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Workshop: Bordering dynamics and liberal political communities: what for the future?

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The aim of this workshop is to reflect on boundaries and boundary dynamics and to examine them in relation to liberal political communities. It is widely recognised that borders are key signifiers for political communities. It is no coincidence that in IR this performance is increasingly considered in relation to other key issues such as the dynamics of securitisation, identity formation, ontological (in)security. Borders can be hard (walls, fences, surveillance systems, agency operations, etc.) or soft (socially constructed borders related to processes of self-identification or othering). Borders in the broadest sense can simultaneously open/close, filter/select, include/exclude, and perform their function in different areas, from health to the economy to mobility, among others.

Against this background, the specific aim of the workshop is to explore how border dynamics are reshaping liberal political communities. Several crises and unexpected events have revived the relevance of assessing how liberal communities use borders in a broad sense, to find out how this use affects and perhaps reshapes their ontology, and to assess potential frictions (or lack thereof) with their liberal nature. As scholars, it is extremely important that we thoroughly examine how the ongoing processes are reshaping the political dynamics of tomorrow, either by changing the governance, expectations or potential contribution of liberal communities.

This workshop invites papers that ideally combine IR with other disciplines that study borders in order to discuss new approaches and understandings of the dynamics at play and the future potential of borders in different areas (energy, trade, health, cyberspace, migration, financial flows, environment, defence, etc.). Both theoretical and empirical contributions are welcome. In particular, we invite papers that address the following questions and themes (but are also open to papers that go beyond these suggestions):

- - What forms of contestation and resistance are emerging (locally, regionally, nationally or globally) in relation to the use of borders in different issue areas?
- - How are border dynamics perceived by liberal communities elsewhere?
- - How can IR further develop a critical discourse around borders in different thematic areas?
- - Is it possible to imagine for the future alternative solutions to fear, anxiety, insecurity that go beyond a traditional understanding of bordering? What are the implications for liberal political communities?
- - How can we fairly discuss the relationship between liberal communities and bordering dynamics? Should the spread of liberal values lead to less bordering?
- - How can the relationship between multilateralism, the rule-based world, the international community, interconnectedness, global crises and borders be imagined conceptually and empirically for the next future? Is there a new paradigm taking traction? Are there new ideas emerging?

This workshop is sponsored by the Jean Monnet Module REBOUND ([REBOUND - Rethinking Borders in and by the European Union \(unibo.it\)](#)).