31]Interview 18, 11/20/2024.
[32]Interview 5, 10/29/2024; Interview 7, 10/31/2024.
[33]Interview 1, 10/24/2024.
[34]Interview 2, 10/25/2024.
[35]Interview 3, 10/28/2024
[36]Interview 8, 10/31/2024.
[37]Interview 13, 11/05/2024.
[38]Interview 15, 11/07/2024.

Notably, the transnational way of life is not a new phenomenon. Some interviewees shared stories of their childhood, or of older family members, that illustrate the centrality of the border to their communities over time. In Nogales, these included crossing the border being "no big deal... like crossing the street",[39] crossing over into Mexico with ease as a child to swim in pools,[40] or it being a regular occurrence for some hundreds of children to enter the U.S. to trick-or-treat for Halloween or receive Christmas presents from downtown businesses.[41] A local activist with a *campesinos* advocacy organization in San Luis recounted playing in the Rio Grande as a child before the wall was built. The grandparents and parents of this individual and those of a local official once worked as *campesinos*.[42] These stories speak to the enduring nature of transnationality in the communities.

The information shared by interviewees confirms the case selection premise. First, Nogales and San Luis are highly transnational. Both communities have a long history of regularized exchange and interaction across the border. Second, interviewees confirmed that there were indeed no protests/riots against coronavirus-related border policies during the pandemic. This affirms the lack of observed resistance in the ACLED data.

Washington doesn't have a clue

Given their deep ties across the border, the theory would have expected political resistance in Nogales and San Luis against coronavirus border hardening. Yet this did not occur. One potential explanation is that the communities did not have the political efficacy, perceived or tangible, to take action. Concern about punishment by the federal government, or the sense of being a peripheral community, may have dampened inclinations to mobilize.

Officials and businesspeople did indeed recount a long series of difficulties that their communities had faced in ensuring that their interests and needs are sufficiently incorporated in border policy. However, rather than acquiesce, the communities have engaged in decades of lobbying and other types of action to demand attention and funding. This history of proactive civil society and government action indicates that inefficacy is an unlikely explanation for the lack of resistance.

The actions of the port authorities in Nogales and San Luis demonstrate this point. These all-volunteer entities, comprised of community leaders, interface with local, state, and federal government authorities and fellow border communities in both the U.S. and Mexico about border policy and day-to-day management of the ports of entry. Their ultimate mission has been to shorten border crossing wait times, which was repeatedly described as the most important border-related issue for the communities.[43] Efficiency necessitates suitable infrastructure such as high-quality

[39]Interview 2, 10/25/2024.
[40]Interview 13, 11/05/2024.
[41]Interview 2, 10/25/2024.
[42]Interview 16, 11/07/2024; Interview 18, 11/20/2024.
[43]Interview 3, 10/28/2024; Interview 5, 10/29/2024; Interview 8, 10/31/2024; Interview 9, 11/01/2024; Interview 11, 11/04/2024; Interview 12, 11/05/2024; Interview 15, 11/07/2024.

roads, staffing by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and technologies for scanning people, vehicles, and goods. The more efficiently that flows can reach, be processed at, and exit a port of entry, the more revenue can be generated from trade, shopping, and other forms of transnational exchange.

However, according to local leaders, federal attention to efficiency needs has severely lacked. In explaining this challenge, interviewees described a physical and political distance between their communities and national authorities. This underlies the inattention or, when the federal government does initiate a project, it being "clumsy" and "reactive" rather than proactive.[44] "Washington", according to a former Congressperson of the area, "doesn't have a clue" about local life and "the symbiotic relationship[s]" among border communities.[45] The problem is "not local people, it's Washington D.C."[46] One port authority member posited the explanation that local communities are "not a priority" because "DC, and Mexico City for that matter, [are] far removed" from the border.[47]

Given this situation, local leaders created the port authorities to improve the state of the crossings in their "forgotten" communities.[48] The first specific goal was to help local import-export businesses compete with firms in border communities elsewhere in the country that had already been receiving federal support for their own ports of entry, which would have ultimately redirected business away to those communities.[49] The second, broader motivation was to better communicate local needs with state and national governments.[50] As put by one founding member of the Greater Nogales Port Authority, the community was "tired of Washington telling our story... what we need and what we don't need."[51] Another co-founder recounted that creating the port authority in late 2004 was "a way of having a voice," as "we all noticed that the state was making our decisions."[52]

These activities have included communicating with lawmakers and officials, hiring lobbyists, and developing the bureaucratic resources to apply for grants. Early successes include the $250-million USD renovation of the Nogales-Mariposa Port of Entry in the 2010s[53] and the construction of a new fully commercial port of entry in San Luis in the late 2000s. According to port authority members and local officials, these and other developments in their communities would not have happened without their bottom-up efforts.[54] Border communities are seen as having had to work proactively and collaboratively to improve their situation.[55] These initiatives were

[44]Interview 17, 11/11/2024.
[45]Interview 13, 11/05/2024.
[46]Interview 9, 11/01/2024.
[47]Interview 15, 11/07/2024.
[48]Interview 1, 10/24/2024.
[49]Interview 9, 11/01/2024.
[50]Interview 5, 10/29/2024.
[51]Interview 1, 10/24/2024.
[52]Interview 2, 10/25/2024.
[53]An even newer project is underway to reconstruct this port.
[54]Interview 1, 10/24/2024; Interview 2, 10/25/2024; Interview 3, 10/28/2024; Interview 12, 11/05/2024.
[55]Interview 11, 11/04/2024.

described as locally driven: the "vast majority of projects on the border are by local authorities... These solutions don't come from D.C. or Mexico City."[56]

These accounts speak to the difficulties that have marred the communities' relations with higher-level authorities in the domain of border policy. They also reflect directed and repeated engagement with the state on border issues, expressing disagreement and demanding both attention and resources. Situating the pandemic in this historical context of proactive action, it is unlikely that political inefficacy explains the lack of mobilization against border restrictions.

We didn't slow down on the border

Why, then, did neither Nogales nor Luis resist pandemic border hardening? The evidence points to the selective nature of the closure that was enacted. The primary type of restriction adopted by the U.S., starting on March 20, 2020, was to differentiate people crossing borders by citizenship and, in turn, "essential"/"non-essential" status. Citizens were allowed to traverse the border as before. Non-citizens, however, were differentiated by whether their movement was defined as essential or non-essential. The essential category encompassed, among others: work within the U.S., attending school in the U.S., and working in cross-border trade (American Immigration Council, 2020). Entry by non-citizens for reasons that were "considered tourism or recreational in nature", such as shopping and visiting family or friends, was disallowed (Department of Homeland Security, 2020; Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 2020). These restrictions were repeatedly extended until November 20, 2021, when non-citizens were allowed to enter through border ports of entry so long as they could provide proof of having been vaccinated for COVID-19 (Federal Register, 2021).

According to multiple interviewees, the restrictions' impact on their communities was relatively limited because important economic flows from Mexico were still allowed. Key pillars of the transnational way of life continued. Put simply by one interviewee, "We didn't slow down on the border."[57]

The exceptions made for non-essential travel were significant, especially in terms of trade and work involving cross-border workers. Multiple interviewees reported that local operations generally continued to a substantial degree, relative to pre-pandemic levels. In the striking words of one of the community's mayors, the border restrictions "hardly affected our economy... Trade kept going."[58] Other interviewees echoed this sentiment. For example, a city administration official in Nogales reported that general movement across the border slowed during the pandemic but that the overall economic situation remained roughly the same since industries involving the border could still operate.[59] As for San Luis, a city administration official characterized the category of essential workers as "relatively broad", noting that it encompassed agricultural workers.[60]

[56]Interview 17, 11/11/2024
[57]Interview 17, 11/11/2024.
[58]Interview 18, 11/20/2024.
[59]Interview 3, 10/28/2024.
[60]Interview 12, 11/05/2024; Interview 15, 11/07/2024.

Both city administration officials recounted feeling great surprise at the relatively diminished economic impact on their cities. They had anticipated their respective communities crumbling to the border restrictions, but were thankful to observe that this did not come to fruition.[61] Interviewees also emphasized that tax revenue for the cities remained relatively constant. Both communities experienced a temporary dip in sales tax revenue, but this went back to normal levels quickly. Interviewees variously attributed this outcome to U.S.-side shoppers being forced to do their usually cross-border shopping within their community, to the shopping done by the workers and others who still were crossing, or to U.S. shoppers purchasing and transporting goods to family and friends in Mexico.[62]

The Benefits of Selective Bordering

The interview findings indicate that the pandemic-era restrictions enacted at the U.S. border with Mexico were selective. They made exceptions for a broad "essential" category related to economic exchange. This approach allowed for multiple cross-border industries and other sources of economic activity in both Nogales and San Luis to operate under relatively typical conditions even during an international pandemic.

In terms of the deviant case study framework, the findings pose two implications for theorizing the local politics of bordering. First, in an intuitive logic, the impact of border hardening on local communities is conditional in part on exactly which types of actors and flows they target. Total border closures that hindered trade and other licit economic flows directly threatened transnational communities dependent on this kind of mobility. But when a closure was accompanied by meaningful exceptions, the impact was diminished. As shown here, the economies in Nogales and San Luis remained largely intact because of the calibrated approach embedded in U.S. border restrictions at the time.

Second, taking the logic further, border hardening does not inevitably spark political conflict between transnational communities and states. The scope condition for the theory on transnationality and resistance is that the hardening measure in question specifically restricts the movement of actors involved in contextually relevant transnational flows. Selective bordering, in which a single control strategy is scoped in its targets, is less likely to fuel discontent because it accommodates key interests. Whether the ultimate intention or not, selectivity allows key aspects of transnationality to remain intact in the context of a changing border.

Conclusion

As a growing community of researchers have documented, international borders are changing. States throughout the world are increasingly implementing dramatic efforts to display and exert greater control over movement at borders. Scholars have

[61] Interview 3, 10/28/2024; Interview 12, 11/05/2024.

[62] Interview 3, 10/28/2024; Interview 12, 11/05/2024; Interview 17, 11/11/2024; Interview 18, 11/20/2024.

uncovered important aspects of this politically salient phenomenon, including the factors driving states to build walls and whether such border enforcement efforts truly "work" to obstruct flows.

This research is important for understanding the macro-level dimensions of bordering, yet other critical questions remain unanswered. Extant theories do not systematically account for or specify the links between bordering processes and local populations in the very areas where hardening is underway. How local populations are affected by and their political responses to hardening are understudied. Addressing this gap is important because a substantial segment of the global population resides within close proximity of borders, meaning that they directly encounter changes in border governance.

This study works to fill the gap by advancing a framework for theorizing the borderland as a unique geopolitical space. Compared to country interiors, communities in border spaces have the unique opportunity to engage with people, goods, cultures, and institutions across the border. Transnational ties alters political incentives, generating deep investments in policies that sustain interaction and exchange across the border. In the face of border hardening, political conflict can emerge as transnational communities challenge the state over disruptive policies. However, if the state calibrates its hardening strategy to be more selective in its targets and accommodate transnational communities' interests, conflict is less likely to emerge.

I empirically demonstrate that these dynamics manifested during the coronavirus pandemic, during which nearly all states with land borders shuttered them to foreign entrance. The global quantitative analysis showed that substantial localized opposition took place against closures and that transnationality played a key explanatory role. This backlack happened across contexts of varying state capacities. Yet mobilization did not emerge in some cases, even by highly transnational communities exposed to border closures. Fieldwork interview data gathered in the U.S. communities of Nogales and San Luis located near Mexico helps to explain this anomaly. Officials and businesspeople consistently reported that the U.S. government's closure had a surprisingly minimal economic impact on the communities, as trade continued and cross-border workers were still allowed to enter. This approach reflected selective bordering, in which a state enacts a hardening measure while adjusting its targets in ways that accommodate certain flows. Importantly, then, selective bordering reduces the potential for conflict to emerge over border hardening.

This study empirically focused on the coronavirus pandemic context but speaks to border politics more generally. The borderland is a unique geopolitical space that deserves more attention from scholars and policymakers. Distinct processes play out in this setting, with substantial variation characterizing how local populations are oriented toward the border. This suggests that local contestation, driven by transnationality, may characterize the politics of border hardening to a much greater extent than extant work recognizes or can explain.

In that vein, the research presented here opens up new areas of inquiry. The first, natural direction concerns how these dynamics do and do not vary for other forms of border hardening. Does opposition differ by the exact type of cross-border ties that prevail and the type of hardening strategy being implemented? Relatedly, under what

conditions do states choose to make accommodations for local transnational flows? Regime type presumably matters, but whether resistance or accommodation comes first is unclear. More broadly, does local resistance impact the ultimate "success" of border hardening itself? This is an especially important consideration given that countries are investing significant resources toward border hardening projects.

To pursue these questions, the border politics community would benefit from adopting a broad array of data sources and methodologies. New systematic data collection projects tracking resistance and other local phenomena can be paired with existing data sources on border infrastructure. Further, more contextually specific measures of transnationality can be developed for analyses of particular regions or types of flows. Interviews with stakeholders and national officials along with other data collection efforts within borderlands should be used to provide granular depth and insight into mechanisms concerning state-society relations. Overall, dedicating more theoretical and empirical attention to the politics of borders *within* border spaces will help to broaden knowledge on some of the most pressing issues of our time.

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Appendix

A Nomological Validity

This section details the analyses used in the two nomological validity tests of the Transnationality measure (Adcock and Collier, 2001). Of these, the first assumed hypothesis is that *The more transnational a borderland community, the wealthier it is.* Transnationality is conceptually defined in part on the basis of cross-border economic ties. Economic gains are a key motivator for sustaining transnational ties, especially in what are otherwise marginal borderland areas that receive little state investment (Idler, 2019; Gallien, 2020; Matanzima, Helliker and Pophiwa, 2023; Miggelbrink, 2014; Su, 2022). Thus, comparatively more transnational borderland communities should be wealthier.

I evaluate the association between Transnationality and wealth in an OLS framework. Wealth is measured using global raster data from that has estimates of the gross domestic production (GDP) of each grid cell for the closest prior year of 2015 (Kummu, Taka and Guillaume, 2018). I changed the resolution of this continuous variable to match the Transnationality data by aggregating from the original 10x10 KM cell size via a summation function. Additionally, the GDP variable is logged because it is highly skewed. To make this logging possible, I first replaced all values of 0 in the data by adding 0.5 to all observations. The models incorporate as independent variables Transnationality, Population, and the same fixed effects specifications used within analyses shared in the body of the paper (borderland side, borderland, and country). Following the approach adopted in the main body of the paper, all of the independent variables are rescaled to ensure that they are on a common scale (Gelman, 2008)

The results are displayed in Table 3. Overall, the results indicate that the measure passes this validity test. As assumed, Transnationality positively and significantly associates with wealth. This indicates that communities scored as comparatively more transnational by the measure tend to be wealthier.

The assumed hypothesis for the second nomological validity test is that *The more transnational a borderland community, the less time it will take to travel from it to the nearest border crossing.* If Transnationality represents connection across borders, travel to the nearest border crossing should be more efficient from comparatively more transnational communities. This is especially the case in terms of infrastructure like roads and railroads. Since Transnationality is not highly correlated with distance to the border (see the main text as well as Appendices B, C, D, and E), it is reasonable to compare differently transnational communities by distance as a nomological validity test.

As with the first validity test, I use an OLS regression framework that includes a variety of model specifications and rescales the independent variables. The information on border crossings comes from the most comprehensive global dataset on where formal ports of entry are located (Kenwick, Simmons and McAlexander, 2023). In order to calculate travel time, I linked each cell to the nearest border

Table 3: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.765***	1.693***	1.592***
	(0.043)	(0.042)	(0.033)
Population	0.851***	0.909***	1.009***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.023)
Constant	16.001***	15.910***	15.180***
	(0.442)	(0.116)	(0.087)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	66,570	66,570	66,570
R^2	0.474	0.441	0.361
Adjusted R^2	0.469	0.438	0.360

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells.

crossing (for the relevant border) in terms of Euclidean distance and then used the Open Source Routing Machine (OSRM) API to calculate the direct route driving time (Open Source Routing Machine, N.d.). While the approach usefully approximates travel time, OSRM is not able to calculate routes for all parts of the world. Thus, the sample for this data includes grid cells in 260 borderland sides rather than the full set of 612. The resultant driving time variable is logged because it is highly skewed. To make logging possible, I first replaced all values of 0 in the variable by adding 0.5 to all observations.

The results are displayed in Table 4. Overall, the results provide evidence for the validity of the Transnationality measure. As assumed, Transnationality consistently predicts shorter travel time to the nearest border crossing. The coefficient is consistently negative and statistically significant, even when accounting for the actual distance of the cell to the nearest border crossing (Models 2, 4, and 6).

Table 4: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.01^{***}	-0.06^{***}	-0.04^{***}
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06^{***}		1.06^{***}		0.94^{***}
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19^{***}	8.19^{***}	8.87^{***}	8.52^{***}	8.87^{***}	8.54^{***}
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

$^{*}p < .1$; $^{**}p < .05$; $^{***}p < .01$

Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells.

B Robustness Check: Alternative Ordinalization Scheme

This section replicates the analyses with an alternative coding scheme for the items comprising Transnationality. The raw values for the distance between each grid cell and each item were originally converted to an ordinal scale. This step was taken to make cells comparable across borderlands, regardless of whether or not they contain any instances of a given item (e.g., a border-intersecting road). The original coding scheme for each cell was: 0 for when the item is not present in the borderland side at all, 1 for when the item is 100 or more KM away, 2 for when the item is between 50 and less than 100 KM away, 3 for when the item is between 15 and less than 50 KM away, 4 for when the item is between 5 and less than 15 KM away, and 5 for when the item is less than 5 KM away.

For the analyses here, the coding scheme is shrunk to: 0 for when the item is not present in the borderland side at all, 1 for when the item is 75 or more KM away, 2 for when the item is between 15 and less than 75 KM away, and 3 for when the item is less than 15 KM away. The items are then aggregated in the same fashion to construct the additive index of Transnationality.

Using this version of the index yields substantively similar results for all analyses. The correlation between Transnationality and distance from the border remains weak, Transnationality predicts greater wealth, and Transnationality predicts reduced travel time to the nearest border crossing.

B.1 Validity Tests

First, the correlation between Transnationality, using this alternative coding scheme, and distance from the border remains weak ($\rho = -0.3$).

Table 5: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.621***	1.563***	1.380***
	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.030)
Population	0.839***	0.897***	1.001***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Constant	17.382***	17.207***	16.285***
	(0.443)	(0.113)	(0.079)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	66,570	66,570	66,570
R^2	0.473	0.440	0.359
Adjusted R^2	0.468	0.437	0.358

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

Table 6: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.06***	−0.04***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.94***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.19***	8.87***	8.52***	8.87***	8.53***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

B.2 Transnational Resistance Hypothesis Test

Table 7: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.18***	0.98***	1.03***	0.80***	1.07***	0.91***
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.15)
Population	0.32***	0.24***	0.28***	0.21***	0.27***	0.21***
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.05)
Natural Resources	1.23***	0.60**	1.26***	0.65**	1.38***	0.65**
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.27)	(0.24)	(0.27)
Ruggedness	−0.33**	−0.45***	−0.23*	−0.38**	−0.02	−0.32**
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.07***		4.34***		4.74***
		(0.16)		(0.15)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	15,998	15,998	22,015	22,015	30,454	30,454

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

C Robustness Check: 20x20 KM Grid Cell Size

This section replicates all analyses with 20x20 KM grid cells. The note in each table indicates if the models use the secondary version of Transnationality described in Appendix B. All results are substantively similar to the primary analyses.

C.1 Validity Tests

First, the correlation between Transnationality, using the main coding scheme, and distance from the border remains weak ($\rho = -0.33$). When using the alternative ordinalization scheme, the correlation is still weak ($\rho = -0.3$).

Table 8: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.722***	1.639***	1.506***
	(0.031)	(0.031)	(0.024)
Population	0.897***	0.954***	1.048***
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Constant	14.747***	14.789***	13.947***
	(0.340)	(0.088)	(0.067)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	130,894	130,894	130,894
R^2	0.453	0.419	0.348
Adjusted R^2	0.451	0.418	0.347

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells.

Table 9: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.05***	−0.04***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance		1.10***		1.10***		0.94***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.15***	8.87***	8.50***	8.87***	8.53***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells.

Table 10: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.642***	1.562***	1.345***
	(0.032)	(0.031)	(0.023)
Population	0.888***	0.945***	1.043***
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Constant	16.198***	16.137***	15.083***
	(0.341)	(0.086)	(0.061)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	130,894	130,894	130,894
R^2	0.452	0.418	0.346
Adjusted R^2	0.449	0.417	0.345

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

Table 11: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.05***	−0.04***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance		1.10***		1.10***		0.94***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.15***	8.87***	8.50***	8.86***	8.52***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

C.2 Transnational Resistance Hypothesis Test

Table 12: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.31***	0.90***	1.18***	0.74***	1.20***	0.84***
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.14)
Population	0.27***	0.18***	0.22***	0.16***	0.19***	0.14***
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Natural Resources	1.32***	0.75**	1.34***	0.81**	1.56***	0.84***
	(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ruggedness	−0.37***	−0.34**	−0.26**	−0.23	−0.04	−0.21
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.70***		4.97***		5.37***
		(0.15)		(0.15)		(0.15)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	31,553	31,553	43,066	43,066	59,662	59,662

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.

Table 13: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.15***	0.67***	1.02***	0.54***	1.04***	0.63***
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.14)
Population	0.28***	0.18***	0.23***	0.17***	0.19***	0.15***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Natural Resources	1.31***	0.73**	1.33***	0.79**	1.57***	0.83***
	(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.29)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.31)
Ruggedness	−0.36***	−0.31*	−0.27**	−0.22	−0.05	−0.19
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.74***		5.01***		5.40***
		(0.15)		(0.15)		(0.15)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	31,553	31,553	43,066	43,066	59,662	59,662

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

D Robustness Check: 40x40 KM Grid Cell Size

This section replicates all analyses with 40x40 KM grid cells. The note in each table indicates if the models use the secondary version of Transnationality described in Appendix B. All results are substantively similar to the primary analyses.

D.1 Validity Tests

First, the correlation between Transnationality, using the main coding scheme, and distance from the border remains weak ($\rho = -0.16$). When using the alternative ordinalization scheme, the correlation is still weak ($\rho = -0.22$).

Table 14: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.532***	1.453***	1.331***
	(0.045)	(0.044)	(0.035)
Population	0.847***	0.896***	1.023***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Constant	18.292***	17.745***	17.256***
	(0.557)	(0.134)	(0.096)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	41,600	41,600	41,600
R^2	0.501	0.469	0.377
Adjusted R^2	0.493	0.465	0.375

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells.

Table 15: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.06***	−0.04***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.96***
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Constant	9.18***	8.21***	7.76***	7.75***	7.80***	7.78***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708
R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells.

Table 16: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.604***	1.528***	1.309***
	(0.049)	(0.048)	(0.036)
Population	0.836***	0.884***	1.017***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Constant	18.457***	17.867***	17.274***
	(0.558)	(0.134)	(0.096)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	41,600	41,600	41,600
R^2	0.500	0.468	0.375
Adjusted R^2	0.492	0.464	0.373

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

Table 17: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.06***	−0.04***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.96***
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Constant	9.18***	8.21***	7.77***	7.75***	7.80***	7.78***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708
R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

D.2 Transnational Resistance Hypothesis Test

Table 18: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.09***	0.94***	0.95***	0.74***	0.98***	0.86***
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Population	0.31***	0.22***	0.28***	0.20***	0.28***	0.21***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Natural Resources	1.15***	0.61**	1.20***	0.68***	1.27***	0.64**
	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.26)
Ruggedness	−0.24*	−0.37**	−0.14	−0.28*	0.07	−0.24
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		3.84***		4.10***		4.52***
		(0.16)		(0.16)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	9,944	9,944	13,722	13,722	19,002	19,002

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.

Table 19: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.09***	0.98***	0.97***	0.77***	0.99***	0.90***
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Population	0.31***	0.21***	0.27***	0.20***	0.28***	0.21***
	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Natural Resources	1.13***	0.61**	1.18***	0.68***	1.25***	0.64**
	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.26)
Ruggedness	−0.25*	−0.38**	−0.15	−0.29*	0.05	−0.25
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		3.86***		4.11***		4.52***
		(0.16)		(0.16)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	9,944	9,944	13,722	13,722	19,002	19,002

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.

E Robustness Check: Excluding Sister City Item

This section replicates all analyses but using a version of the Transnationality measure that does not incorporate sister cities as an item. Sister cities are distinct from the other items (roads, ethnic homelands, and railroads) in occupying precise point locations rather than extending across larger spaces. Sister cities thus might have a fundamentally different geographic relationship to borders in ways that, when incorporated into the Transnationality measure, bias the results.

However, resolving this concern, all results are substantively similar when using a version of Transnationality that excludes sister cities. First, the correlation between Transnationality without the sister city item and distance from the border remains generally weak. This relationship holds across all variants of the measure. Second, Transnationality continues to positively and significantly predict wealth as assumed for the nomological validity test. Third, Transnationality continues to negatively and significantly predict travel time to the nearest border crossing as assumed for the nomological validity test. Finally, replicating the primary analyses testing the **Transnational Resistance Hypothesis**, Transnationality has a positive and significant relationship with Resistance to a pandemic border closure. Overall, these consistent results demonstrate that the analyses are robust to this additional modification of Transnationality.

E.1 Validity Test: Correlation with Distance from Border

Transnationality Measure Version	ρ with Distance from Border
20x20 KM and Primary Ordinalization Scheme	-0.37
20x20 KM and Alternative Ordinalization Scheme	-0.35
30x30 KM and Primary Ordinalization Scheme	-0.37
30x30 KM and Alternative Ordinalization Scheme	-0.35
40x40 KM and Primary Ordinalization Scheme	-0.16
40x40 KM and Alternative Ordinalization Scheme	-0.22

E.2 Validity Test: Wealth

Table 20: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.260***	1.205***	1.177***
	(0.026)	(0.026)	(0.020)
Population	0.922***	0.977***	1.073***
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Constant	15.844***	15.885***	15.265***
	(0.342)	(0.086)	(0.061)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	130,894	130,894	130,894
R^2	0.450	0.417	0.345
Adjusted R^2	0.448	0.415	0.344

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 21: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.261***	1.223***	1.132***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.021)
Population	0.914***	0.969***	1.067***
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Constant	15.963***	15.968***	15.322***
	(0.342)	(0.086)	(0.061)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	130,894	130,894	130,894
R^2	0.449	0.416	0.343
Adjusted R^2	0.447	0.414	0.342

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme. Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 22: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.246***	1.197***	1.199***
	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.027)
Population	0.876***	0.933***	1.036***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Constant	17.033***	16.949***	16.470***
	(0.444)	(0.113)	(0.079)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	66,570	66,570	66,570
R^2	0.471	0.438	0.358
Adjusted R^2	0.466	0.435	0.356

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 23: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.260***	1.230***	1.167***
	(0.036)	(0.036)	(0.027)
Population	0.865***	0.922***	1.027***
	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.024)
Constant	17.161***	17.041***	16.529***
	(0.444)	(0.113)	(0.079)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	66,570	66,570	66,570
R^2	0.470	0.437	0.356
Adjusted R^2	0.465	0.435	0.355

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme. Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 24: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.245***	1.186***	1.147***
	(0.041)	(0.040)	(0.032)
Population	0.873***	0.920***	1.050***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Constant	18.122***	17.623***	17.439***
	(0.559)	(0.134)	(0.095)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	41,600	41,600	41,600
R^2	0.498	0.466	0.374
Adjusted R^2	0.491	0.462	0.372

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 25: Transnationality and Wealth (OLS)

	Dependent variable: GDP (Logged)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Transnationality	1.255***	1.219***	1.113***
	(0.043)	(0.043)	(0.033)
Population	0.862***	0.908***	1.042***
	(0.027)	(0.027)	(0.029)
Constant	18.245***	17.706***	17.504***
	(0.560)	(0.134)	(0.095)
Borderland Side FEs	✓		
Borderland FEs		✓	
Country FEs			✓
N	41,600	41,600	41,600
R^2	0.497	0.466	0.372
Adjusted R^2	0.490	0.462	0.370

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme. Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

E.3 Validity Test: Driving Time to Border

Table 26: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.03***	−0.03***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance		1.10***		1.10***		0.94***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.15***	8.87***	8.50***	8.87***	8.53***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 27: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.03***	−0.03***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Distance		1.10***		1.10***		0.94***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.15***	8.87***	8.50***	8.87***	8.53***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383	36,383
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 28: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.04***	−0.03***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.95***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.19***	8.87***	8.52***	8.88***	8.54***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 29: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.04***	−0.03***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.95***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.19***	8.87***	8.52***	8.87***	8.54***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068	20,068
R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 30: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.04***	−0.03***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.96***
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.21***	7.76***	7.75***	7.78***	7.77***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708
R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 31: Transnationality and Travel Time to Border (OLS)

	Dependent variable: Driving Time to Border Crossing (Logged)					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.01***	−0.04***	−0.03***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
Distance		1.06***		1.06***		0.96***
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.01)
Constant	9.19***	8.21***	7.76***	7.75***	7.78***	7.77***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.02)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708	11,708
R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97
Adjusted R^2	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	0.95	0.97

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

E.4 Transnational Resistance Hypothesis Test

Table 32: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.29***	0.97***	1.14***	0.80***	1.15***	0.91***
	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.14)	(0.13)	(0.15)
Population	0.29***	0.19***	0.24***	0.17***	0.20***	0.15***
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Natural Resources	1.35***	0.72**	1.35***	0.78**	1.59***	0.79**
	(0.28)	(0.33)	(0.29)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ruggedness	−0.31**	−0.28*	−0.22*	−0.19	0.004	−0.15
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.12)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.73***		5.00***		5.40***
		(0.15)		(0.15)		(0.15)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	31,553	31,553	43,066	43,066	59,662	59,662

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01

Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 33: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.15***	0.74***	1.00***	0.59***	1.01***	0.69***
	(0.14)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.15)
Population	0.30***	0.19***	0.24***	0.17***	0.20***	0.15***
	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)
Natural Resources	1.33***	0.71**	1.34***	0.77**	1.59***	0.79**
	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.29)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ruggedness	−0.32**	−0.26*	−0.23*	−0.18	−0.02	−0.14
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.75***		5.02***		5.41***
		(0.15)		(0.15)		(0.15)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	31,553	31,553	43,066	43,066	59,662	59,662

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 34: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.14***	1.02***	0.98***	0.82***	1.01***	0.94***
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Population	0.35***	0.26***	0.30***	0.23***	0.29***	0.22***
	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Natural Resources	1.28***	0.60**	1.28***	0.64**	1.41***	0.63**
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.27)
Ruggedness	−0.28**	−0.38**	−0.18	−0.32**	0.03	−0.26
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.09***		4.36***		4.77***
		(0.16)		(0.15)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	15,998	15,998	22,015	22,015	30,454	30,454

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 35: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.19***	1.04***	1.03***	0.85***	1.06***	0.97***
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.16)
Population	0.34***	0.26***	0.30***	0.22***	0.29***	0.22***
	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.04)
Natural Resources	1.27***	0.59**	1.27***	0.63**	1.40***	0.61**
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.24)	(0.27)
Ruggedness	−0.29**	−0.39**	−0.20	−0.33**	0.01	−0.27*
	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		4.10***		4.36***		4.76***
		(0.16)		(0.15)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	15,998	15,998	22,015	22,015	30,454	30,454

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 36: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.00***	1.00***	0.86***	0.80***	0.88***	0.92***
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.16)
Population	0.34***	0.23***	0.30***	0.21***	0.30***	0.23***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.05)
Natural Resources	1.17***	0.61**	1.21***	0.68**	1.28***	0.62**
	(0.22)	(0.26)	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.26)
Ruggedness	−0.19	−0.31**	−0.10	−0.24	0.10	−0.19
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		3.89***		4.14***		4.56***
		(0.16)		(0.16)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	9,944	9,944	13,722	13,722	19,002	19,002

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

Table 37: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.06***	1.11***	0.93***	0.89***	0.95***	1.03***
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.14)	(0.16)	(0.14)	(0.17)
Population	0.33***	0.22***	0.30***	0.21***	0.30***	0.23***
	(0.07)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.06)
Natural Resources	1.15***	0.60**	1.19***	0.67**	1.26***	0.61**
	(0.22)	(0.27)	(0.23)	(0.26)	(0.22)	(0.26)
Ruggedness	−0.21	−0.32**	−0.11	−0.24	0.09	−0.20
	(0.13)	(0.16)	(0.13)	(0.15)	(0.12)	(0.16)
Proximate Event		3.91***		4.15***		4.57***
		(0.16)		(0.16)		(0.16)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	9,944	9,944	13,722	13,722	19,002	19,002

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Transnationality measure uses the alternative item ordinalization scheme.
Transnationality measure does not include the sister city item.

F Robustness Check: Linear Probability Modeling

This section replicates the primary analyses of Transnationality and Resistance presented in the main body of the paper but with a linear probability modeling approach involving ordinary least squares that includes the entire sample across the fixed effects specifications. Robust standard errors are calculated using the Huber-White correction in order to account for heteroskedasticity. The note in each table indicates the grid cell size. All results are substantively similar to the primary analyses.

Table 38: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (OLS)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	0.01***	0.005***	0.01***	0.005***	0.004***	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0004)
Population	0.01***	0.003***	0.005***	0.003***	0.01***	0.003***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Natural Resources	0.01**	0.004	0.01**	0.004*	0.01**	0.004*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Ruggedness	−0.002***	−0.001*	−0.001***	−0.001	−0.001***	−0.0005
	(0.0005)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0004)
Proximate Event		0.20***		0.20***		0.20***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	120127	120,127	120,127	120,127	120,127	120,127

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Robust standard errors calculated using the Huber-White correction for heteroskedasticity.

Table 39: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (OLS)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.004***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Population	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Natural Resources	0.01**	0.01	0.01**	0.01	0.01***	0.01
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Ruggedness	−0.003***	−0.002***	−0.002***	−0.002**	−0.002***	−0.001**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Proximate Event		0.20***		0.20***		0.20***
		(0.01)		(0.01)		(0.01)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	61123	61123	61123	61123	61123	61123

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Robust standard errors calculated using the Huber-White correction for heteroskedasticity.

Table 40: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (OLS)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	0.02***	0.01***	0.02***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Population	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***	0.01***
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Natural Resources	0.01**	0.01*	0.01***	0.01*	0.01***	0.01*
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)
Ruggedness	−0.003**	−0.003**	−0.002*	−0.002*	−0.002**	−0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Proximate Event		0.22***		0.22***		0.22***
		(0.02)		(0.02)		(0.02)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	38,186	38,186	38,186	38,186	38,186	38,186

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Robust standard errors calculated using the Huber-White correction for heteroskedasticity.

G Subgroup Analyses: OECD and non-OECD Countries

This section replicates the primary analyses of Transnationality and Resistance presented in the main body of the paper but after dividing the sample into cells in either OECD countries or non-OECD countries. The first set of tables includes models among OECD countries, and the second set of tables includes models among non-OECD countries. The note in each table indicates the grid cell size. All results are substantively similar to the primary analyses.

Table 41: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.08***	0.93***	0.83***	0.58***	0.93***	0.79***
	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.20)	(0.17)	(0.20)
Population	0.39***	0.38***	0.38***	0.29**	0.43***	0.37***
	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.12)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Natural Resources	0.69	0.26	0.97*	0.58	0.70	0.37
	(0.59)	(0.66)	(0.59)	(0.64)	(0.59)	(0.65)
Ruggedness	−0.48**	−0.39	−0.23	−0.15	−0.42**	−0.38
	(0.20)	(0.24)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.24)
Proximate Event		4.56***		4.70***		4.89***
		(0.22)		(0.21)		(0.22)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	12,001	12,001	15,449	15,449	17,019	17,019

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in OECD countries are included.

Table 42: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	0.98***	1.08***	0.70***	0.68***	0.83***	0.96***
	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.22)
Population	0.48***	0.51***	0.44***	0.42***	0.53***	0.54***
	(0.12)	(0.15)	(0.11)	(0.14)	(0.12)	(0.15)
Natural Resources	0.66	0.45	0.94*	0.67	0.55	0.42
	(0.51)	(0.54)	(0.50)	(0.54)	(0.52)	(0.54)
Ruggedness	−0.43**	−0.40*	−0.18	−0.22	−0.37*	−0.39*
	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.23)
Proximate Event		3.92***		4.04***		4.25***
		(0.22)		(0.22)		(0.22)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	6,066	6,066	7,931	7,931	8,642	8,642

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in OECD countries are included.

Table 43: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	0.82***	0.84***	0.53***	0.47**	0.67***	0.73***
	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.19)	(0.22)
Population	0.51***	0.45***	0.49***	0.39**	0.58***	0.47**
	(0.14)	(0.17)	(0.13)	(0.18)	(0.14)	(0.18)
Natural Resources	1.05***	0.51	1.28***	0.72	0.96**	0.50
	(0.41)	(0.46)	(0.40)	(0.46)	(0.41)	(0.46)
Ruggedness	−0.41**	−0.46*	−0.16	−0.25	−0.34*	−0.44*
	(0.21)	(0.24)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.24)
Proximate Event		3.53***		3.66***		3.89***
		(0.23)		(0.22)		(0.22)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	3,757	3,757	4,926	4,926	5,376	5,376

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in OECD countries are included.

Table 44: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.45***	0.84***	1.42***	0.84***	1.32***	0.80***
	(0.19)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.21)	(0.18)	(0.21)
Population	0.22***	0.14***	0.16***	0.14***	0.14***	0.14***
	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.03)
Natural Resources	1.53***	0.88**	1.45***	0.86**	1.80***	0.95**
	(0.31)	(0.38)	(0.32)	(0.38)	(0.31)	(0.37)
Ruggedness	−0.32	−0.29	−0.33*	−0.29	0.11	−0.15
	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.20)	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.22)
Proximate Event		4.84***		5.19***		5.67***
		(0.22)		(0.22)		(0.22)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	19,552	19,552	27,617	27,617	42,643	42,643

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 20x20 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in non-OECD countries are included.

Table 45: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.31***	0.85***	1.27***	0.84***	1.19***	0.79***
	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.22)	(0.18)	(0.22)
Population	0.26***	0.20***	0.21***	0.19***	0.22***	0.20***
	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.05)
Natural Resources	1.48***	0.66**	1.38***	0.63**	1.65***	0.69**
	(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ruggedness	−0.32	−0.51**	−0.32	−0.52**	0.11	−0.38
	(0.20)	(0.24)	(0.20)	(0.24)	(0.19)	(0.24)
Proximate Event		4.22***		4.58***		5.07***
		(0.22)		(0.22)		(0.22)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	9,932	9,932	14,084	14,084	21,812	21,812

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 30x30 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in non-OECD countries are included.

Table 46: Transnationality and Resistance Against COVID-19 Border Closures (Logit)

	Dependent variable: ACLED Event					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Transnationality	1.27***	0.96***	1.26***	0.96***	1.18***	0.91***
	(0.20)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.23)	(0.19)	(0.23)
Population	0.24***	0.18**	0.19***	0.18***	0.23***	0.20***
	(0.09)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.06)
Natural Resources	1.17***	0.63*	1.12***	0.61*	1.32***	0.65**
	(0.27)	(0.32)	(0.28)	(0.32)	(0.27)	(0.32)
Ruggedness	−0.15	−0.29	−0.14	−0.29	0.26	−0.16
	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.19)	(0.22)	(0.17)	(0.22)
Proximate Event		4.11***		4.48***		4.95***
		(0.24)		(0.24)		(0.24)
Borderland Side FEs	✓	✓				
Borderland FEs			✓	✓		
Country FEs					✓	✓
N	6,187	6,187	8,796	8,796	13,626	13,626

*p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01
Note: Unit of analysis is 40x40 KM grid cells. Intercepts are omitted.
Only cells in non-OECD countries are included.

H ACLED Data Codebook

Codebook for Coding ACLED Events

Version: December 13, 2023

Variable Description (column name)

This document describes instructions for coding the content of descriptions about protest and riot events that have been documented by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED).

ID of the Row (row_id)

The ID of the row.

ID of the Event (EVENT_ID_CNTY)

The ID of the event.

Date of the Event (EVENT_DATE)

The date on which the event took place.

Country of the Event (COUNTRY)

The name of the country in which the event took place.

Administrative Region 1 (ADMIN1)

The name of the largest subnational administrative region in which the event took place.

Administrative Region 2 (ADMIN2)

The name of the second largest subnational administrative region in which the event took place.

Administrative Region 3 (ADMIN3)

The name of the third largest subnational administrative region in which the event took place.

Name of the Coder (coder)

The last name of the coder.

Text of the Event Description (NOTES)

The text of the event description.

Relevant to Border Control (relevant)

Is the event relevant to one or more border control efforts? An event is relevant to border control efforts when the fundamental purpose of the event directly relates to border control. Here, border control efforts are defined as any effort by a state at or

around its international land borders to facilitate or prevent the entrance of people or goods into its territory. Border control efforts in this variable encompass different types, including but not limited to the construction of physical infrastructure near a border such as walls; the deployment of guards to a border area; and restrictions on authorized movement through official crossings at land borders, including more stringent requirements to pass through a crossing and the temporary closure of individual crossings or an entire border. Note that the focus of this variable is on efforts by *states* at *international* borders on *land*. Thus, this variable excludes events that are about otherwise similar actions at subnational borders, maritime borders, and international airports, or that are taken by non-state actors like rebel groups and vigilantes.

Finally, note a few features of this variable. First, the participants of an event being part of a state agency or social group that is indirectly connected to or impacted by border control efforts does not in and of itself mean that the event is relevant to border control. The fundamental purpose of the event has to directly concern border control efforts in order for the event to be considered relevant. This criterion means that events like the following should *not* be treated as relevant to border control: people from a different country gather at an embassy of their home government to demand that they be repatriated; migrants in a detainment center protest against the conditions in which they are being held; or truckers demonstrate in frustration about delays when traversing borders because too few personnel work border crossings. Second, an event taking place near a border does not in and of itself mean that the event is relevant to border control. Third, an event could be relevant to border control efforts by either one state or joint efforts by multiple states. Fourth, an event that is simultaneously relevant to border control and other issues should still be coded as relevant to border control. Fifth, events that are related to movement restrictions in Cyprus or between Israel and Palestine should not be treated as relevant to border control.

- Code 1: the event is relevant to border control.
- Code 0: the event is not relevant to border control.

Relevant to Border Control Confidence (relevant_conf)

This variable denotes the degree of confidence that the coder has in their coding of this variable.

- Code 3 (high): this evidence is very strong, alternative interpretations are unlikely, and you are quite sure that others would agree with your assessment.
- Code 2 (medium): there is good evidence for the judgment, but alternative interpretations are possible.
- Code 1 (low): you are almost guessing.

Relevant to Crossing Restrictions (relevant_restrictions)

If the event is relevant to border control (relevant = 1), is it relevant specifically to restrictions on formal movement through official border crossings? The purpose of this variable is to identify, among all events that are relevant to any kind of border control, those whose fundamental purpose directly relates to restrictions at official border crossings. Not all events that are generally relevant to border control are specifically relevant to crossing restrictions, but all events that are relevant to crossing restrictions are generally relevant to border control. Thus, restrictions at official crossings do *not* encompass other types of border control efforts (e.g. walls or armed patrols in other locations to target unauthorized/"illegal" movement). Note that an event can be simultaneously relevant to crossing restrictions and other types of border control efforts.

Restrictions can apply to people or goods. They can take two forms. The first form is the implementation of more stringent requirements to pass through a border crossing. An example of this is mandating the possession of a medical document. The second form of limitation is the temporary closure of official border crossings, spanning from particular site to those along an entire border. Leave this variable blank if the event is not relevant to border control (relevant = 0).

- Code 1: the event is relevant to restrictions on formal movement through official border crossings.
- Code 0: the event is not relevant to restrictions on formal movement through official border crossings.
- Leave blank: relevant is 0, meaning that the event is not at all relevant to border control.

Relevant to Crossing Restrictions Confidence (relevant_restrictions_conf)

This variable denotes the degree of confidence that the coder has in their coding of this variable.

- Code 3 (high): this evidence is very strong, alternative interpretations are unlikely, and you are quite sure that others would agree with your assessment.
- Code 2 (medium): there is good evidence for the judgment, but alternative interpretations are possible. An example description for which a coder might have moderate confidence is that a group of people march to an international border crossing in protest of "coronavirus-related restrictions", but without specifying the type of restriction.
- Code 1 (low): you are almost guessing.

Specific Border(s) Referenced (specific)

If the event is relevant to border control (relevant = 1), does its description refer to one or more particular international land borders? Some event descriptions refer to specific borders explicitly by name, while others use indirect references. These indirect references can take two forms. One form is referring to specific elements of a

border such as the name of a port of entry, checkpoint, or bridge. The other form of indirect reference is broad terms such as "nearby border". When an event description potentially contains an indirect reference, search for additional information online to confirm whether this is the case. If the online search supports interpretating the language as an indirect reference, then the event description should be treated as referring to a specific border. Note that references to specific borders should all be treated the same, whether or not the referenced border is a border of the country in which the event took place. Leave this variable blank if the event is not relevant to border control (relevant = 0).

- Code 1: the event description refers to at least one international land border.
- Code 0: the event description does not refer to any international land borders.
- Leave blank: relevant is 0, meaning that the event is not at all relevant to border control.

Specific Border(s) Named Confidence (specific_conf)

This variable denotes the degree of confidence that the coder has in their coding of this variable.

- Code 3 (high): this evidence is very strong, alternative interpretations are unlikely, and you are quite sure that others would agree with your assessment.
- Code 2 (medium): there is good evidence for the judgment, but alternative interpretations are possible. In general, select this level of confidence when an event is coded as referring to one or more specific borders (specific = 1) based on an indirect reference.
- Code 1 (low): you are almost guessing.

Specific Border(s) Referenced Free-responses (specific_free_1, specific_free_2, specific_free_3, specific_free_4)

If the event references one or more specific borders (specific = 1), which *neighboring countries* are associated with those borders? These variables are intended to capture, if possible, the neighboring country linked to the specific borders involved in the event. Start by noting the entry in the COUNTRY column, which is the name of the country in which the event took place. Then, for the specific_free variables, input the name of the country on the side of the border in which the event did *not* occur. For example, if an event in Country A is relevant to border control efforts at the border with Country B, then the free-response should contain the name of Country B in specific_free_1. Only input the name of the neighboring country rather than the name of more specific references like border crossings, checkpoints, and bridges. Fully spell out the name of the country, and keep that spelling choice consistent across events. In case an event description references more than one border, multiple columns are provided. Enter only one country name per column, and only fill as many columns as there are countries to specify. For example, if an event in Country A is relevant to

border control efforts at the borders of Country A with both Country B and Country C, then the free-responses should contain the name of Country B in specific_free_1 and the name of Country C in specific_free_2. Note that, if a referenced border is not a border of the country in which the event took place, still input the name of each country associated with the reference. Leave all of these variables blank if the event is not relevant to border control (relevant = 0), or if the event is relevant but does not refer to any specific borders (relevant = 1 and specific = 0).

- Free-response: enter the name of each bordering country.
- Leave all blank: relevant is 0, meaning that the event is not relevant to border control, or relevant = 1 and specific = 0, meaning that the event is relevant to border control but does not refer to specific borders.

Position on Border Control (position)[63]

If the event is relevant to border control (relevant = 1), does it express opposition or support? This variable is intended to capture the position expressed by the event on all of the border control efforts to which it is relevant. The position is indicated by the stated demands of the event and/or the actions taken by event participants. An event opposes border control if it demands the end or reduction of, or takes action to obstruct or defy, one or more border control efforts. An event supports border control if it demands the initiation or intensification of, or takes action to support, one or more border control efforts. Leave this variable blank if the event is not relevant to border control (relevant = 0).

- Code 2: the event opposes border control.
- Code 1: the event supports border control.
- Leave blank: relevant is 0, meaning that the event is not at all relevant to border control.

Position on Border Control Confidence (position_conf)

This variable denotes the degree of confidence that the coder has in their coding of this variable.

- Code 3 (high): this evidence is very strong, alternative interpretations are unlikely, and you are quite sure that others would agree with your assessment.
- Code 2 (medium): there is good evidence for the judgment, but alternative interpretations are possible. An example description for which a coder might have moderate confidence in coding an event relevant to border control as opposed or supportive is that a group of people in a border town drive in a motorcade demanding "authorities take measures to reactivate the border's economy" in the context of a closed border, but without specifying the type of measures.

[63]The codebook originally instructed a coding of 3 for events that simultaneously opposed and supported different forms of border control. But I have removed this from the codebook in the interest of brevity since no events fell under that category.

- Code 1 (low): you are almost guessing.

Position on Crossings Restrictions (position_restrictions)[64]

If the event is relevant to restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings (relevant_restrictions = 1), does it express opposition or support? This variable is intended to capture the position expressed by the event specifically on the one or more crossings restrictions to which it is relevant. The position is indicated by stated demands and/or actions taken by event participants. An event opposes restrictions if it demands the end or reduction of, or takes action to obstruct or defy, one or more restrictions. An event supports restrictions if it only demands the initiation or intensification of, or takes action to support, one or more border restrictions. Leave this variable blank if the event is not relevant to restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings (relevant_restrictions = 0).

- Code 2: the event opposes restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings.
- Code 1: the event supports restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings.
- Leave blank: relevant_restrictions is 0, meaning that the event is not at all relevant to restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings.

Position on Crossings Restrictions Confidence (position_restrictions_conf)

This variable denotes the degree of confidence that the coder has in their coding of this variable.

- Code 3 (high): this evidence is very strong, alternative interpretations are unlikely, and you are quite sure that others would agree with your assessment.
- Code 2 (medium): there is good evidence for the judgment, but alternative interpretations are possible.
- Code 1 (low): you are almost guessing.

[64]The codebook originally instructed a coding of 3 for events that simultaneously opposed and supported different restrictions on formal movement through official land border crossings. But I have removed this from the codebook in the interest of brevity since no events fell under that category.

I Interview Questionnaires

Note that the open-ended nature of the questions and some interviewees occupying multiple positions led some discussions to vary in question order, scope, and topic.

I.1 Government Officials

1. Name, birthplace, and current place of residence?
2. What is your background?
3. How did you come to your position?
4. Could you describe your community's relationship to the border?
5. In what ways is your community connected to society across the border?
6. For your community, what is good about being near the border?
7. For your community, what is bad about being near the border?
8. Which border policies have been the most significant for your community? For each mentioned policy:
   (a) How does the policy impact the community?
   (b) Does the policy affect everyone equally?
   (c) Who supports the policy?
   (d) Who opposes the policy?
   (e) What political activism or pressure have occurred over the policy?
   (f) How have government authorities responded to these activities?
9. If COVID-19 border policy was not mentioned:
   (a) How did COVID-19 crossing restrictions impact people in your community?
   (b) Did the restrictions affect everyone equally?
   (c) Who supported the restrictions?
   (d) Who opposed the restrictions?
   (e) What political activism or pressure occurred over the restrictions?
   (f) How did government authorities respond to these activities?
10. Could you describe the local government's relationship with state and federal authorities regarding border issues?
11. Could you describe any conflicts that have occurred between local government and the other authorities?

12. What do people from outside the border area get right and get wrong about border issues?
13. Additional interviewees?

I.2 Businesspeople

1. Name, birthplace, and current place of residence?
2. What is your background?
3. How did you come to be involved in the business?
4. Could you describe your business's relationship to the border?
5. For your business, what is good about being near the border?
6. For your business, what is bad about being near the border?
7. Which border policies have been the most significant for your business?
8. For each mentioned policy:
   (a) How does this policy impact your business?
   (b) In what ways have you engaged with government officials about this policy?
9. If COVID-19 border policy was not mentioned:
   (a) How did COVID-19 crossing restrictions impact your business?
   (b) In what ways did you engage with government officials about the restrictions?
10. What do people from outside the border area get right and get wrong about border issues?
11. Additional interviewees?

I.3 Activists

1. Name, birthplace, and current place of residence?
2. What is your background?
3. How did you come to be involved in your organization?
4. When and where did your organization form?
5. Where does your organization currently operate?
6. Which border policies have been the biggest priority for your organization?

7. For each mentioned policy:
    (a) How does the policy impact people in border area communities?
    (b) Does the policy affect everyone equally?
    (c) What is your organization's stance on the policy?
    (d) What kinds of political action has your organization taken over the policy?
8. If COVID-19 border policy was not mentioned:
    (a) How did COVID-19 crossing restrictions impact people in border area communities?
    (b) Did the restrictions affect everyone equally?
    (c) What was your organization's stance on the restrictions?
    (d) What kinds of political action did your organization take over the restrictions?
9. What kinds of people and groups make up your organization's support network?
10. What strategies do you find to be the most effective when trying to mobilize the public?
11. Could you describe your organization's experiences with engaging local, state, or federal officials?
12. What do people from outside the border area get right and get wrong about border issues?
13. Additional interviewees?

J Ethics and Research Practices

The interview component involving human research subjects fully adheres to the Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research established by the American Political Science Association Council. Each component is addressed below.

J.1 Informed and voluntary consent of research participants and others directly engaged by the research process, including continuing consent if needed

All interviewees provided informed and voluntary consent to participate in the research. I obtained this verbally at the beginning of each interview. Each interview began with me discussing and providing a printed copy of the consent form mandated by my home institution's Institutional Review Board. Consent was meaningful and sufficient because I detailed the nature of the research, provided the physical form, took care to affirm that their anonymity would be protected, and ensured that I received a clear, verbal affirmation of consent.

J.2 Deceptive or covert research should be avoided

No deception or covert research was used in the course of the interview data collection.

J.3 Harm (traumatization, social, economic or physical) should be avoided, minimized when avoidance is not possible, and research suspended if excessive

Because the in-person interviews occurred at a time and place of subjects' choosing and because virtual interviews took place on a computer, participation posed no physical risks to subjects. None of the information obtained about the subjects could lead to social, economic, legal, or information harm if released, and as the information will be collected anonymously, the risk of disclosure is mitigated in any case. All statements individuals are exposed to are similar to that encountered in standard news reports and social media.

J.4 The confidentiality of participant identities, or, in some settings, the higher standard of anonymity

I took multiple steps to safeguard subjects' information. To ensure that I could keep track of subject interviewees, I maintained a password-protected spreadsheet in an encrypted file on my personal computer. In this spreadsheet, I assigned all of these subjects an ID number that I used as a link to names. In my personal notebook that I used in interviews, I wrote down subjects' ID numbers made via this method rather than their names to track which notes associate with whom. This ensured that accidentally losing the interview notebook would not reveal subjects' names

or interview responses in case an unauthorized individual accessed the notebook. Overall, the names, contact information, and ID numbers will not be made publicly available or shared with someone other than myself.

J.5 Compromising the integrity of broad political processes either at the time of the research process or on publication without the consent of those directly engaged by the research process should be avoided

The research did not compromise the integrity of broad political processes, and would not do so upon publication. The research involving human subjects consisted only of asking the subjects for their opinions on and experiences with a set of political issues.

J.6 Review by relevant ethics boards to approve the research protocol, confirm exempt status, or confirm that the research is Not Human Subjects Research (NHSR) (Note that this also includes local review when required by host community or host country.)

The Institutional Review Board of my home institution confirmed exempt status of the research and approved all research procedures.

J.7 Awareness of relevant laws and regulations governing research and related activities

The research did not involve violating any laws or regulations governing research and related activities.