Critical Edges

edition 2019

a magazine for critical students globally
## CONTENT

**EDITORIAL ARTICLE**

*Student Appeal: Letter to Evergreen*  
1

**CROSSING BORDERS**

We occupy the frontiers of the University to defend her  
9

Crossing Borders: Stories from my Life  
10

From Borders to Frontiers: Possibilities of crossing over  
22

Migrant Remittance – A Tie that Binds  
33

*Student Investigates: A Report on China's Contemporary Collectivization Movement: Haoxi Village*  
35

**CLIMATE CHANGE**  
39

How Climate Change is not an individual problem  
40

My Valley Has Changed  
43

*Student Action: How to Create a Student Movement*  
44

Want Change, Friend? Let’s Get Political!  
50

**TRANSITION**  
53

Transcendence  
54

The Paradox of Transition  
55

What is innovation in education  
59

Transition as I see it  
61

*Student Reads: Teach to transgress book review*  
69

Critical Edges Annual Report  
71

Acknowledgements  
77
I. INTRODUCTION

When we first selected the theme for this issue, we were quite bemused. We had heard from our colleagues at Critical Edge Alliance, that the conference in New York would be about Border Crossing. Though we knew what it meant, it was also something that very soon opened up many questions, for what exactly is border crossing? Isn’t it a phenomenon much deeper than just crossing from one national border to another? And what is a border? We found out quickly that this was something of importance, mainly as we realized its connection with many of the problems we knew about and that we are experiencing. We had numerous discussions about this and we have to this point not yet been able to reach any truly all-encompassing definition of a border. Despite that, we would like to share our preliminaries and some of the conclusions we reached during our discussions.

In our childhood, our parents and teachers taught us what we could do and what we could not, what we should think and what we certainly should not. Later in our education we had faced borders, when from an early stage, we were told that some things were simply impossible for us. “You want to become a musician? That is impossible, if you want to feed yourself and earn a living”, our teachers would say. We were told which jobs and subjects are “good” and which subjects are equivalent to wasting time.

There were tests for us when we wanted to make a choice, and some of us were lucky enough to pass, and some of us were not. We are lucky. Most likely, if you are reading this magazine, you are enrolled in a university, and perhaps quite a good one, after crossing layers of borders on your way. Those who are left outside the borders experience the rain falling down every day—they end up with the consequent imposition more profoundly than those who are included.
We all know that, and we often take the borders to be natural or fine(1). Because as long as we are the “winners”, we will have the good life promised to us. But now these promises of good life are debubbling around the world, and borders are increasingly strengthening the existing order. Facing this, we should question the imbalanced bordering system and the consequences it creates. We must try to imagine: What if one day every person who wishes to, could go to university and receive education according to their needs, regardless of their backgrounds?(2) From there, we might build a vision and reality for the good life for all.

I. Border crossing

What can we understand as borders and of border crossing? Jean Jacques Rousseau famously wrote:

The first man who, having enclosed a piece of ground, bethought himself of saying This is mine, and found people simple enough to believe him, was the real founder of civil society. From how many crimes, wars and murders, from how many horrors and misfortunes might not any one have saved mankind, by pulling up the stakes, or filling up the ditch, and crying to his fellows, "Beware of listening to this impostor; you are undone if you once forget that the fruits of the earth belong to us all, and the earth itself to nobody."

(J.J. Rousseau, On the Origin of the Inequality of Mankind 1754)

From this famous quotation by one of the most influential and famous philosophers, we can understand borders as something that was created, and that is continuously being created, sustained, or reproduced. In that sense, the moment a border is drawn, it is in fact an essential moment of change. So is the moment that the border is crossed or abolished. Consequently, the creation of borders and crossing over the borders are in many ways essential to the processes of change.

Before discussing the concept of border crossing further, it is quite important to understand what constitutes a border. Borders are generally created through processes of constant homogenization and differentiation. When a group of people feel or think they are different from another set of people, they make barriers between themselves which may eventually turn into impenetrable spatial or non-spatial borders. Human beings derive a sense of ‘us’ and ‘them’ based on shared forms of identities. The social solidarity formed out of shared identifiers such as race, religion, interests and ideologies (to name a few), in its extreme forms, can create stringent physical or abstract
barriers guarded with positive or negative sanctions on individuals’ actions and choices.

While visible boundaries come with manifested rules and sanctions out in the open, there are boundaries which are more unspoken in nature. These intangible boundaries may not have a legal basis, but often can only be experienced in violating them. In this sense, these unspoken, intangible, informal boundaries form the basis of the do’s and don'ts of society with formal or informal negative sanctions on the latter. These are more deep seated in the society precisely due to a certain normalization i.e. their power of going unquestioned or un-resisted. For instance, racial discrimination is an illegal and punishable offence in most parts of the world, yet we often see fashion brands lightening the dark-coloured models’ skin in their product advertisements(3). In this, the large global corporation hiring non-white models is a tangible border crossing in order to create a commercial image. At the same time, these models not questioning why their skin tones were lightened up in the advertising photographs shows the intangible border that remains impenetrable and beyond the ambit of legality.

**Capitalism as the central force of border crossing**

As we also brought up, in our first editorial article, our society today is witnessing more and more border crossing. Originally we called it exchanges and communication and we described how the world is becoming smaller and how the world economy is increasingly allowed to develop.(4)This is related to the increasing scope and power of the market(5), as many of our countries already experience this. Under the world market, the logic of capitalism rules, and permeates every sphere of life. It is not only a mighty creative power but also a mighty destructive force. As Marx and Engels already long ago stated in the Communist Manifesto:

> Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

*(K. Marx & F. Engels: The Communist Manifesto, 1848)*
In light of this powerful socio-economic structure, everything is already in a constant state of border crossing, in flux. And it is clear that nothing remains the same; nothing is eternal; everything can change from one day to another. Even our lives go shattered, lose their meaning, or become commodified as we unconsciously and anxiously cling to them when we try to stretch our best to “win” the rat race of survival, or when our lives are perpetuated by the growing proletarization and precarization of every stable structure: welfare state, civil rights, human rights, family, friends, and even abstract concepts such as love, truth and beauty.(6)

Despite capitalism being an explosive spirit of innovation, change, and revolution, it is also a system that creates millions of borders and categories, regulations and restrictions on people and nature. Just think about the similarities between a nation and a workplace, neither of them allows us to leave freely.(7)

To continue thinking within this framework, it also becomes clear that there is something highly stagnating, something fundamentally monotonising about the multitudinous and revolutionizing machine of capitalism that runs through all the continents, and forms everything after its will. Some things seem to be reproduced again and again.

An element here, is at least a reproduction of stability, not only of family structures, state-models and laws, even infrastructure, city planning, and aesthetic, and even say ideas(8). The most visible picture this reproduction of stability is McDonalds, the arch symbol of monopoly capitalism of the global era. Here we see a reproduction of stability, of franchization. Within capitalism's instability, the customer can find peace, homeliness, and familiarity for a moment in the bosom of its lulling commodities– anywhere in the world McDonalds is (to a large extent) the same or tastes the same.

Talking about borders and border crossing, we can thus not avoid talking about capitalism as well – as it is the central driving activity behind both of them today.

Photo by Fang Keping, Jiayuguan, China.
National borders as imagined

In relation to this growing monotonization of the world by globalization, as described above, borders seem to appear more and more everywhere. In Europe and North America, borders are closed more and more tightly, as the consequences of economic exploitation, war, and climate change are causing innumerable crowds of people to seek new places of security.

Simultaneously to this escalating tendency, it also seems that borders are being repeated and reproduced into many different spheres of social reality. One can take the special case of how more clearly marked borders between different cultures based on nationality are increasingly made, even as our world is getting more and more globalized. There seems to be a necessity, for those who create these borders, to be able to distinguish between you and me more clearly: This is mine and that is yours.

Nations and cultures that are relatively new, are heavily investing into the creation of their own distinguishing characteristics, national myths, religions, and artifacts to boost their own difference, and the unity of the people of their countries. Benedict Anderson, famously called these for the imagined communities — these communities, nations, only exist in so far as the inhabitants think them to be so.

II. BORDERS OF EDUCATION

Education is seen by many as the entrance point for everyone to reach equality. But the reality is in fact different: Education systems around the world are ridden with complexities, many of which are brought about by political interventions. Education bordering remains as an important reality, and often becomes a hindrance to many young people around the globe. As shown by sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passerson, the nation state is a crucial agent for controlling the content and form of education, with the objective to reproduce and maintain the status quo of power in society, they write:

The symbolic strength of a pedagogic agency is defined by its weight in the structure of the power relations and symbolic relations (the latter always expressing the former) between the agencies exerting an action of symbolic violence. This structure in turn expresses the power relations between the groups or classes making up the social formation in question.
In short, pedagogic agency is, in the simplest terms, the authority of an educator over those seeking education in any setup involving exchange of information, for the purpose of social and cultural reproduction of dominant values.

Education can become a tool to propagate the existing dominant power structures of nation states and societies. This means that the reason why a nation state would show great interest in its education system is to retain its own power, which often is the power of the dominant classes. This thus spells into desirable and undesirable knowledge pursuits, and the resulting consequence is the creation of borders within the education system where certain kinds of knowledge pursuits enjoys more financial resources, greater socio-cultural respectability and employability. Borders in education are created so as to perpetuate existing power structures and normalise them. And it is often in the violation of these normalised borders, that this power is felt.

How does this reflect in the education that we receive? As students writers, participating in the creation of this international student magazine, we each have very different experiences – experiences that despite their differences share many similarities.

In the small wealthy north European welfare-state country of Denmark, the education system, like the rest of the well-fed bureaucratic system, is permeated by a fever for more and more efficiency. This can be seen by the increasing focus on testing these years. Today even children from 2nd to 8th grade (8 to 15-year-olds) are being tested every year.

The idea that higher education is the only way through life is instilled in one’s mind from a very early age. One must get good grades throughout primary school, attend high school, and then head to the university. After that, one must get a well-paid job and thereby contribute to the economic growth of the welfare state. Why is this happening? It seems that students are increasingly being pushed through the educational machinery, and a sense of non-autonomy and indirectioness is felt among the students enrolled in the ruling dreams. Indifference grows towards everything other than that which is relevant for one’s own career.

Another example comes from India, where a vice chancellor of a top university of the country in her joining statement said, “Jamia needs new
courses and I feel many areas have old-fashioned courses” and further added:

"If we approach the government rightly, funding will not be a problem. We also have to learn to earn. That is what the government wants. For long, the central universities are being spoon fed by the funding of the government.”

The statements are prime examples of how education becomes restricted and ridden with constraints due to the ongoing political narrative. Studying only those courses which will put individuals in the market as workforce are encouraged in such a narrative. Theoretical and philosophical courses, which do not fetch employment in large corporations thus become ‘old fashioned’ or devalued. The reduction of education to skill training is dangerous for anyone willing to study liberal arts, social sciences or languages. It is not that these courses are devoid of any value or have no scope of future employment. But rather these courses often don't have employability due to the entire neoliberal narrative of prioritizing skills over knowledge. For a student, this creates a nearly impenetrable barrier.

In China, the education bordering is also clear. During the 1940's until the 1970's, education was a collectively owned and public affairs. Across the country, local communities and various social groups actively ran their education systems to help increase literacy and build agency among the proletariat and young generations. People were united to learn and become self educated builders of a socialist country in the early difficult years.

Over the past four decades, along with China’s great economic and social transformation, is a rapid change of values in the Chinese society. The march towards a market economy and modernized social order has broken the borders of both traditional and collective values which orient towards community or public goals and interests. Personal, familial interests have triumphed over the common goals, or social responsibility. Education has mainly become an engine for economic development: a highly selective, competitive, and unbalanced education system (especially in K12 education) was created for the most talented students and practical subjects. Ironically, today when the public education system is larger than ever and provides free basic education for over 93% of the children, more and more people are dissatisfied with the public education system and seek to escape it. Privileged groups and classes are investing in and establishing their own schools, choosing and buying education which serves them the best, while disadvantaged local communities continue to face a challenging and even deteriorating future.
Crossing borders in education

All the above examples illustrate the multifarious creation of formal and informal barriers in education, and reveal to us a crucial link between economy, politics, and borders in education. Education is not the sole sphere where borders are seen in itself, but also constitutes as central institutions for separating the sheep from the bucks. In the age of massification of education in many parts of the world, more invisible, sophisticated, and internalized borders are instilled in education systems by global market forces and neoliberal policy trends, replacing the previous visible borders of education provision, quantity, and selection.

Today, the educational goals for students are predominantly centered around developing transferable competencies, building useful characters, and optimizing the self in all aspects, so that they will be selected by the fast changing global market.

Scholars have observed this phenomenon and pointed out the self-centered and individualistic ideology permeated in educational institutions and discourses internationally. The emphasis on personal choice (of school), knowledge acquisition, competence building, competitiveness and employability are, to some degree, helpful to revolutionize learning from the traditional banking model(9). However, they amplify the causes of education inequality, by leaving education to the hands of private decisions (survival of the fittest), making the goals of education be that of the markets’ demands of humans, degrading the idea of “being educated” into acquiring the habitus of the bourgeois class.
In these regards, education bordering is going through an important upgrade and shift, to make the competent, assimilate the different, and ultimately strengthen the existing global economic order. Students who cannot be assimilated, due to whatever reasons, will be left out as losers or inadequate workers. Because of this, the borders people are so eager to cross are the ones that keep them away from the existing order of power and privilege. Only those who take the difficult route of challenging these borders are able to discover them. And it is the responsibility of these students to reimagine a new borderless education system and work toward it.

III. CRITICAL STUDENTS INTERNATIONALLY AND POTENTIALS OF CROSSING BORDERS

One of the most elusive elements in the concept of borders is that with every vantage point, our ideas and understanding of it can change. This multiplicity of vantage points can often reveal to us the problems in comprehending its difficult nature: What is unthinkable in one context can be taken for granted in another. This multiplicities of contexts and acknowledgement of a diversity, is therefore fundamental for our magazine, and for students around the world to gain deeper perspectives on the difficult common problems we are faced with.

The current issue of the Critical Edges is a culmination of student voices from several parts of the world. These voices are reflections of diverse but yet common vantage points. In this issue you will be able to read about many different experiences and ideas that might be challenging your own perceptions. The articles range from the issues of migration in a seemingly progressive Danish society to the daily negotiations an African student undergoes in a Chinese environment.

Reflections on transgression and stability

We represent a growing international student community, therefore it is essential for us to ask ourselves which borders are the most important to be addressed in our time.

Coming from a wide scope of nations and different classes, we are separated to begin with. That is not to mention the numerous other divisions there might be among us, such as identity, ethnicity, gender, caste, etc. Among all of these, one important question emerges and remains open for interpretation: which borders do we have to cross; which to guard? We must say that an exact and very clear answers for that does not lie with us.
While we already established that capitalism was the central border-crossing phenomenon in the beginning. We would perhaps now think that this border-crossing is the central problem itself, and that more “firmly rooted” (border) societies and ways of being are better, in contrast to the fleeting and border-crossing ones, such as our present age of modernity.

But this way of looking appears absurd. In reality the problem cannot be rooted in the simplified and abstract dichotomy of borders versus border crossing, of movement versus stillness, transgression versus stability. Nonetheless, for the purpose of analytical clarity and critical reflection, these terms help to break down the problem: This means that they can be critical concepts, which can help us challenge and transgress our own borders, or the ones of the established (dis)order, whether that be conventional habits, understandings, ethics or knowledge. We have to insist on that truth which is outside what we already know or believe in. We have to insist on challenging ourselves and our slumbering societies.

Border crossing is central to all critique

Today, to insist on ethics and politics in itself, can be considered as a transgression of borders, in other words, the humanization of the social and political sphere. This means taking active choice and doing that which goes against the dominating logic of self-prominence, of strategic assertiveness and of pursuit of the (purely) individual dream – which can be termed the capitalification of the life-world(10).(11)

Here, it is important to remember that crossing a border does not necessarily mean that you have to go into an entirely different terrain; often times, it is the same part of our landscapes that are denied from us.(12)

Capitalism operates in the same way: It creates a rift in us, it takes away the best from us and dedicates it to something entirely abstract and instrumental. How many extremely resourceful, smart and innovative people nowadays from creative, industries, though in the state precarization, are not forced to negate this logic that their lives have been centered and structured around? The way they do it is often through radical movement – of border crossing – in their career, in which they say goodbye to their field or try to start a new life with much more free time on their own.(13) This example indicates how something good is being colonized by an entirely alien and autonomous force, which seems to be a driving force that operates as a center around which the individuals sustain themselves and their productive and creative processes. These creative individuals are therefore both taking benefit of these structures, and having their free individuality repressed.
This movement of the individuals trying to liberate themselves, seems to be an attempt to overcome one of the central contradictions in today’s world. But even though the subject’s change in career or lifestyle might (seem to) be radical to itself, it is often not radical enough.

**The ways forward**

While the question of how to cross (or abolish) a border still remains difficult to answer, approaching the problem is nonetheless of importance. Despite the limitations we have seen and experienced, there seems to be something pointing towards a way out of all of these problems.

As students, many of us already have experienced educational migrations, during which we might have moved along the ladders of educational institutions, travelled from rural places to big cities or even to foreign lands. In the process, we might have taken leaps beyond our mental and social limits that once confined us. However, the ability to traverse these distances, to cross these barriers can often be a matter of privilege which must be accounted for.

Isn't this a small proof that crossing borders is still a possibility? That it is still an option to reverse things for the better?(14)

**We need to cross borders as critical students**

Today, more than ever, we must follow these wishes. Without upholding it as an abstract and alienating ideal, we must regard border crossing as a critical concept.

A critical concept should avoid to fall prey to abstraction or the creation of a separate identity. The identity of border crossing cannot exist without contradicting itself(15). Instead, border crossing should be seen for what it is: a process, belonging to no one, except for those who, in the moment of border crossing, are emerged in it and transformed by it.

Border crossing is to see beyond these, and to try to see clearly despite the fog.

We, as critical students from Critical Edges, can only share a minimum amount of advice to our fellows: That we must reach out to one another. We must experiment and identify the imagined borders that have been dividing us for decades. It is clear to many of us already. But we keep falling back to upholding these imagined borders, despite that we are perfectly capable of abolishing them if we wanted.
Dreams for the future

Another aspect is the borders that we are constantly setting up to ourselves. It is our parents' voice, our teachers' voice, or our societies' voice telling us: You can not be like this.

Isn’t this the most present border for most of us? If we are women, we are taught, directly and indirectly, that we can or should not be as men, and that we should be submissive. In the end, many of us fall into believing that. This is just one typical example of other very prevalent phenomenon.

If we belong to different caste, or class, or if the so-called test results are not good enough, we are denied to enter the university. Is this what we call the free information society? Free access to knowledge? We as critical students should call for free and accessible education for everyone of us!

Only by giving access to education to everyone, we can truly say that education is free and democratic. That it belongs to everyone.

Only if everyone can access and create knowledge, all of us can become the owners of society. Let’s break the monopoly of knowledge!

Let’s open the door to education for everyone!

By Adrian Ortega Camara Lind, Adriana Escandon Meza, श्रेया उर्वशी Shreya Urvashi, उषोशी पाल Ushosee Pal, Jaganth. G., Freya Julia Madsen, Thea Pan, Doğan Balta, Lisa Trebs

Footnotes:

1. Even though this is true, a person enrolled in a university can feel borders pervading in the education system, as the common university, in the present form, is a highly hierarchical institution — this is just one example.

2. Arguing for the right for everyone to be able to access education, or enter university, is of course different than arguing that everyone is obliged to go to university. Though we wish for open and different universities, we are also critical towards how the recent years of massification of the university has deteriorated the quality and goals of education. Giving equal access to (good) education, breaking down barriers is more difficult than simply letting more people in—though this is not at all a bad thing in itself.

4. For good but also for bad as we increasingly see on the violations on nature and people by contemporary capitalism.

5. Which somebody wish to call all the “Free Market”. In reality, as most of us know, the market is not so free.

6. While the latter examples (of ideas and values) are of a different and more complex character, their deterioration nonetheless appear at the same time as we witness the development of late capitalism before our eyes.

7. Unless we have a VISA or a permission to work from home.

8. Say for example, democracy, but also ideas about the good life - and these ideas are often highly linked together with the commodities they represent. A good life is a good car, etc.

9. The banking model of education was a concept introduced by Paulo Freire, an education philosopher and activist from Brazil, to criticize the traditional way of education. In this model, students are viewed as containers for information and knowledge, teachers as the giver and transmitter. Students are in a passive position of acceptance, unable to make inquiries, discuss with the teacher, or exercise their own power to understand/shape the environment around them.

10. Borrowed from Habermas' Lebenswelt concept.

11. This of course owes to the persisting logic of protestantic capitalism that Max Weber already famously discovered.

12. We can see how this is true by looking at for instance, Israel and Palestine, Mexico and Baja California, Pakistan and India — all of these places have many geographical and cultural similarities that often strike us clearly. And we ask ourselves, how can these be two different countries, and why are we not allowed to cross? In other words, a border crossing does not have to radically affect anything else than the border in itself, which in its crossing can either be weakened or abolished.

13. In contrast, those who are able to do this are often those who have been able to save up enough capital during their often relatively highly paid jobs. Thus quitting is in no way at all an option for everyone.

14. Not that the remaining “freedom” of being able to cross some borders, is a sign of us living in a desirable world, but that these possibilities for us, should be seen as possibilities not for the individual alone, but possibilities for us students, in solidaric community -- to give force and power to the underprivileged and to do away with all the (unnecessary) borders that keeps us separated, unfree and in inequality.

15. Not that containing contradictions is in itself a problem. We would mainly like to stress that an understanding, or an attempt at understanding these contradictions are important before simply taking these values to oneself. Something that is easier said than done, but which must be a requirement for any critical thinking individual.
LETTER TO EVERGREEN

DRAFTED BY PHELAN OKSEN (USA), THEA PAN (CHINA),
EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
SEPTEMBER 18, 2018

Social justice, internationalization, and Evergreen’s mission

A proposal to advance Evergreen’s commitment to learning and co-creating across significant differences in the globalized world through the Critical Edge Alliance & Critical Edges.

Introduction by the Editorial Board

Our friends Phelan and Thea first wrote this letter together last year in September, when Phelan was teaching in China, Thea having graduated from Evergreen and before leaving for China. They have experienced a volatile phase in the US and on campus, with people winning and losing while fighting for their ideas. They, like many other students, also witnessed how Evergreen’s status as a progressive critical college has been changing and might be becoming something less than its ideals. In this letter, they wrote down their analysis of the crisis at Evergreen and a potential way forward by building strong ties with critical students and universities internationally, to strengthen and revive Evergreen’s mission so as it stays relevant to our time and enables students to build a possible better future.

We think this is an important letter to share with students, faculty, and staff in other CEA universities, as they experience internal and external struggles similarly. We hope that the CEA members can discuss the changing environments, nationally and internationally, that affect their universities and find ways forward together!
Purpose of this proposal

We are writing this proposal to you on behalf of students and faculty who wish to see more vibrant exchanges and collaborations between Evergreen and the international academic and cultural communities. We first share our understanding of Evergreen’s mission and argue that it calls for an internationalization in a globalized era. Then we explain in more detail the existing challenges, opportunities, preparations, and proposed steps to advance Evergreen’s commitment to learning and co-creating across significant differences in the globalized world through the Critical Edge Alliance & Critical Edges.

Evergreen’s mission today: Not just another four-year College:

- Evergreen was founded in a void of higher education in Washington to be “escape the bounds of tradition in order to create a new and different option” (Planning for the Evergreen archive). In response to the rapid social changes in the 60s, the founders did not want to create just another copy of the “neat and tidy” a 4-year higher education institution, but an institution that could respond to the society through its education process. Evergreen was created to evolve and innovate to meet the new demands of different times and the future, without being restricted in “any rigid structure of tradition.” While we uphold Evergreen’s core tenets around social justice, commitment to local and global social justice, diversity, environmental stewardship and service in the public interest, we need to reflect critically on Evergreen’s current practices to examine if they still meet the challenges of our current time.
- Globalization has linked all our local communities into an interconnected global community. We no longer can only focus on local systems to make sense of our societies, we must see and live beyond the immediate to understand the complex causes, realities, and problems of the global web of interconnections. As Evergreen’s recent vision goes: “Our model of learning prepares students for the way the world happens now, layering academic disciplines so students can focus on how they want to uniquely impact our ever-changing world.” In order for Evergreen’s education to be relevant to our times, it has to embody international perspectives—knowledge, theory, and practice—as well as the lived-experiences of the members of the institution and their greater global community. Adding this global lens would help enrich Evergreen’s interdisciplinary pedagogy, enhance Evergreen’s commitment to serve both a local and global community, and further enable students and faculty to grow and innovate from engaged learning across significant differences.
Beyond just faculty, students have played a powerful role in shaping the college’s spirit and life. They have taken their ideas and knowledge about the world and engaged in student activism across the world, pushed for institutional changes and creations, brought energy and activities to the campus, and created rich and authentic learning communities. When we ask ourselves, what Evergreen should evolve into in the 21 centuries, it is vital to include the young minds and actions of the students to contour and enrich Evergreen’s essence and life.

 Concerns seen by students

Some critical challenges:

- Whether within academia or without, we live in a highly divisive climate in a highly divisive world. This led to a clash between student protesters and the administration last Spring. Both liberal and conservative media latched on to these events not to understand or report them, but to use them as a tool to promote their agenda, amplifying the two sides and characterizing events dramatically. Regardless of the truth or authenticity of this reporting the result has been a devaluation of Evergreen in the public's eyes and a dip in enrollment. In a national climate where there is growing skepticism towards liberal arts education this threatens not only the school but its underlying pedagogy and belief in education that is student-centered and emphasizes the development of character and life skills as opposed to technical skills that serve only employment and business interests.

- The fate of the college is now uncertain. To continue to champion liberal arts, student-centered learning and interdisciplinary education. Evergreen needs both to reaffirm its commitment to its core values to maintain its traditional support base and to rebrand itself in order to attract new enrollment and ease the skepticism of an establishment critical of progressive education.

- We, as students, have observed that a fair number of Evergreen students sometimes experience frustrations, disenchantment, or a deep sense of confusion despite the abundant and inspiring academic programs, the creative and caring faculty, and the various academic support services. Something is lacking in Evergreen’s institutionalized learning process that could further awaken students’ sense of purpose and engage students intellectually, socially, and emotionally in the learning process. This reality hinders students to thrive in Evergreen’s unique environment or to find their path to create impacts for the public interest in a fast complex and changing world.
Evergreen’s academic programs provide less and less opportunities for students to learn about international history, culture, politics, or language. International programs have served as important windows for Evergreen students to learn about the experience, the diversity and the complexity of the world. These programs, however, have been shrinking as the faculty teaching them retire and their positions remain unfilled. This lack of internationalism limits us to only an American perspective. Even if we are trying to capture the perspectives of minority communities and cultures within America, we are all subject to the same fundamental national culture.

**International presence and minority students on campus:**

Evergreen has a small base of international students. While the school itself is small, their number seems disproportionately low. While the College has made extraordinary efforts to support and create opportunities for minority students to thrive. There are less explicit efforts tailored to the international minority students. The current reality is that international students come to Evergreen to “enjoy” the unique academic experience, and in the larger cultural context consuming the US culture. The College has little explicit processes or opportunities for international students to bring out what they could offer to the community culturally, academically, or professionally. This implies insufficient educational design in which international students could become better ambassadors of their background and facilitators for meaningful exchanges. This also means we have untapped potential for building more intentional and inclusive community that allows US and international students to engage in deeper exchanges, learn from each other, and build new understandings.

At Evergreen, even though we emphasize celebrating cultural diversity and learning from one another. There lack sufficient opportunities for students from different backgrounds to truly see each other. Such a lack of cultural encounters determines that students are rarely confronted with a situation where they can to put their words into practice and engage with individuals from other national cultures. Without this, students cannot open up to the foreign and make it not foreign, but familiar, albeit different. This engagement is necessary to overcome implicit biases and misconception.
• Beyond the interaction of members of American and other national cultures, there is the further layer of interaction between international and minority students. Just as our perceptions of other nations are colored by stereotypes, media representations and a deceptively monolithic view, international students may have little to no authentic exposure to the experiences of minorities in America. By enhancing international dialogue, we can build better understanding between ethnic groups based on friendship and shared experiences. In this respect, we have unexplored but meaningful experiences of cultural encounters which could be subject for research and education around the topic of inclusivity and multicultural education.

Opportunities with the Critical Edge Alliance

• Evergreen helped initiate and became a partner in the Critical Edge Alliance (insert link) in 2014. The CEA, at its core represents all the fundamental values of Evergreen: a commitment to social justice, student-centered learning, interdisciplinary teaching and research, and intercultural discourse. The Alliance also represents a true breadth of perspectives, encompassing a plurality of nations of radically different ethnic backgrounds, cultures and education systems from 5 continents.

• The CEA serves as the rigorous base of a global, critical academic network in which creative, experimental and scholarly research, and action-oriented projects can emerge from faculty, students and administrators. Various stakeholder at Evergreen have been engaged over the past several years trying to share knowledge, start collaborations, build networks, attend conferences, co-create curricula and engage in other experimental exchanges. One of CEA’s explicit goals is to share increase cross-campus collaborations on various levels and raise their visibility to the international community, allowing them to become trans-national collaborative ventures.

• If Evergreen faculty and students start to connect more deeply with colleagues within the Alliance, we could instigate unprecedented diversity, creativity and collaboration in terms of curricula, pedagogy, knowledge, methodology, and student participation. The CEA network is a valuable opportunity for Evergreen to embrace a global community, gain new insights on its local realities, go beyond previous limitations, open up new possibilities, learn new modes of inquiry, and find like minded comrades to work on meaningful projects. On a practical level, this means finding tested, innovative practices for institutional improvement on college level, discovering new connections for research and knowledge production for faculty, and opening to a broader world for the personal development and learning of students.
Actions and Challenges

Student-led Engagement:

- Over the course of the past two years we (students from 4 CEA universities) created a student-driven international magazine, *The Critical Edges*. Our vision is to open a window for students around the world to see and know each other through sharing experienced and ideas, as well as question the possibilities of our education and look for ways to improve it. We have established an editorial board, release schedules and meeting times. We have outreached to contributors and published and distributed a magazine both online and physically in multiple countries. In order to carry this project forward students have had to learn a great deal of project management and coordinating skills, involving collaboration by citizens with different software systems, languages, and local time zones. The act of collaborating has required of us the very self-driven skills that Evergreen rightly prides itself on instilling in its students.

Faculty-led Engagement:

- Evergreen faculty has contributed enormously through the innovation of their academic programs. They have brought their pedagogical practices and research to share with the CEA community and inspired students and faculty alike. As just one example, Evergreen’s Gateways for Incarcerated Youth has been promoted as one of the alternative approaches for inspiration on CEA’s website. In addition, there have been faculty exchanges thoroughly the CEA network through which faculty play important roles in sharing knowledge and experiences to facilitate new learning. Lastly, some faculty, although they did not participate in the conferences or exchanges, have supported students in their programs to embark on an international learning journey, or allowed them to pursue personalized learning goals that let them work with the CEA network and imitate projects.

Administration Support:

- Evergreen’s administration has demonstrated consistent and sincere support in building and promoting the CEA and its student magazine. It was Evergreen’s Dean of International Studies who helped started this Alliance. There have been financial awards for students and funds for faculty to attend annual conferences and Evergreen’s students and faculty appreciate these opportunities. However, so far there is no formalized processes that enable faculty and students to engage with the CEA network or build new paths for collaboration, exchanges, and knowledge production. Perhaps there are ideas and interests, but people don’t know how to turn those ideas into realities without institutional support.
Challenges

- At Evergreen, this alliance does not have a formal place in the Evergreen structure, has no budget and relies almost entirely on students and faculty acting above and beyond the mandate of their roles at the school. The lack of a clear budget and funding, and of official support for publicity and recognition, has created difficulties in raising awareness and involving more community members in this international venture.

- We have noticed an apparent lack of interest and motivation in international educational experiences by many students and faculty. This could result from many complex reasons. Foremost could be a lack of awareness. Students may know generally of the existence of opportunities but lack a sufficient sense for them to identify an interest or a means of financial assistance to make them accessible. Likewise, faculty may feel unprepared for the leap teaching with a global community may require. We need to make both aware of the breadth of opportunities and the financial tools to make them achievable as well as the benefits these opportunities and experiences can bring them. We need to find ways to stimulate the community’s curiosity, interest, and attention towards a broader international community and engage them in a richer, more diverse, and courageous academic praxis.

CALL FOR ACTION

Our Proposal

- We suggest the College make a commitment to providing adequate support increase CEA’s visibility among faculty and students, and to make the passionate effort of the students and faculty involved in this project sustainable. This could include an officially incorporated point person to share updates, make announcement, conduct outreach, build networks and so on. As the CEA now mandates each member college identify a student representative, creating a student position for this work would be ideal. Another aspect would be financial and/or credit support to recognize faculty/student work.
We suggest Evergreen faculty and students build an Evergreen CEA community and stay connected to the global community. Faculty, students, and the student magazine (Critical Edges) who have participated in the CEA could be the starting base of this community. Right now while there are a number of involved members there is not a regular office, meeting place or schedule of events (other than magazine publication and annual conferences). By building such an CEA community within Evergreen, members could start having more regular conversation, create shared goals, and build processes to allow for more collaborative curricular/action projects with the larger CEA network.

We suggest formalizing a process through which faculty and students could start collaborative curricula, projects, and research with the CEA network. The Critical Edges has served as liaison to a point but have not been able to put out general calls to faculty, announce events or dialogue with the community of staff at Evergreen at large in the way that we would like to. Some schools have begun to run join classes and seminars on a preliminary basis, but unfortunately thus far Evergreen is not part of them. We want to explore suitable academic processes in Evergreen for faculty and students to solicit ideas, make connections, build joint projects, get approved, and implement projects with other CEA institutions. This will also partly depend on whether the CEA also has a process for connections across institutions. So, Evergreen should coordinate with CEA to design a complete process.

What We Will Provide:

- **An opportunity for the school to invigorate its mission** and revive the creative potential of its faculty and students through discourse with a like-minded global community. with something new, novel, timely and positive opening up a whole new area of action for the school, but at the same time reaffirm all of Evergreen’s core values and enabling them to be put into practice on a hitherto unheard of scale.
- **Passionate student volunteers** to help/facilitate to identify other interested students and faculty, conduct research, build connections, engage in conversations, and suggest potential institutional processes. We hope our own costs and lost time can hopefully be offset by the grants we ourselves will be pursuing.
- **Tangible benefits** in the forms of a magazine in the short term, and an academic journal (an allowance for this has already been approved at another school), joint research on important global topics, and meaningful learning opportunities both for the students and faculty.
CROSSING BORDERS

Photo by Ryan Miglinczy. Al Ain, United Arab Emirates
The Great Preaching of Hospitality

The French University thinks of itself as fundamentally "open" and performs as such. This "openness" historically took shape in the post-68 development of the politics of welcoming, which aimed to include audiences that had thus far been secluded due to their social vulnerabilities. As such, the University's fundamental and radical openness, acquired during the second half of the 20th century, is tied to its pretense of being a space of unconditional welcoming. Indeed, the encounter of the ideal of emancipation and of this politics of welcoming would bring along a redefinition of the University. In this conception, the University would be a place for critical thought where all would be welcome, where the invisible and visible frontiers that structure our society would be challenged and deconstructed. Instead of being borders and separations, the frontiers would be blurred and resignified. Instituted partitions would become places of encounter, of crossing, places for the apparition of new “possibles”.

Thanks to its location in the borderland - in Anzaldua’s conceptualization of borderlands: a place within the borders, at their intersection, where the act of kneading cleaved identities is both creative and deconstructive -, the Open University becomes a space for emancipation. In other words, a privileged space for the questioning of borders and their crossing over. For all those whose identities are torn by borders, the University would be a place of subjectivation. Indeed, and as a result of this politics of welcoming combined with an ideal of emancipation, a certain liberty of crossing develops in the University; an increased agency is actualized. The University thus comes to think of itself as a privileged location for openness and emancipation.
Paris 8-Vincennes-Saint Denis, an heir to the Vincennes Experimental Center, is an emblem of this stance. The Vincennes Experimental Centre was founded in response to the student protest of May 68 and embodied their reclamation for what a University should be. In time, Vincennes’ heritage was transferred to Paris 8, which carried on its legacy, in Saint-Denis. Historically “open” to foreign and working class students, Paris 8 has incidentally adopted “World University” as its slogan. The phrase goes along a set discourses and institutional devices that cater to people in vulnerable situations. The University thus has a well performing disability department which provides for the students with a disability, a University diploma for refugees and since recently allows those who wish, to sign up with their preferred names and pronouns. As such, Paris 8 presents itself as a place and community welcoming to its diverse users. This welcome and the diversity in the identities of the users that it allows for, contributed fully to the progressist image of the university and especially that of Paris 8.

However, this image is to be nuanced by taking into consideration certain dynamics that are gradually eroding the unconditionally open space that the University claims to be. Through a long process of toughening of its accessibility, the University increasingly closes in on itself, and reconducts within itself the borders that dissect society. Paris 8’s openness to the popular territories that surround it is only selective as can be seen in the decision to reinforce security on campus and to heighten the barriers that enclose the University. The bag checks at the entrance, a purely dissuasive measure, allow for a control of the bodies that enter its premises. The closure of the nursery and of the kindergarten in 2002 excludes de facto numerous students who are in charge of young children. Its unconditional welcoming is also restricted by administrative constraints such as the possession of a high school diploma as condition sine qua non for the access to University education, which was not the case in the Experimental Center of Vincennes. Events such as the adoption of the ORE law (1) and the refusal of the Paris 8 university presidency to publicly take a position against the law ‘Bienvenue en France,’ (2) confirm the University’s anchoring in a national dynamic restricting the access to University to a certain - already privileged - part of the society.

(1) The ORE law: Law targeting the “Orientation and Success of the Students”, reforming the conditions of access to French University by allowing to the universities to select and order the applicants, instead of a system affecting spots based on an algorithm. This law increases the inequalities in the selection of the candidates depending on their social and geographical origins.

(2) The “Bienvenue en France” law: The governmental plan “Welcome to France” forecasts a tenfold multiplication of registration fees for non-EU students, starting September 2019. This plan is criticized as a racist and elitist measure, in total rupture with the principle of equality of access to public services.
This gradual enclosure comes along a slow yet methodical destruction of the politics of welcoming conquered in May 68 and radically questions the University’s capacity to actualize its emancipatory potential. These dynamics confirm what Derrida claimed in 2001 on the University without Condition: "This University without conditions does not, in fact, exist, as we know only too well. Nevertheless, in principle and in conformity with its declared vocation, its professed essence, it should remain an ultimate place of critical resistance and more than critical to all the powers of dogmatic and unjust appropriation." (Derrida, 2002, p.26). In spite of this destruction of its historical achievements, Paris 8 continues, up to this day, to be a center for contestation, as the spring 2018 occupations have shown. And indeed, the contradictions of the politics of welcoming of the University were revealed by the occupations of the buildings A and B2 of Paris 8.

Appendix A: Map of Paris 8 and its occupations

[Map of Paris 8 with marked occupations A and B2]
The Occupations as Radical Critiques

In order to illustrate this, we will offer a look back at these occupations of Paris 8 during the spring of 2018. At first, a part of the A building of the University was occupied by the "exilé.e.s" (3) and their allies. This occupation lasted until June 26th, 2018, date of their expulsion by CRS (French anti-riot police). This occupation answered a double aim; that of opening a space where the exilé.e.s could spend the winter instead of sleeping outside, and that of creating a power struggle with the French institutions in order to obtain administrative regularization of all the Paris 8 occupants that would demand it. In parallel to this first occupation, a second one took place within the B2 building, from beginning of April onwards, as part of the nationwide social movement against the ORE reform. Many of the occupants of the B building identified as queer and used the occupied University as a field for the theorization and exploration of queer identities. This second occupation died out on its own, with the arrival of the summer break, and resulted in the partial destruction of the facilities. The teaching staff and the administration judged the spaces unfit for use in the state in which they had been left by the occupants.

One could have expected, along the lines of Preciado’s reading of the similarity of border crossing between refugees and trans- people, that there would have been a merging of these two struggles on campus. Indeed both conditions involve a crossing of borders, whether they be of gender or national ones. Yet, despite a true proximity, both geographically and socially (activism based and interpersonal connections between the occupants), a certain impermeability of these occupations remained and needs to be questioned. That the two occupations did not converge could be a consequence of the fact that they did not share a common objective. Indeed it meant different strategies for the struggle which also impacted the spatial organization of each occupations. While the exilé.e.s had their daily life concentrated on the University grounds (with sometimes up to 150 people present on the occupation), most of the occupants of the B2 had the possibility of going back to their homes. As a consequence of this difference, the living spaces were constructed differently.

---

(3) Exilé.e.s: the use of the term "exilé.e.s" (with the dots to signify that it does not only include men) had been chosen over "migrants" as the latter is often tied to and restrained to an "economic migration" in the French media, thereby negating the interconnectedness of the causes of migrations, and the fact that these are too often incurred. As this choice was emblematic for the occupation of the A building, we decided to leave it in French in this text as well.
The difference is especially noticeable in the importance given to the dorms, rooms and private spaces in the occupation by the exilé.e.s. They reinvested classrooms as communal dorms which they then transformed into increasingly private rooms through the installation of fabric, tables and other materials to create separation and privacy. This process of nesting through the reinvestment of the University buildings and materials occurred much later and to a lesser extent in the process of the B2 occupation. When it did occur it was particularly in the form of spaces of chosen mixity (4), particularly dorms - which were seen as preferable to individual rooms for security reasons. The repartition of sleeping places except from this communal dorm on the second floor was also much more scattered in the building and did not answer dynamics of trying to build a home. Instead of building dorms and private rooms from the start, the B2 occupants rather created spaces of debate, workshops and party.

A similar diverging process occurred with the modes of organization. The A occupation was structured around a core constituted of about forty activists and/or students fully involved over time. Regardless of this core’s inner divergences, this mode of organization made getting involved difficult for people who did not personally know any core member, or who did not have

(4) Spaces of chosen mixity: spaces whose access is restricted to different groups, depending on the situation (only cis-men not allowed, only cis-hetero men not allowed).
the possibility of being invested on the long term (such an investment was necessary for the follow-ups, the assistance with administrative files and meetings, as well as medical ones, and for strategic reflection).

People outside of the core found themselves stranded in the position of merely punctual and/or material assistance. This polarization however also stemmed from the necessity of having a rapid circulation of information to face the occupier's vital logistics problems, as well as the continuous risk of expulsion. Indeed the A occupation was under the constant strain of a feeling of emergency that the B2 occupation possibly did not experience as such. Finally, this polarization was also due to the difficult communication with the exilé.e.s which de facto reinforced the centrality of the Arab or Amhara speakers. These dynamics partly explain the lack of investment by the people occupying the B2 building of the already existing A occupation. In contrast, the organization of the B2 was much less centralized, with, instead of a centralized group, a plurality of group and actors in relation - and often in conflict. The groups occupying the B building were either already established political parties, labor unions, autonomous organization or gatherings of miscellaneous non-affiliated people. The tensions between the groups and their conception of the ways in which the University should be occupied made common agreement difficult. The power relations were in constant reorganization and groups evolved over time, each focusing on a certain aspect of the occupation. The lack of oversight was at times problematic but also allowed for a plethora of different creative energies that resisted any centralization to be potentialised. These organizational difference are partly due to different questionings: while the B2 occupation saw an effervescence in the reflections concerning queer questions (a recurring practice in the University-based social movements of the last decade), the A occupation was rather faced with questions of strategies in order to best organize a political power struggle in order to obtain the administrative regularization of the occupants who wished for it. Queer questions thus remained marginal within the A building occupation, even though many of the allies present on the long run happened to identify as queer themselves.

The separation between the two occupations can also be read from a spatialized view. The campus is split in two by a highway road. The A building is on one side of this road, the B on the other. The only ways to cross over are two bridges. On each side of the bridge, different materializations of the occupations took place, oscillating between construction and deconstruction of borders.
Food storage outside the A building

Pictures of the building A occupation. Cupboard for the organization of the cooking material
While the first occupation was based on an attempt to organize to build – a power struggle, life spaces, a strategic base for fighting back, a relatively safe space, administrative files, relations, friendships, loves … - the second mainly obeyed logics of deconstruction – of the power plays within University and between the established political groups, of the essentialist gender identities within a cis-hetero-patriarchal society … This distinction also took shape in the modes of appropriation of the buildings. Both occupations were prolific tag producers but where the A building was reconfiguring the available spaces by building new life spaces, the B building was deconstructed, wall by wall (holes in walls and missing doors were somehow a recurring problem in the B building). Here a tension appears between the reinvestment of frontiers as places of creation, and as borders to be crossed in an act of deconstruction – that only too easily shifts to destruction.

The separation between the two occupations was however not absolute. A certain complementarity and hence a porosity developed over time. Faced with the lack of calm spaces and opportunity for intimacy, some of the exilé.e.s took the habit of sleeping in the B2 building. Conversely, some of the B2 occupants brought their material and logistic support to the occupation of the A building, in the transport of materials and the preparation of meals for example. The exilé.e.s also participated in the parties organized by the B2 occupants, as the latter invited them to join. Finally, a notable solidarity occurred when the threat of expulsion by the police forces, authorized by the university presidency, became increasingly serious.

Furthermore, their mere existence answered a similar dynamic of rupture. Such a rupture, by its tearing apart of the established order, allows for the appearance of the limits of the University's "politics of welcoming". Both occupations put the University's claim to be unconditionally welcoming to the test and sought to what point the University would be "malleable". This breakpoint offers a time of reflection, a space other than that dominated by the frontiers that divide society. As such, this rupture teared of frontier, revealing in its gap a world with a certain liberty of creation and where resignifying frontiers would finally be conceivable, a radical welcoming made possible. Within the two occupations, the walls were resignified: they no longer functioned as ways to separate knowledge shared within classrooms, but as spaces for the expression of another knowledge. The creativity of the tags in both occupation, as well as the work of the "Pink Committee" (whose main aim was - and still is - to paint the whole B2 in pink,) contributed to reinvest the critical space of the university and to give its back, to a certain extent, that which it is gradually eroding: its openness and its emancipatory potential.
The occupations overflowed of the administration by a welcoming that exceeded what its bureaucratic structure could allow, soon revealing a breakpoint in the bureaucratic approach of the occupation. Indeed, the presidency’s reaction was to propose an individualist, humanitarian and as such a depolitizing management of the occupations, especially concerning the exilé.e.s administrative files. In this perspective, the exilé.e.s’ paths appeared as individual paths without a relation to a certain political order instead of the plural manifestations of systemic and structural phenomenon that they are. The B2 occupation was not taken seriously by the presidency, who discredited it as an invasion of its buildings by non-students, and the creation of a deleterious atmosphere - in reference to the tags, drawings and paintings that covered the walls. Over the summer the building A and B2 were “repaired”, “sanitized” and neutralized to welcome students again in September. The methodical removal and erasure of all the traces of the occupation by the presidency too answers to a logic of depolitization of the occupation. As soon as the start of the next school year, the University proudly celebrated the 50th anniversary of its creation, without any reference to the events of the 2018 spring. Such a recuperation of the principles that underlie the Experimental Center of Vincennes in a move to revalorize the current University and to bury the memories of its recent occupation inevitably leads one to wonder in how for Saint-Denis University can still today call itself an open University, a space for emancipation? If the University claims to be fundamentally open and emancipatory, can it still pretend to a form of emancipation even though it is increasingly closing in on itself? If emancipation happens to be its foundation, can the places in which we study today still carry the name “University”? Or yet, was Paris 8 more of a University when it was occupied and that its regular mode of operation was interrupted?

Archives from the occupations

12h - AG de P8 Occupée
Amphi du bâtiment B2

18h30 - AG Publique des Exilé.e.s de P8
Salle A280 du bâtiment A

04/04 Rendez-Vous à Paris 8.
Rethinking the University from its Borders

The dynamics that determined the reaction of the University presidency in the face of the occupations are to be read in the broader context of the erosion of the welcoming capacities of the French University. The inclusion of the Habermassian concepts of "colonization of the lifeworld" and of the "demise of the public sphere" in our reasoning allows for a lecture of these developments as part of a general trend that introduces neoliberal logics of productivity, of profit and individualism in University; a true functionalization of University is occurring. A succession of laws reinforcing the borders controlling the entries in the country, in the high schools, in universities participate to this erosion of the political sphere, on a national level. Indeed the University should play a fundamental role in the political development of a country, as being a space for informal discussion on topics of shared importance. In this sense, the University would be a public sphere in Habermas' view.
On an architectural plane, this expresses itself in the lack of spaces of communal life on University campuses, which stifles the appearance of spaces of day-to-day political discussions. To a certain extent, the occupations allowed for the reintroduction of this public sphere within University. Thus, during the GAs, and throughout the day, the occupiers of both buildings were facing decisions necessitating political reflection. Between practical questions of justice, feminism, queerness, anti-racism, ecology, ... the occupiers were confronted to the necessity of critical thinking and communal discussion in order to reach shared decisions. These attempts were not always fruitful and the scission and disagreement within each occupation did not help. But, after all, is this not precisely the sign of a return of the politics and of the public sphere? Wouldn't it be in this liberty of speaking that Derrida too found his vision of the University?

“I say University" because I am distinguishing stricto sensu, the University from all research institutions that are in the service of economic goals and interests of all sorts, without being granted in principle the independence of the University; I also say "without condition" to let one hear connotation of "without power" and "without defense." (Derrida, 2001, pp. 27-28)

This comment by Derrida allows for an appreciation of the extent to which the definition of a space such as the University is questioned by its becoming at the service of interests different from those it defends as a space for emancipation. To this he further adds:

“This limit of the impossible, the "perhaps," and the "if," this is the place where the University exposes itself to reality, to the outside forces (be they cultural, ideological, political, economic, or other). There, the University is in the world that it attempts to think. On this frontier, it must therefore negotiate and organize its resistance. And take its responsibilities. Not in order to enclose itself and reconstitute the abstract phantasm of sovereignty whose theological or humanist heritage it will perhaps have begun to deconstruct, if at least it has begun to do so. But in order to resist effectively, by allying itself with extra-academic forces, in order to organize an inventive resistance, through its oeuvres, to all attempts at reappropriation (political, juridical, economic, and so forth), to all the other figures of sovereignty.” (Derrida, 2001, pp. 66-56)
The remobilization of the term "frontier" by Derrida sheds light on the particular position that the University occupies in their face. The University is both grappling with a world crossed by frontiers and their a reverberation within her. But it is also set at the frontier, the borderland between this world and the world it could be, an emancipatory world. And it is just this situation in a borderland that makes the University open. Or rather, it is by opening the frontiers it harbors within itself that the University is ever becoming emancipatory. If the questioning of the societal frontiers as set up by the University is shown to be infructuous in contrast to what the occupations have allowed for, should the ideal of emancipation of the University be re-thought? Instead of establishing itself as a place of welcome, why couldn't the University destitute itself, in order to better seek for itself in all the places of the society that could welcome it? Derrida does not say any different when he writes the following statement:

“The University without condition does not necessarily, nor exclusively situate itself within the enclosure of what we nowadays call a University. [...] It takes place, it seeks for its place everywhere where this unconditionality can announce itself” (Derrida 2001 p.78)

As such, the University is above all a becoming. It necessitates its own destruction as an instituted and closed space, in order to allow for its propagation and proliferation throughout society. Instead of being enclosed to a specific place, the University without condition would then be a rhizome in becoming of society.

---

(5) The English version of the text does not have this quote. The translation is by the authors of this text. The original reads as follows: "L’université sans condition ne se situe pas nécessairement, ni exclusivement, dans l’enceinte de ce qu’on appelle aujourd’hui l’université. [...] Elle a lieu, elle cherche son lieu partout où cette inconditionnalité peut s’annoncer." (Derrida 2001 p.78)

Boundaries can be perceived at several levels, and thus, there are several ways of crossing these boundaries. In this essay, I share two simple stories which shaped my understanding of borders.

My first experience of border crossing involves a family history of Partition of India in 1947 and its subsequent ‘uncrossing’ through technology. I come from a family of migrants who saw the place they once called home, overnight become a part of another country which they were no longer allowed to inhabit. My grandparents of both sides, maternal and paternal, were affected. They had to leave their homes, in what used to be West Punjab before independence. Their villages were now a part of Pakistan. The partition of India in the year 1947 on religious lines saw people from both sides of the newly etched geopolitical border, uprooted from their homes ushered into an unknown territory, starting their lives from scratch. 14 million people crossed the border on bullock carts, horses or even barefoot.

Tens of thousands (on both sides) could not even make it across the border, succumbing to the immense bloodbath that followed the partition. My Grandparents were teenagers at the time, in the exciting phase of their school days. Everything happened so suddenly that they did not have any time to contemplate on how this move will change their lives or of their future generations. My grandfather being the oldest of seven siblings, gave up on his dream of getting a college education and dived neck-deep into workforce to make ends meet. Years later, I was born in a divided India, in a city which my grandfather made his new home and built a life from scratch. Often, he would narrate stories from his childhood, of the vast green fields his family tended, or of the love which the community shared.
He would tell us how the neighbours would come together and cook joint meals. His stories made me curious about borders from a very early age and as I grew up, I began to constantly engage with all that bound me.

Meanwhile, my grandfather who was well into his eighties now, yearned to see the places where he once spent his childhood. Political tensions and a fear of the unknown had never allowed him to go back and now at this age the journey was nearly impossible to make. I wanted to be of help but I could not figure out how. Then one fine day while looking up images for a college project, I typed the name of my grandfather's village and ended up finding few images of 'Sargodha', the district to which my grandfather's village belonged before Independence. I rushed to him with my laptop and pointed on the screen. Born in the 1930's, decades before the first ever computer came to India, it took my grandfather a while to believe that it was actually possible to see his birthplace, thousands of miles away, from the confines of his own room.

He recognized a couple of landmarks and asked me to show pictures of a nearby locality where he attended his school. The sparkle in his dark green eyes reflected how much that moment meant to him. Crossing a physical border years ago was very painful and the ordeal is unimaginable. This time, this virtual crossing of boundary was painless. It only took a few clicks on the laptop. But it took him an entire lifetime of hard work to ensure that his grandchildren do not see the days he must have seen.

In that small moment of nostalgic 'uncrossing', of revisiting the place he came from, my grandfather's entire life looked like a series of borders crossed successfully in the end.
While my grandfather crossed a great barriers of displacement and rehabilitation, my story is that of crossing cultural and mental borders. Born to middle-class working parents in a small city in India, I had a modest but a comfortable upbringing. I worked hard in studies and managed to be on the top of my class. As a Pan-Indian phenomenon, Engineering and Medicine are considered to be the most prestigious professions and a student who scores well in high school is often expected to opt for nothing but either of these two career paths. Choices become limited and the pressure from social circles, relatives and one's own peers can get excruciating for anyone who does not want to pursue these fields. In fact, a large number of schools including mine, back then did not offer courses in arts or humanities for students. The only options we knew worth pursuing were engineering or medicine. I studied hard and managed to crack the pre-engineering exam, landing into a coveted Engineering college. I continued to toil not quite knowing the purpose of it or where I was headed in life. Completing my graduation in Mechanical Engineering with gold medal and securing a well-paid job in one of the largest automobile companies in the world, I was ecstatic. I was one of the only two girls from my batch who managed to clear the interview for that company and the entire college celebrated us.

My friends and family were all excited and so was I. But deep down in my heart it still did not feel quite right.

The coming years were a challenge as I could not relate to the 9-to-5 work hours. I was earning enough money but felt no inner happiness or contentment. It was during this time that I began volunteering for a local NGO: "Make a Difference", working for children in shelter-homes.

Parallely, I got connected to an alumna of Tata Institute of Social Sciences, an educational institution that I had never heard of before. She soon became a friend and I learned about the innovative and path-breaking courses the institute offered, different from the mainstream courses that many of my generation had grown up being aware of. In the following weeks, knowing more about TISS and its courses, I found my answer. I decided to opt for higher education in social entrepreneurship, a total swerve from the territory I had charted so far in my professional life. It was hard with the hectic schedule of my manufacturing job and a health issue, but I kept trying. I used to solve sample questions for entrance exams during the one-hour long bus ride to my office. I would spend my weekends immersed in books and study-materials. I was determined to seek a higher education. And one failed
attempt later, I managed to pass the entrance examination and secure admission into the course of my choice. If this was hard, then what followed was an extreme. To leave the comforts of a well-paying job and entering into an unconventional field was a difficult decision. My relatives felt it was the right age for me to get married instead of pursuing higher education. My colleagues felt I was taking too great a risk and urged me to reconsider this choice. I was stuck in the boundaries of societal pressure and my own mindset. After much consideration and several sleepless nights, I went ahead with my decision of leaving my job and joining TISS.

The next two years of university brought immense knowledge and interesting experiences. I met diverse people from different nationalities and ethnic groups and started working on a social enterprise to bring about sustainable livelihood for local artisans in my state. In the process, I not only developed a deeper understanding of human society but ended up exploring a newer dimension of myself. All this only happened because I could muster up enough courage (although a bit late) to overcome my own mental barriers and discover my true calling. This way, I crossed boundaries of the education system, I crossed boundaries of the preferred and unpreferred, and I overcame the fear of stepping out of my comfort zone and embracing difference.

Our stories shape our lives and these two stories of crossing geopolitical, cultural, and mental barriers have greatly shaped my life.
The concepts around borders and boundaries have undergone a tremendous change in their school of thought over the last decade. The study of borders was once considered to be a space of exploration for only geographers as the nature of borders was limited to its spatiality and linearity. It signified territories and lines and the order that it created with its existence. However, in the recent years, we have seen many other disciplines jumping in to explore the different aspects of borders and their existence. We are witnessing the emergence of complementary forms of border that depart from the norms of territorial linearity by becoming embedded into flows that can travel and be monitored continuously across space[1].

Many scholars have begun to explore the fluid and traversing nature of borders and boundaries in our everyday lives. There seems to have been a shift in thinking about borders from a rigid to a more Heraclitus ontological point of thinking that has also given birth to an exploration of the possibilities of crossing these borders. Borders do not simply exist anymore, but are ceaselessly both contested and maintained by diverse processes and practices not only by the state but also as a result of everyday forms of transnationalism, border-crossing, border-negotiating, and networking (ibid). By exploring the complexity and interplay of these diverse, often antagonistic, processes, we arrive at a somewhat multifarious understanding of borders as something very concrete and fixed, yet also at the same time abstract and fluid[2].
**Historical Borders**

Historically, creating borders in their spatial context was a process of territorializing that space to create one's own order and control. In the era of colonialism across the world, we saw the imperialists creating and marking their territories to gain spatial control. Many scholars in the field of ethnography and sociology have created works on the process of colonialization and its after-effects. It has been widely stated that due to colonialism, the idea of territory and border and control became an integral process of building a nation in the postcolonial phase. We see it in the case of Africa, then even Asia that most of the countries that shaped themselves in the postcolonial phase brought in a new idea of safeguarding themselves from any future control by creating an identity through forming a nation state, forging a spirit of so-called nationalism. The spirit however has deepened the process of othering where, there is ‘us’ and ‘them’. The result of such borders in the postcolonial phase are showing us its implications today. In the case of India in South Asia and its relation with its border countries especially Pakistan, stands testament to the creation of a false sense of nationalism and identity that has only led to a stronger division between the two sides. It is also controversial as the notion of nationalism was to create a homogenous identity amongst the population of one nation state; however, in case of India, which is a state of heterogeneous and diverse identities, the hybridity has only created more forms of othering in terms of religion, clans, caste etc. This also makes us question, who is creating these borders and for whom? Who controls them? What we might call postborderism argues that boundaries are mere artificial constructs, methods of marginalization designed by those in power, mostly to stigmatize and oppress the ‘other’ — usually the poorer and less Western — who arbitrarily ended up on the wrong side of the divide[3].

For political scientists, borders reflect the nature of power relations and the ability of one group to determine, superimpose and perpetuate lines of separation, or to remove them, contingent upon the political environment at any given time[4]. Therefore, the idea of statehood, nation state and identities have been controlled and introduced to us from the political standpoint of Western and European mindset. European (and, later, American) cultural hegemony has thus ‘written the script’ for the growth and consolidation of a global nation-state system. The model of statehood has had as its central geographical moment the imposition of sharp borders between one state unit (imagined as a nation-state, however implausible that usually may be) and its neighbours.
Previously in world history, a wide range of types of polity co-existed without any one empire, city-state, nomadic network, dynastic state, or religious polity serving as the singular model of ‘best political practice’. It is only with the rise of Europe to global predominance that an idealized European territorial state became the global archetype[5]. Part of the political tragedy of the contemporary Middle East and Africa, for example, lies in the attempted reconciliation of the Euro-American style territorial state of sharp borders with ethnic and religious identities distributed geographically in ways that do not lend themselves to it (ibid).

**Understanding Border in a Borderless World**

Many social scientists have over the times studied borders and boundaries in relation to the emergences of capitalism and a globalized world. Most economists and scholars of globalization profess that the new globalized world has given birth to a world without borders, borderless and deterritorialized. They argue that borders no more are defined by their rigid and linear existence but a more transnational nature of bordering where there is less control. For some, the notion of a ‘borderless’ and ‘deterritorialized’ world has become a buzzword for globalization[6], but it is not possible to imagine a world which is borderless or deterritorialized[7].

It is believed that the idea of the free world and globalization has led to construction of new borders and barriers that has brought control in the hands of the few powerful and the elite, creating an illusionary effect of a world without borders. As Sofia Na˚sstrom (2003)[8] puts the problem succinctly: ‘it is one thing to argue that globalization has opened the door to a problem within modern political thought, quite another to argue that globalization is the origin of this problem.’ Until political community is redefined in some way as not being coextensive with nation-state, we will be stuck with much of business as usual.

The creation of a borderless world however seems to have on the contrary created a more problematic aspect of borders where other forms of borders have come into the forefront. Alain Badiou[9] makes the overall point eloquently as follows: The fall of the Berlin wall was supposed to signal the advent of the single world of freedom and democracy. Twenty years later, it is clear that the world’s wall has simply shifted: instead of separating East and West it now divides the rich capitalist North from the poor and devastated South. New walls are being constructed all over the world: between Palestinians and Israelis, between Mexico and the United States, between Africa and the Spanish enclaves, between the pleasures of wealth and the desires of the poor, whether they be peasants in villages or urban
dwellers in favelas, banlieues, estates, hostels, squats and shantytowns. The price of the supposedly unified world of capital is the brutal division of human existence into regions separated by police dogs, bureaucratic controls, naval patrols, barbed wire and expulsions.

There is no promise that the borderless and the deterritorialized world will not fall back into the definitions and linearity of territories and spatial borders. Deleuze and Guattari (1987)[10] caution that there are always forces of stratification attempting to capture the borders in order to re-organize and reabsorb (reterritorialize) it into a serial order of like bodies. These are ‘mechanisms of capture and containment [...] that induct the outside into a system of interiority. That system consists in a grid of identities abstracted from actually existing bodies and transposed onto another dimension: from the here and now into the great beyond'[11]. Deterritorialized bodies are therefore always at a risk of falling back under the influence of organization, falling from the continual present, actualized through continuous becomings, into an elsewhere of transcendent identity structures (ibid). However, Deleuze and Guattari (1987)(ibid) also look upon the other aspect of a borderless and deterritorialized world, which is the process of bordering, the idea of fluidity across borders and as a result bring to us the concept that borders can be crossed and bridged.

The Process of Bordering

As geographers, we have traditionally understood borders (or boundaries) as constituting the physical and highly visible lines of separation between political, social and economic spaces. Only more recently have we begun to understand that it is the bordering process, rather than the border per se, which affects our lives on a daily basis, from the global to the national and, most significantly, at the local and micro scales of socio spatial activity[12]. The study of borders and its contemporary significance has moved beyond the, often too rigid, borders separating the traditional academic disciplines, drawing together geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, historians, economists, international lawyers, philosophers and political scientists[13].

Borders are not given, but are made, remade, and unmade. As such they are products, but also processes, ceaselessly practised, performed, produced, and reproduced through various bordering practices. This understanding allows us to transform the border from something that merely exists in an objective, unmediated way into a site of investigation, and to move the analytical frame from the state to the border itself[14].
They seek to provide evidence that borders are multiple, different to different people and different activities, and in doing so, they challenge the idealistic linkage between concepts of state, territory, citizenship, and identity that has for too long been inherently unquestioned. Foucault suggests that we ‘look closely, a bit beneath history, at what cleaves it and stirs it, and keep watch, a bit behind politics, over what must unconditionally limit it[15]. It means paying attention to struggles that are discordant to the codes and the language of state’s politics as well as to the norms of citizenship that disrupt the ‘hold’ borders have over people’s lives and open up new political spaces of subjectivation(ibid).

According to Foucault (1978), by understanding the process of bordering one can disrupt the hold borders have over people’s lives and successfully transcend those boundaries. As Michel Warschawski[16], in his work ‘On the Border’ suggests that the ‘border is not merely a place of separation where differences are asserted; it can also be a place of exchange and enrichment where pluralist identities can flourish. One can have encounters there that cannot take place elsewhere.’ The reality of the border therefore permits itself to be reformed or transformed, a process in which the borderland can serve as a vehicle for new interpretations.

Transcending conventional borders – both of the map and of the mind – also forces us to challenge our own understanding of the often unquestioned unity between the concepts of state, territory, citizenship, and identity[17].

**Borders as Space of Possibilities**

Borders are now commonly understood as multifaceted social institutions rather than solely as formal political markers of sovereignty. Borders are in flux, but rather than from one form to another, they are becoming increasingly multiple. They must be understood as complex and multidimensional, yet dynamic, entities that have different symbolic and material forms, functions, and locations. Borders have migrated from being mere nation state lines and have become much more diffused throughout society[18]. Borders mean different things to different people. They are not substantive but structural entities, and as such they can generate different effects in different circumstances; borders can enclose as well as relate, facilitate, and divide, and function equally well in encouraging and hindering movement[19]. The discussion concerning the nature of borders as bridges and points of interaction (as contrasted to their traditional role of barriers) is of relevance in the sense that borders can become transformed into the frontiers
(in the most positive sense of the term where people or groups who have traditionally kept themselves distant from each other, make the first attempts at contact and interaction, creating a mixture of cultures and hybridity[20] of identities[21]. At the most micro of scales, anthropologists remind us of the personal, often invisible to the eye, borders, which determine our daily life practices to a much greater extent than do national boundaries – across which the majority of the global population do not even cross once in their lifetime[22]. In the Indian context, the everyday borders that are being bridged give us narratives from the invisible, aspatial context of borders that exist in the form of caste or class or even gender. Every day we hear stories of people transitioning from one gender, or rather battles of people who have transitioned from one gender to the other or from one caste to the other, same for class and religion. These invisible forms of border reemphasize the fact that in a spatial context, borders are a social construct.

David Newman[23] in his lecture in 2006, on ‘the lines that continue to separate us: borders in our “borderless” world speaks of a narrative that concerns a tension-filled border of India and Pakistan. He talks about the gate-opening ceremony that takes place every week where the soldiers from both the sides of the country perform a well-coordinated march which is part of ritual with perfect simultaneity as they outstare each other with their vicious gazes. Upon asking how this ritual is made possible every week, he find out that twice a week, the area is closed off to outside visitors, the border gates are opened and the two groups of soldiers undergo joint training in order to perfect their technique. The absurdity of the border, as displayed in this narrative, is summarized in a short Belgium film, entitled Le Mur (The Wall), produced in 1998. Located in bilingual Brussels, a French speaker spends the night of millennium with his Flemish-speaking girlfriend, only to wake up to the bright new world of a new era and to find that a concrete wall has been constructed between the two parts of the city. He is unable to cross back to the French side and, together with all other aliens, is hunted down by the Flemish police/militia. Only when he is reminded (in a conversation with his dead father) that many borders are no more than social constructions and that they are often more imagined than real does he escape through the wall, while his pursuers, lacking this deeper understanding of borders, crash into the hard-concrete wall and are killed.

This fluid nature of borders presents to us various possibilities and potential to constitute bridges and points of contact as much as they traditionally constituted barriers to movement and communication. Therefore, this article attempts to
understand and present a conceptual context to the creation of borders and ways of creating the burden of borders into possibilities by creating a non-linear fluid space making it possible for people to cross.

References

The inspiration for the poem came as a result of the data I was introduced to while doing my research on remittance. Most of the data I found were projections and statistical predictions of the impact of remittance on both receiving and sending countries. These projections failed to capture the impact that remittance has had on me. I decided to tell my story on remittance differently as not only an outcome of poverty but as a means by which I maintain my identity as a daughter and a Sunday school teacher, albeit trans-nationally.

The message I wanted to send across to my audience and readers was that there is a deeper meaning to remittance that goes beyond poverty, inequality, and underdevelopment; and that as Africans, there is a more significant reason to our remittance: a means to feel at home even when away from home; a way to perform the duties that our culture demands of us.
Studying oceans away from home,
Cannot and should not be a piece of cake;
Families and connections left below the equator,
Unsummoned memories that sometimes to the surface foam;
Absence does not only make the heart grow fonder,
It has a way of potently clenching the heart and making it ache.

The privilege and glamour associated with studying abroad,
How easier life gets in the West; even I admit to this;
Beckons me to reach out and help those I left behind.
Through remittances, I am handed a binding cord;
A cord that empowers me to study with peace of mind,
Albeit tremendous sacrifices that hinder personal bliss.

It makes life harder than it is supposed to be,
This decision of mine to remit;
But is a person not a person because of people?
Did I not get here on the offered wings of an eagle?
So I'll suck it up even as responsibilities triple,
Even as fear and stress and deadlines threaten to cripple.

Maybe someday I will be wealthy;
Rendering the burden of helping others, less hefty.
Until then I will do the best I can,
With the little I make, I will plan;
Remember what they say about practice and perfection?
Someday when I’m rich, I can give without reservation
Because remitting as a poor student groomed me;
To lift a person to become a person for free.
The following report is mainly the product of fieldwork undertaken by Cody Hartsburg, Wang Xuecheng, and Alexander Witherspoon in December 2018:

Background

In 2016, citing Nanjie village, Huaxi village and others as examples of successful collective management, eighteen cadres in Jinyun County called for a new wave of collectivization. They circulated a formal proposal within the party and leftist circles at large. In it, they declared that reform-era policies were generally unsuccessful at alleviating rural poverty, let alone rural inequality. In response to these concerns, the authors laid out some general points for the revitalization of collective economic management in the countryside[1].

Although some local officials voiced their support and a limited discussion of the proposal has occurred on internet forums and Maoist-leaning blogs since then, coverage in the official media has been minimal and generally lukewarm. Behind the scenes, according to Zheng Lijian and another cadre, there were rebuffs from official leadership and no concrete moves to meet the points laid out in the proposal. Furthermore, of the eighteen cadres who included their positions and contact information in the proposal, only three responded to the author of this report’s inquiries in September and October of 2018.

[1] A translation of these points can be found in the full version of this report.
One hung up the phone after learning the reason for the inquiry, and another told the author to cancel the project on account of the central government’s opposition to the 2016 proposal. The third respondent, who was happy to support the author’s project, was Zheng Lijian, the main architect of the 2016 proposal and Communist Party secretary of Haoxi village.

Under Secretary Zheng’s leadership, Haoxi village has been developing towards collectivization for the last eight years. In this period, 678 of the village’s 687 households have given their land over to collective management, opting to join in the village’s array of social services. This has broadly been accomplished through three channels: The first is the village government, which organizes land use and social services. Second is a commercial cooperative, which provides employment for villagers. Lastly, there are the private companies associated with Zheng Lijian and the village chief, Zheng Chuanyong. Since Chinese banks often do not recognize or give loans to collectivized villages, Zheng Lijian and Zheng Chuanyong use these outside companies to bring in capital for the village’s various projects.

This tenuous synergy between public and private organizations has concerning implications: If something happens to the leadership that connects all of these groups, Haoxi’s entire collectivization effort could end abruptly. Keep that in mind while assessing the progress of the projects discussed below:
Housing
Back in 2016, the same year that the proposal was written, work on the first collectively-owned apartment block was still underway. As of December 2018, two blocks had been completed, and several more buildings are in the midst of construction. Villagers who have opted to join the collective have gotten to split the costs with the local government on construction and the installation of utilities that include electricity, modern plumbing, and internet.

Education
Scholarships are offered for gifted students in the village. Students who pass the entrance exam into the Jinyun County High School can receive 1000 RMB in scholarships, those who can test into "first tier" colleges receive 2000 RMB, whereas students completing master’s or doctorate programs may receive 4000 and 8000 RMB respectively.

Health
Village residents aged eighty and above receive a small stipend as well as the community outreach. 200 RMB is annually awarded to each 80+ plus resident, 500 for 90+ residents and 1000 for centenarians. Few live long enough to be awarded all of these stipends; however, each senior in the village has free access to the recreation center, which includes a library, ping pong tables, and ample seats for chatting.

Village Enterprises
Among all of Haoxi’s ventures, the farmer's market is the best established. It includes dozens of stalls, operated by a combination of local and outside producers. Unlike other aspects of the village, this market has been opened to migrant workers, as evidenced by a Guizhou snack stand ran by several migrants and several vegetable stalls ran by families from nearby villages. All vendors, regardless of origin, pay annual fees to the cooperative organized by the village. According to one vendor at the site, this fee is set by vote at an annual meeting of all vendors.

Further progress has been achieved when it comes to building the village as a tourist site. A recreation center, two fishing ponds, and a refurbished temple complex are all open to residents and tourists alike. Summer camp-like activities are arranged at these sites during the warmer months, where visitors from across the province go to enjoy the village’s relatively untouched natural environment.
Zheng Lijian additionally expressed the desire to build “red” cultural sites including a quotation from Xi Jinping and a depiction of Liu Hulan. All of these projects provide employment for local villagers.

**Conclusion**

The Haoxi Collective, if we may take the liberty to call it that, is a pale ghost of the People’s Communes that once defined the Chinese countryside. Direct democracy appears to be limited to the farmer’s market where independent vendors pocket most of the money; the market determines wages for those who work in collective projects; social services are partial and not open to every resident in the village. Most concerning of all, the patronage of a few wealthy officials remains a critical source of income for the village. These facts point to the conclusion that collectivization in Haoxi is neither stable nor complete.

However, the accomplishments of Haoxi village are sufficient to make it a rallying point for China’s new left. The village leadership succeeded in following the example of Nanjie village and others in undoing the “division of fields among households,” building collectively-owned housing and village enterprises. They did all of this within the law and without once contradicting the ideological boundaries of the Xi Jinping administration. As Haoxi village continues to expand its range of economic activities and involvement in the collectivist movement, Zheng Lijian hopes, sooner or later, official recognition and support will be granted to them and similar villages. The author of this report shares that hope.

*Full article access, please go to criticaledges.com*
CLIMATE CHANGE

Photo by: Tiziana Rigodanzo
Italiano: Demonstrators at Fridays for Future in Corso Palladio, Vicenza, 15th March 2019
HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS NOT AN INDIVIDUAL PROBLEM

HINNERK FRECH, ROSKILDE UNIVERSITY, DENMARK

Shortly before Christmas a few German media outlets discussed the problematic of wrapping paper in terms of their negative impact on the environment (1). While not directly linked to climate change, this example made me ask myself: Are there even any products left that are not potentially damaging to the climate and the environment? Almost on a daily basis we as consumers see headlines confronting us with the sad reality of the negative impact of the products we consume. Plastic packaging everywhere – threatening the oceans and its wildlife. Our vegetables and fruits - still predominantly grown under the frequent use of chemicals and travelling around the globe: polluting, damaging, sometimes poisoning. Our meat: its production consumes way too much agricultural land, water and other resources. Production and transport causing pollution again. Our travelling habits – flying and cars as a major factor of global warming. Most of us are probably aware of all this, some might be tired of reading it.

Yet, things barely seem to change. Day by day we are surrounded by bad options in regards to climate and environmental friendly consumption. For every time we go to shop our groceries, we leave the store with the whole world united in our shopping bag. Covered in plastic. Rightly so, experts in the public debates are reminding us of our responsibility to pay attention to a climate friendly style of living. But, most of us do not seem to want that. The enormous supply of climate damagers and killers suggests that there is a demand for them and we all just don’t care. The price of climate and environment friendly products are often high – the supply for them often relatively limited. The majority of products in an average Western European supermarket are not local or regional, often barely national. Neither are they ecological or Fair Trade in too many cases. And climate-friendliness is, in practice, barely paid attention to. So, is it us, the consumers that are at fault here? Us, that continue to make the wrong choices because we often prefer the cheap and problematic product over the more expensive, more sustainable solution? That is surely one side of the coin. But is it the decisive one? For that, let us take a look at Germany. A study from the German University of Göttingen (2, on German consumer’s attitudes) concludes, that around 62% of the population are of the opinion, that it is important to buy climate friendly products.
65% of the study’s participants share that the opinion, that consuming local products is important. Moreover, according to this study, the majority would accept higher prices for better products.

Further, the biennial study of the German Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt) about German consumer consciousness presents an interesting statistical picture (3). A staggering 91% of the participants would support more regulations of the market in order to protect the climate. The same percentage would support a ban of products that are climate damaging. A vast majority would support a tax on these products and the stop of subsidies going to products that are damaging climate and environment. The picture that these two studies paint is an interesting one: The demand for climate and environment friendly products seems to be there – yet the supply is limited or not affordable for many. And here, the responsibility goes beyond the individual to the governments. If humankind is serious about limiting the effects of climate change, we cannot only rely on the responsibility of the individual. As long as a flight from Berlin to Copenhagen is available from 10 € while the regular train ticket is priced above 100€, many consumers will, through their income, be forced to choose the unsustainable option. The same holds for groceries and countless other products. Often, transparency about a product’s impact is lacking completely. As a consumer, we are asked to keep track of fair trade, ecological products, climate friendly products, sustainable products, environment-friendly products, regional products and so on and so forth. The complexity of this task is enormous and as an individual one can simply not keep track of the impact of every single consumed product. Instead, governments all around the world need to step up and support climate-friendly solutions.

At least in Germany, the considerable shares of the population seem ready to support climate-friendly policy and to consume climate-friendly products. Since, once again in history, supply and demand do not seem to work out perfectly, governments need to introduce (higher) taxes on flying, cars and climate-damaging products in general. Instead, and for instance through these taxes, alternative solutions such as public transport and sustainable products should be supported. Government policy has to increase the transparency of products so that we as consumers can make actual, well-informed choices in order to make the impact that is demanded of us.
And not at least governments need to deal with climate-scandals seriously – companies such as Volkswagen in the Diesel affair need to take the consequences of their damaging behaviour (4).

Rigid policy to reduce pollution is needed. And so much more. The data presented in the 2018 report of the German Environment Agency speaks a clear language: We see tiny improvements in many areas – but backslides in others in terms of the government’s and international climate goals. To reach those – often rather unambitious – goals, the effort has to be increased dramatically. Here it is most definitely not the individual consumer who is responsible – but the government. Not only the German government has to take the initiative, this is something - and I am only repeating countless other opinions and articles and research - that has to happen internationally and strongly coordinated. Luckily, a broad and increasingly powerful movement of the young generation around the Swede Greta Thunberg and many of her fellow activists has understood this message. In times where the gap between attitudes and actions is huge, especially in politics, we can only hope that the Friday for Future movement will have the political success it deserves – and which we all desperately need.

References:


(4) The Dieselaffäre [Diesel affair] refers to the manipulation of software during the test of cars. Before approval for the market, the manipulated software showed a significantly lower pollutant emission than the cars actually had in day-to-day use. In many instances, the cars actually violated EU-threshold values but car firms such as Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz and Audi managed to cheat on the authorities using the manipulated testing software.
Tall mountains covered with trees, 
Ran beside rain-washed lush green fields. 
Tiny pebbles in the meandering stream, 
Shone like stars when kissed by sunbeams.

The scent of wild flowers filled the air, 
A swarm of variegated butterflies, a sight so rare. 
A cuckoo crooned a soulful melody, 
Perched on the branch of a deodar tree.

Earth was clad in a saffron hue, 
As trees shed the old leaves, anticipating new. 
A veil of mist gently landed, 
Every evening, as night descended.

Snow-capped mountains looked resplendent, 
The snow-covered ground appeared like white velvet. 
No sign of chirping birds and bleating sheep, 
As if the valley slipped into deep sleep.

Alas! those were the bygone days, 
Gradually, everything around changed. 
Buildings rose and mountains lay bare, 
Even the pebbles in the stream were not spared.

The earth was chipped, inch by inch, 
At the sight of destruction, Oh dear! I flinched. 
The ground was jolted by numerous quakes, 
Water gushed from crevices as the hills cracked.

The veil of beautiful mist disappeared, 
The deodars chopped, the forest plundered. 
The azure sky roared and thundered, 
Perhaps, Mother Earth was deeply angered.

The wild flowers bloomed no more, 
Once colourful surroundings turned eyesore. 
Cheerful birds and beasts abandoned their abodes, 
Or perhaps, could not stand the strong winds that blew.

Alas! The plunderers paid no heed, 
They were blinded by an insatiable greed. 
It is time that the destruction halts, 
Or the selfish beings would soon regret their fault.
A little more than a year ago, I finished a dissertation that tried to explain why we do not seem to change our carbon-intensive behavior, despite knowing so much about the urgency of climate change and the role we humans play in bringing it about. This question had puzzled me ever since I learned about climate change in 7th grade. Being enormously saddened and scared by the troubling information I suddenly possessed, I asked adults around me what we should do to prevent this terrifying disaster from happening. The message was that we should all do as much as possible to limit our energy consumption by e.g. switching off the lights when leaving a room, unplucking our phone charger when not in use, showering for less than 10 minutes, avoiding driving, avoiding flying, etc.
Being highly motivated to reduce my own as well as my family’s carbon footprint, I soon started demanding that we all followed these many steps. However, to my big disappointment, no one, not even the most knowledgeable around me, seemed keen on following the advice. I was very frustrated by this lack of action and assumed the reason was that no one else than me really cared about climate change. However, despite trying my very best, I was also struggling to live up to these requirements - especially in social contexts. This was mainly due to a fear of being labelled as a self-righteous environmentalist and a lack of motivation for entering tiring discussions about the scientific basis for claiming that climate change is human-made.

Fast-forward to my dissertation, after having read a ton of social psychology, I realized that many of our actions are guided by our desire to belong to a social group. This desire is so strong that it can even lead us to act in ways that conflict with our private beliefs. I also found some studies that had detected a widespread tendency to underestimate the climate worries of others, despite the ‘worried ones’ making up the vast majority in most countries. Having myself assumed that no one really cared about climate change, I was very surprised when I later read a public opinion study (1) showing that no less than 88 percent of Danes - including 96 percent(!) of Danish youth - believed climate change was a serious problem. A theory started to form in my head that maybe most of us, myself included, were inhibited from taking climate action, not because we did not know enough about it, or because we did not care, but because we were afraid of deviating too much from the groups we identified with. And, maybe this fear was based on a mistaken belief that most of our friends, family members, and acquaintances did not care about climate change and would think negatively of us if we started to engage widely with these issues. I concluded that to stimulate climate action, we needed to make our climate worries visible.

**The Making of The Green Student Movement**

In April 2018, I was lucky to be given the opportunity to share these insights in a Danish radio show called Klimatemomentet (2). Shortly after the episode aired, I was contacted by several people who shared their excitement about learning that there existed students out there who were engaged with climate change.
Soon, I met up with a small group of students who had already started their own climate initiative and a group of academics who were trying to mobilize researchers from all over Scandinavia to collaborate on speeding up the green transition. We all agreed that engaging the wider student body was paramount to bringing about the large-scale societal transitions needed for a more climate-friendly future.

In May, we organized a meeting for students of all disciplines and institutions who would be interested in creating and becoming part of a new inter-disciplinary climate-focused student movement. Not knowing what to expect, we were pleased to see that around 40 students showed up. Among these were representatives from already existing smaller student-led climate initiatives. After some introductory talks, the large group was split into smaller ones. In every group, we presented ourselves and shared what worried us most about climate change. For many of us, this was the first time we shared these feelings with anyone. It was an almost therapeutic experience for me to be in this room together with other young people I had only just met who openly admitted to being as terrified and frustrated about climate change as I was. We realized that our climate worries made us part of a community that had been invisible until that day. We also realized that we could accumulate all the frustration and anger each of us had carried in solitude and turn it into something productive, namely meaningful collective climate action. These realizations created an uplifting feeling of hope and excitement for the future, a feeling many of us had not felt in years.

We then discussed how we as a student movement could ensure that climate change would become the most talked-about issue in politics and among those governing our educational institutions. The most interesting ideas gave rise to task forces consisting of whoever thought they could contribute with something. We of course also devoted a task force to finding a good name for our movement. We agreed to meet every other Monday to update each other on how the work was going in the smaller groups. Over the next couple of months, our many discussions, considerations, and ideas crystallized into The Green Student Movement with some of our main aims (3) being:
Mobilizing young people in the fight against climate change and create a platform that gives young people a voice that corresponds to the magnitude of their stake in the outcome of climate policy decisions,

Ensuring that the climate crisis is, first and foremost, addressed with collective and structural solutions, rather than e.g. by convincing people they should consume in more eco-friendly ways,

Demanding that our educational institutions prioritize climate change in all major decisions regarding facilities, curriculum and the research conducted.

Going Public

Our first event was the Green One-Day Festival which took place in September 2018 after an unusually dry and hot summer. We organized the festival with the intention of creating a positive vibe around our movement and to mobilize students to the many upcoming activities we had in mind for the fall. The event started out with researchers giving talks about the steps needed for a sustainable energy transition, about how social movements have brought about political change historically, and about the importance of shifting focus away from individual consumer responsibility and onto finding ways to stimulate effective large-scale policy changes. After these talks, we had organized some workshops. One consisted of painting banners for upcoming protests. We also wrote letters to those politicians responsible for formulating climate-relevant policies – an activity that has now turned into a recurring event. A third workshop concerned ensuring a healthy social environment in a movement based on voluntary forces. Another dealt with finding ways to effectively putting pressure on our educational. After a couple of hours’ important work, there was a cheap climate-friendly meal for everyone to consume before dancing the night away to the three live-bands we hired.
We had also invited a journalist from a large Danish newspaper to report from the day. To our pleasant surprise, the report was published the following week on the front page of the newspaper’s debate section (4). This was the first time we went public as a movement in the media and it was also an indicator of how well the media would generally receive us.

**Communicating Our Message**

When we are interviewed, we often share our personal worries and anxieties related to climate change. Our intention is of course to make climate worries visible among the young generation. This personalized angle has turned out to be an effective communication tool, as it both evokes an element of conflict, which journalists tend to like, but at the same time avoids reinforcing harmful ideological divides. By focusing on sharing our own stories, we bring a fresh voice into the conversation which makes people want to listen to us. Furthermore, as a movement, we do not see our role as providers of facts about the state of the climate, as we believe others are better suited for that and as we do not think more climate facts are what is needed right now to bring about structural change. Rather, mobilizing people is crucial for creating a political awakening.

The first political activity we organized was to sit in front of the parliament building for two days in a row to ensure that politicians would take climate change into considerations when formulating policies. This turned into a tradition called the ‘weekly climate reminder’, where every Thursday morning, we stand in front of the parliamentary building together with various other climate initiatives and concerned citizens alike. Other activities have since followed. In November, we organized a debate with representatives from our educational institutions on how to ensure that the research conducted supports the fight against climate change. The same month, we also helped organizing national school strikes together with Fridays for Future. Furthermore, our recurring letter campaign has enjoyed considerable attention with some of the letters having even been published in full length in an online news media (5). It has increasingly become clear to me that the advice I got as a child that the best way of tackling climate change is by changed consumption habits, is really problematic. It easily makes us forget that we can work collectively to demand that those who have the power to change things on a large scale start taking action. Moreover, there is a lack of transparency about which consumer choices are in fact climate friendly,
which makes living climate-friendly rather cognitively demanding - especially in a carbon-intensive industrial society as the Danish one. So, although I myself have chosen to eat plant-based and avoiding planes because my personality is such that I like going ‘all the way’, I have become aware that I cannot expect everyone else to do the same. The work I have put into this movement will forever be more impactful in terms of tackling climate change than any personal consumption change I could ever make – no matter how radical and significant the change may seem. However, I will continue living like this, as it keeps my mind focused. Also, every time I run into an obstacle, I become aware of precisely what structural changes are needed to make it easier for everyone to live more climate-friendly.

What Are the Results So Far?

In addition to obtaining a solid media presence as the ‘voice of the young generation’, in December a public opinion study (6) was published showing that climate change was now for the first time on the very top of Danish voters’ agendas. It had jumped no less than five spots since last year’s survey! A political commentator called the result ‘remarkable’ and an outright ‘breakthrough’ for the green agenda. Also in December, the Minister of Climate proclaimed he would set up a youth climate council (7) to include the ideas of young people, who “are not as resistant to alternative climate solutions as the older generations and who are more inclined to give priority to climate rather than the continuation of bad, old habits”. Moreover, we are constantly being invited to participate in debates and climate-related events and festivals.

On reflection, it now seems absurd that one year ago people were surprised to hear a young person like me talk about climate change on the radio - especially after witnessing Greta Thunberg’s impressive school strike for the climate. I hope this article can serve as inspiration for everyone who goes to bed at night with climate anxiety in their bodies and who would like to turn this energy into something productive and meaningful for themselves and the world.

References

Want Change, Friend? Let’s Get Political!

Rebecca Canright
Evergreen State College
USA

America is experiencing some troubling political times right now, to say the least. Though the actions of our federal government may leave us feeling tempted to curl up in a fetal position and weep (I have been there myself), I am learning that we, as individuals, hold more power than we think. Acting together, we are a force capable of challenging the hatred, greed and ignorance that we are witnessing in our world. We truly can be the healing change we need right now. I have become fond of calling and writing letters to government officials to respectfully urge them to support environmental protection legislation (such as laws that would safeguard endangered species, our national parks and forests, and others that would increase renewable energy technologies like solar and wind power while decreasing our reliance upon fossil fuels).

I first want to acknowledge that not all human beings have the privilege to voice their opinions to their government. I respect and have much compassion for those who live in less-than-democratic nations where folks’ yearnings for change are oppressed. As someone who lives in the U.S. (which has innumerable government challenges and imperfections of its own), I am fortunate to be able to involve myself in political advocacy, and I want to support those who cannot do this however I can.

Advocating for meaningful change in the U.S. can be easier than you think. Calling your Senator or Member of Congress on the phone takes two minutes or less, and the receptionist who takes your message is trained to be friendly and helpful. Channel your inner activist! Putting ourselves outside of our comfort zone by trying new activities often leaves us feeling more confident and empowered.
Here's an example of what you can say: “Hello, I'm a constituent (and young person) asking the Senator to support land and water conservation and endangered species protection laws such as the Endangered Species Act. Can this message please be passed on to the Senator?” And don’t worry; if talking to a live person on the phone about a political issue sends you trembling under your bed covers, you can call after-hours, when no one is in the office, and leave a voice message.

Handwritten letters are even more effective at getting lawmakers’ attention. In this age of speedy, technology-oriented interaction, they demonstrate your commitment to speaking up about an issue that matters to you. Imagine if everyone in the U.S. wrote one letter and made one phone call to their legislators, even just twice a month. What an engaged, politically-effective populace we would be!

Here is one more crucial, easy way to exercise your citizen power: vote! In these politically-charged times, both in America and throughout the democratic world, it is extra important to vote for the change we wish to see in the world, while also remaining realistic. For instance, though a candidate may have a few aspects that you don't completely love, it's still worth voting for them if, on the whole, they stand for compassion, honesty and justice for our Earth and fellow human beings. If you're on the fence about voting, it might help to mull over the potential outcomes: hmm... would I rather accept this candidate's human imperfections and vote for their positive qualities, or not vote at all and possibly witness their less competent, less compassionate opponent get elected and cause harm in our community?

It's also helpful to imagine the best potential outcome: our preferred candidate gets elected! Surely in our enthusiasm we might consider contacting this person’s office regularly by phone, email or written letter to express our views and hopes on issues that matter to us. Any legislator worth their salt takes the suggestions of their constituents seriously. We voted them in, and we deserve to have our voices acknowledged.

If by now, you’re feeling peppy and zesty as a lemon about political engagement, I encourage you (if you live in the U.S. or in another country that welcomes citizen input) to take it a step further by paying your elected official(s) an in-person visit at their office. It's simple enough to call ahead and schedule an appointment with their scheduler.
Taking time from your busy life to meet with your legislator illustrates to them your deep care about your chosen issue. And do be sure to let them know that you appreciate their time commitment to hearing your perspective. It’s a great learning experience to express our hopes and concerns on, say, a local environmental issue that we would like to see addressed, or a current bill they will soon vote on that, if enacted, would benefit our community. If, after meeting with them, we learn that our legislator voted in support of our position, it’s a wise idea to call their office and thank them for their dedication to constituents like us, and it increases the likelihood that they’ll consider our views in future decision-making.

Meeting with legislators always helps me feel more confident and grounded in my strength as a young activist. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain from letting our politicians know that we care and desire meaningful change.

My good friends, I encourage us all to not feel discouraged by the current state of our world. If we’re able to, getting active in our local government, in whatever form this takes for each of us, contributes to positive and visible change. Together we are returning the power to the people!

Thank you.
TRANSITION

Photo by Xiong Liqi.
I exchanged an extreme insecurity for an extreme need for a space for self-expression. The inability to hear my own thoughts turned into a need to say them all out loud.

I moved away from my comfort zone and out into the unknown.

I escaped from a state of strong mental illness to one of strong mental balance, and back, and forth, sometimes in one day, and I’m not sure I won’t transition back — or forward.

I slipped out from inside my self-centred self into the open universe, and then I brought the universe inside of me.

I fled from relationships that held me down to loving myself unconditionally.

I stopped trying to control everything and started accepting life's continuous change, because no matter how hard I try, I can never hold it still.

I evolved from rejecting all of my emotions to understanding that it's ok not to be ok.

The soul, just like life, continuously moves.

I healed from wounds which haunted my sleep, and I kept scars which shaped my core and adorned my skin.

I learnt to trust my intuition instead of letting rational over-thinking drag me onto paths which are not the ones I want to walk. I walked on thin ice, on clouds, on quicksands. I ran.

I flew.
I Do Not Have to Worry about A Visa. Do You?

Red. It is the colour of my passport which apparently gives me the opportunity to travel the world without any worries. That leaves the imagination open for every adventure that my mind might come up with. Where should we go next? Well, it is stress-free to think about the world as being open to everyone when you have easy access to it. However, such is not the case for everyone.

At the age of 24, I have traveled to more than 30 different countries and I have never experienced being denied access to a country. Thus, I have been able to do what has become a ‘demand’ in the discourse of the labour market and politicians in Denmark – being able to travel the world to challenge myself and to find and place myself in a position where I ‘beat’ competitors for a job because I have seen the world.

The Prime Minister of Denmark even stated last year that the youth should travel and explore the world as this would be the future market for Denmark. In this sense, I have, for instance, been on an exchange program to Hong Kong, where no questions were asked about my intentions because of course I just wanted to improve my future. Well, thank you, Red Passport.

It is a paradox that as I live in a part of the world where I never have had to worry about food or security, I can travel to any destination without anyone raising an eyebrow, whereas people who hail from regions that have terrible conditions and approach the Danish border to improve their lives, they are denied entry. Really? Something seems a bit off in this construction.

When discussing transition, I understand it as someone who is on the move, the busy-bee of the international sphere, one who has a
life in a global world and someone who is about to change a setting, a life. But how does this reflect on the reality of those who are in transition to actually be able to simply just live their lives by survival? These people who are constantly on the move due to lack of security in their native countries are not counted in but are rather referred to as ‘the other’ or the refugees. But when I try to escape the monotony of school and go on exchange programs, I am far from being called a refugee and referred to as being global. The Western world seems to ignore the logic of why one would flee from everything they know to somewhere different, foreign and new, or as Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim, a German Sociologist, describes it, “in other words, why should I be poor, hungry, oppressed when people elsewhere have plenty to eat, have their own house and a motorcar, and can go to the doctor when they are sick? Why should I go on suffering here? Why not try to get there?”

I was flying back from a vacation, which I think is a privilege to have as a student, when I engaged in a conversation with two women, a generation older than me, about their relationship to travelling. One of them said that the only time she experienced being checked from top to bottom was at the Russian border. This made me think about how the discourse about Russia often includes how they are discriminating the homosexuals, foreigners and women, and also refers to Russia as being a restricted, dominant, ‘less-free’ country. Denmark, on the other hand, is miles ahead of Russia in terms of having freedom, open democracy etc. so how come we do not realize to share traits with them when it comes to discriminating people coming from other countries? People who are fleeing from war and insecurities? Parents and children seek better opportunities for a greater and better life, which we are so proud of demonstrating and portraying to the world that we have, but still, there is no way we would like to share this with anyone. It seems to me that we have forgotten that those who come to our borders, searching for help and want to establish a new life in Denmark, are also people who we can employ, who we can teach and who we can learn from. It is a paradox that we have all these opportunities for working abroad, doing development work and going on exchange, but we do not see the same benefits when it goes the other way around. This will leave Denmark a poorer place, as the country will be known to celebrate migrant restrictions and have closed borders for the humans who need our help the most.

Everything Is in A Box, But Where Is the Box for “Love?”
I have found my soulmate- it sounds like a cliché, right? But this is the reality of many people in Denmark and around the world. This also means that when going out to travel, which has, as discussed above,
quickly become a demand of the public, there is a high chance that you will find someone in the “other” world.

In Denmark, right-wing politics have increased heavily in the past few years and there have been restrictions and tightening up of rules that allow nationalities other than Danish to live in the country. These rules have varying effects, including some, as I believe, leading to wrong consequences that might result in high transition for Danish citizens.

When visiting the website “nyIDanmark.dk” to understand the rules required to get a residency permit, there are all these boxes and if you do not fit into any of them, you are no longer in a position to be considered to get a permit to live and work in Denmark. This also has an effect on those who have found their love in Denmark. I saw a commercial by Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) that portrays travellers as the future and focuses on a little girl who can travel to Los Angeles and Tokyo; the world is open for her and she can realize her dreams, whatever they might be. But what about those who just dream about a future with security and being together with whom they love? Where is the room for them? Scandinavia is known for being one of the better-functioning countries and while I believe it is true, we lack humanity when we make boxes to categorise people from other places of the world. I have found my soulmate, but unfortunately, for Denmark, he does not fit into one of the boxes, which has resulted in us moving away from Denmark – my native country, my motherland and my support for seeing the world. But, it prevents me from engaging in the same world, if it is within the Danish borders. So my life now is in constant transition between going to school in Denmark and living in Sweden to be with my family. Moreover, there is a paradox that when living abroad, you are no longer allowed to vote in Denmark, even if you still have your citizenship, which means that those of us who are forced out are not able to change the same laws. So, how are we going to change it?

Between 1990 and 2017, there has been an increase in the number of migrants by 69%, which is a lot, but when going into the details of the numbers, the majority of migrants are from the so-called Global South to the Global North. But I believe that this will at some point change. It might still be attractive to move towards Europe, but Denmark will not be one of these countries, as we are now known, globally, for being the country that forces its own citizens out of its territory just to be with the men or women in their family. It is not only me and my little constitution that is hurt, but this is also causing huge issues for families in which children who may not be born in the country are then considered “not able to integrate,” even when they are enrolled in Danish schools, speak
Danish and have no issues. This is simply to target one group of people, who are, statistically, not causing any issues. This way of political removing children or parents from their comfort and their livelihood as such is attracting criticism from Amnesty International for being against the international conventions of human rights. So, how come the Danish state can go through with this? In 2017, I wrote a project about the left-wing increase that is seen throughout Europe, with England, Germany and France as examples, which shows that the refugees or the migrants are not causing any harm in areas of crime or economy, but rather it is the discourse of the media and politicians that are causing issues. Moreover, has a Swedish article been written on how the migrants have actually given the Swedish economy a boost, so, where is the issue again?

This leads to my biggest concern, that media and politicians in the “former” good Denmark have caused its citizens to live in transition to be with whomever they choose to be with.

When putting things at an edge, the President of Syria, Bashar Al-Assad, controlled the country in such a manner that the population had to seek permission for who they wanted to marry. Are we seriously heading there, Denmark? For now, it seems like it, with all the boxes that have been created to make it difficult to be “the other” in Denmark. It is a shame and I am not proud of this change. We must make it stop.
WHAT IS INNOVATION IN EDUCATION?

FEDERICO JENSEN, ROSKILDE UNIVERSITY DENMARK

Is innovation the use of technology to teach and create new pedagogical tools? Is innovation creating different formats of studying so that students are not just receiving information but learning by doing? Is innovation giving students more influence in their education and curriculum creation? Is innovation setting the framework of education towards real problems of the society?

All of this was discussed at the Critical Edge Alliance (CEA) conference in Bogotá this June, where educators and students from the seven-member institutions as well as other universities met to discuss the topic of innovation in education. This was my second CEA conference after attending the one in Mumbai the year before, whose theme was “Higher Education for the 21st Century: Innovations in University-Society Partnerships,” in which we discussed how to create more synergies between higher education and society at large.

One of the most interesting aspects is the relation I could see between these two conferences and their themes, in that it seems that most of the innovations and curriculum changes are aimed at the need for education to be in touch with societal issues and realities and the creation of more interaction between higher education, the students and the societies they live in.

This is a good sign at least for the CEA institutions that they have their heads in reality and are attempting to understand what the needs of societies are at large and how can innovations in education be geared towards accomplishing some of these objectives. Of course, the example of technological and curricular changes however was only focused towards few students or isolated projects outside the main curriculums. Therefore, it is important that this knowledge, inspiration and conversation regarding these innovations continues and becomes a reality for most students, at least in CEA institutions.
This to me relates back to two of the highest points of the conference and stark contrast to the Mumbai conference. First, that the students and professors discussed all conference topics together and conversed in the same room for the whole conference, breaking the barrier between different academic levels and education perceptions. It should also be high on the agenda of politically minded students who are trying to gain influence over an academia that time and time again forgets that it is not only there to serve the general society, but also to stand on their own feet, thanks to the students’ curiosity, energy and motivation to keep learning.

Second, and most importantly to me, was when the students, specially through the insistence of a student from Roskilde University (RUC), were able to be recognized as a true part of CEA and were invited to attend the big planning meeting and will subsequently be invited to all the next planning meetings of the organization after a process of selecting the students who should represent each CEA institution is finished.

To me, this was the biggest innovation of all, giving the students agency in their learning and power in decision making at academic institutions should be high on the agenda of any critical group of universities. Now with the inclusion of another critical university (Paris 8) and the preparations for the new conference and other activities soon starting, I can only imagine the type of exciting products and ideas this collaboration among students and teachers can bring in the future. Therefore, the conclusion of this conference, to me, is that innovation is about collaborating and working together across disciplines and removing academic barriers and levels to create a better educational future for the society at large.
Physical transition in young girls is not a comfortable process. Especially for a girl in India, apart from the psychological trauma of seeing her body undergo numerous changes, there is the additional trauma from the many societal taboos and restrictions that are imposed on her. In this piece, I share my personal experience and views in this regard. I particularly emphasise on a phase in my childhood in which certain practices and taboos left me traumatized, lowered my self-esteem and forced me to live wishing I were born a boy for many years. Later, when I left home to pursue my higher studies, I was able to shed my apprehensions and inhibitions to a large extent.

An anecdote from my childhood goes like this ...

As a little girl, I enjoyed the freedom of playing in mixed groups (consisting of boys and girls) in my neighbourhood. From gully cricket to carrom to hide and seek, there was no game in which I did not take part. My mother, who was a working woman, would not worry about my safety because my grandmother would always keep a close watch on my whereabouts. Moreover, I received extra attention from the kids because my grandmother was the headmistress of the school in which most of them studied. I took advantage of this and behaved like a self-proclaimed leader of the group. Even in school, I was always ahead of my classmates in participating in various sports.
As soon as I reached home, I divulged about my impending death with moist eyes; however, my mother and grandmother’s reactions dazed me more. Instead of being worried about me, they burst out laughing and instructed me to stand still. My grandmother sprinkled water in every corner of the house and barred me from touching anything. My mother scurried around the house and moved the furniture. In no time, an old mattress was laid in one corner of the bedroom, an old sheet was spread on it and I was asked to occupy the makeshift bed. All the activities of the two women puzzled me and I started howling. It was then that my elder sister, who was watching everything helplessly, rushed to my rescue.

She tried to intervene but could not compete with the adrenaline rush that my mother and grandmother experienced with the mere news of me bleeding from my vagina. I was neither allowed to touch food nor water until sunset despite my pleas. However, my sister sneaked in a few biscuits and a glass of water and stood to guard me until I finished.

(1) Antakshari: A game in which one participant sings a verse from a Bollywood movie and the next participant begins with the letter or the word with which that verse ends. The chain continues with the other participants.
My mother then asked me to change into a new pair of cotton mekhela chador (2) and imparted the first lesson on how to use a sanitary napkin. The next seven days that followed were petrifying and traumatic and all the activities that revolved around me seemed downright illogical. I was furious as I was barred from attending school, which for me meant missing out on the lessons and the weekly assessment test, which would affect my yearly grades. But for the women in the family, traditions were more important than the lessons in school. It was as if my entire future was dependent on those precious seven days.

By the evening of that day, the entire neighbourhood was enlightened with the news of the school headmistress’ granddaughter reaching puberty. My little cousin brother danced with joy and even announced that I was getting married because he heard everyone utter the term ‘second-marriage,’ a synonym for young girls attaining puberty.

Women of all ages poured in till the seventh day and each one of them had a precious piece of advice to share with me. Although I don’t remember all of it, a few golden words still ring in my ears. For instance, one said, “You are a woman now. Stop playing with boys from now on.” Another one said, “Your behaviour now will determine the kind of marriage you will have in the future.” Yet another said, “You should not take part in sports from now on because it will affect your monthly cycle and there will be complications during childbirth.” For all those women in the neighbourhood, I was suddenly not the girl who played with their sons and daughters but an adult all set to bear children.

(2) Mekhela chador: A traditional dress worn by the women in Assam.
Boys were barred from seeing me and even if they wished they did not dare to because the women warned them that they would not grow moustaches if they walked into my room. But curiosity couldn’t keep my little cousin brothers at bay and they tiptoed into the room once in a while and teased me by unwrapping chocolates and ice creams in front of me and devouring them in slow motion taking advantage of my helplessness. Other than that, those seven days were a women-only affair.

While a distant aunt objected to the fact that I worked on my lessons daily, which would anger the goddess of knowledge because I touched books while I was impure, thankfully my sister backed me up and helped me keep up with the classes that I lost for a week. She even called up my friends daily to keep track of the homework and made sure that I completed it. Whenever I lost my cool owing to the number of rules and regulations that I had to follow, she calmed me down by sharing a funny story or reading a book to me.

There were one or the other ritual every day till the seventh day. I had to change into a new pair of new mekhela chador every day, wearing which was uncomfortable and unmanageable. For the first three days, I was allowed to eat only fruits accompanied by a glass of milk. Salt was prohibited. My mother, however, had no inkling that my sister kept feeding me from her plate every time she got the chance. I vaguely remember that on the fourth day, I was bathed in the backyard by a group of women with a paste of turmeric and lentils under a tomb made by tying four small banana stems.
Meanwhile, preparations were on for the seventh day, the so-called ‘second marriage.’ My mother was on her toes. Caterers were hired, a pandal (3) was set up, and everyone was busy doing some odd job or the other. On the seventh day, the morning started with women bathing me again with a paste of turmeric and lentils, which they said would keep illnesses away. The most interesting event was marrying me to a banana plant and a random woman in the group predicting that my future husband would hail from the north or perhaps south of Assam. More rituals followed by an evening of celebration. I was decked up as a mini bride. I remember my mother losing her temper when I refused to wear a gorgeous mekhela chador and don the jewelry that adorned my neck with rashes. From my misconduct, a woman from the neighbourhood even predicted that I would have a troubled marriage with my future husband.

Hence, my grandmother and many other women joined the bandwagon to discipline me. After hours of wrestling, I finally conceded. Guests (only women and small children) poured in with gifts. A big red bindi adorned my forehead and women took turns to pour oil on my hair. Then three wailing babies were placed on my lap and I was asked to feed them bananas. The babies depicted the future children that I would supposedly bear.

This followed by a game in which women smeared rice flour on each other’s faces. After hours of laughter, dancing and singing by the women folk, my second marriage ended and it was time for everyone to leave. My mother, sister, older cousins, aunts and uncles stayed up late to clear the mess. As for me, I threw away the mekhela chador and the jewelry and was relieved to slip into my pajamas after a week. I climbed into my bed and concocted a story to relay to my girlfriends the next day at school. In a week’s time, everything changed. I was no longer a part of the games with the boys in the neighbourhood. I was suddenly welcomed by the group of big girls I always wanted to be friends with.

(3) Pandal: A marquee.
I took time in picking up their conversations though. The remarks from the women around made me conscious of my body and the way I looked. I preferred to stay indoors because the bumps on my chest made me uncomfortable. I was told to sit like a lady and wear decent clothes in front of my male cousins and uncles.

In the months that followed, the days of periods were a journey to hell and back, not because I bled and was still not used to sanitary napkins but because of the mindless restrictions that were imposed on me. Although I could disobey my mother and play the rebel card, I couldn’t do the same with my grandmother because I did not want to disrespect her. Her dos and don’ts irritated me, although I kept quiet. She did not allow women in their period to enter the kitchen or touch anything. My aunts stayed in their rooms and would not emerge for four days. Food was served in the room. Anybody who touched a woman in her periods had to bathe before entering the kitchen. On the seventh day, mattresses were taken out and sprinkled with water. Curtains, mosquito nets, tablecloths, sofa covers, bed sheets, etc., anything and everything that the women in periods touched, were washed. Apparently, it was a purification process, the logic behind which I failed to understand. These events only made me bitter and I loathed myself for being a girl. I envied my male cousins who faced no restrictions at all.

School was not a very happy place either. The fear of getting a stain on the skirt always existed. And the best way to hide a stain in case one would get it was to spill ink on it so that we could escape the smirk of the boys. At least I was privileged enough to be able to use a sanitary napkin. Some girls used cloth because their parents could not afford sanitary napkins. But I don’t remember anybody openly discuss anything. Period was a hush-hush affair and it was associated with shame and fear.

It was only after I left home to another city for my higher studies that I felt liberated from the shackles of period restrictions. I graduated from an all-women’s convent college in South India, where male faculty members were almost non-existent. However, stories weren’t different even there. Although I graduated in Life Sciences, I do not have any memories of the teachers in my department discuss periods or anything related to women’s hygiene. I learned from my South Indian friends that even their families had strict rules for girls and women in periods.
Years later, while working on a project in TISS, I visited certain parts of Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra and what I encountered left me dumbfounded. I learned that girls and women in these parts have to live in small dark huts without doors called gaonkar during their periods. These huts are constructed a little away from the main house. The family members of the girls and women do not look at the women during the period days. Food is placed on a plate kept outside the hut. The girls and women in periods only come out to relieve themselves before sunrise or after sunset when everybody else is asleep. There have been incidents of girls and women being attacked by wild animals and drunk men. There have also been deaths due to snake bites and poisonous insects. And most of these girls and women use cloths during periods, which increase chances of infection. However, the initiative of a local NGO called Sparsh has been successful in creating awareness among the villagers and the tradition of gaonkar is slowly abolished. The NGO also produces sanitary napkins and distributes them free of cost among the girls and women in these areas and imparts lessons on women's health and hygiene.

What I have written above is not something that has not been debated or discussed. Efforts have been made in India to discard the perception that periods is an unnatural thing and that women in periods are impure. Many activists and NGOs have been successful to a great extent in imparting awareness about periods and women's health. However, the process of change is gradual and might still need many more years.

What makes me happy is the increase in awareness among educated women regarding this transformation in the female body. At least the women around me don't hesitate and discuss periods openly or anything related to their reproductive parts. They have shed the age-old traditions that some of them inherited from their grandmothers and do not limit themselves from going anywhere or touching anything during periods. They are teaching their young daughters to embrace the transition in their lives. I am sure that schools too are working towards imparting education on this front. Teaching young girls about periods and the changes that their body would encounter as they grow up is very important. Otherwise, it would leave indelible psychological scars that would haunt them for a very long time. More than a physical transformation, it is a psychological transformation that young girls have to go through. Hence, utmost care should be taken by parents, by teachers and by the society to make this transition as comfortable as possible.
A lot can be written on this issue and a lot has been written in the recent times. I have just shared a tradition that I experienced and which still baffles me. None of the adult women in my family had answers to my questions regarding the taboos or the rituals. It was something that had been practiced for generations. And as far as my grandmother is concerned, she staunchly supported the tradition most of her life. My mother is however afraid of imposing restrictions on me while I visit home and my aunts decided not to torture their daughters with the futile embarrassing tradition called second-marriage. Although the tradition is disappearing in the towns, it is still celebrated with pomp even today in many rural parts of Assam.

---

Illustrated by: Amrita Saikia.
Self-Actualization: Towards ‘wholeness’

As someone from a psychology background one often comes across this term being bandied about in contexts ranging from organizational behavior (Haslam Powell & Turner, 2000), psychotherapy (Rogers, 1966) and social psychology to more esoteric ones like transcendental psychology and ‘Indian’ psychology (Sedlmeir et al, 2012). However, bell hooks has given us a performative understanding of self-actualization. She situates the necessity for self-actualization in two ways – one rooted in her own quest for it where she equates real success in life to self-actualization (pg. 18), and the problematic split of mind/body and public/private in the classroom. In order to make the classroom experience more ‘engaged’ rather than disconnected from other aspects of our personality, she urges us to acknowledge the body and confront Eros, and move towards a union of mind, body and spirit (pg 18). She writes,

“Understanding that eros is a force that enhances our overall effort to be self-actualizing, that it can provide an epistemological grounding informing how we know what we know, enables both professors and students to use such energy in a classroom setting in ways that invigorate discussion and excite the critical imagination” (pg. 195).

This ‘excitement’ and critical imagination are generated by collective effort and are integral to construct education as a site of resistance. But, none of this is possible if the teachers and students do not take up the challenge of self-actualization. By this she means focus on our well-being, which can only happen if we delve into our personal histories and what brings us to the class. Shades of this are visible in Sharmila Rege’s (2010) call for opening up language in Phule-Ambedkarite-Feminist pedagogy, which emphasized, among other things, on unpacking the ‘baggage’ brought by each child to the classroom.
In my reading, I'm fascinated by the emphasis to unite all aspects of our identity and personality by consciously acknowledging them. bell hooks's commitment to and continuous mention of emotion, spirit, heart, mind and body is a vital contribution to re-imagine how theory is generated. The usage of these in feminism or pedagogy or ‘serious’ academic inquiry was unimaginable to me before reading bell hooks. This not only has ramifications for feminist and education theory but for academic practice as a whole. This is a call to really live out our lives with an understanding that ‘the personal is political’. It is not merely enough to link personal experience to existing political situations, but to draw from our lived experience to shape political discourse. This is a potential source for our empowerment and liberation. This is theory as liberatory practice.

Full article access, please go to criticaledges.com
Reflection
Almost three years have passed since the CEA students met during the conference at Roskilde University, June, 2016. It was there and then, we built a seed in our minds that we students will stay in touch, find a way to share our learning experiences, and learn from each other. Inspired by CEA’s plan to have a student magazine, we decided to make one ourselves in December, 2016. The goal then was to help CEA students learn more about their respective institutions and experiences. After a few skype meetings and communication, students from the Evergreen State College and Roskilde University released the CEA online magazine March, 2017, with only a few articles at the time. Gradually, some students from other universities joined, especially from Tata Institute of Social Science.

September that year in Mumbai when the third CEA conference took place, we published our first annual print with a collection of articles that focused primarily on education, culture, and learning on different CEA campuses. A few enthusiastic students joined us, and we formed an Editorial Board as the main operation unit. Gradually, we chose our own name: Critical Edges, upgraded the website, formulated our vision, and created a publishing structure that centers on tri-monthly focuses.

June 2018, we published our second annual print in Universidad de los Andes, in Colombia and attracted more students to join our editing team. Since then, the new members have brought in many ideas and helped the magazine grow in new directions. Our work experience has been with many achievements, and many serious challenges, including insufficient online communication, balancing different schedules, some difficulty in getting submissions, and importantly obscurity in our goals. We need more people to understand our situation and help us along our way, by guiding us, joining us, or supporting us in whatever way possible. Below we share some of our achievements and plans.
Overview of our work

These two years, the work with the magazine has taken shapes into a few sections. We will report on the progress and future goals with each section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trimonthly Focus</th>
<th>Critical Edges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bookelt + Annual Print</td>
<td>Research Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with student magazines</td>
<td>Critical Edges in Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We have formed different working teams and a rather flexible working structure to accommodate our working tasks. The current working teams look like the following, and we would like to invite more of you to build and improve our structure with us.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editorial Board</th>
<th>Editors Team</th>
<th>Project Teams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Publishing Officers</td>
<td>Contributors</td>
<td>Communication Officers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Publishing outcome

After reviewing the statistics on our website, we have found out our publishing outcomes over the past few years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Posts</th>
<th># Viewers</th>
<th># Views</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2554</td>
<td>9395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2682</td>
<td>7353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 (till May)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2823</td>
<td>5827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>8059</td>
<td>22575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of June this year, we will have published 30 articles, including our annual print, a booklet on Climate Change, many articles on various Focus topics, and on numerous other topics such as feminism movement in India and the youth political movement in Moldova. We have also diverse styles like interviews, fiction and poetry.

Student writers across the globe were the biggest pillar of strength and reason for our growth. They actively came forward with interesting articles contributing to our magazine.
This year student writers from around eight countries: Denmark, Germany, France, India, Italy, Ghana, China, United States of America and Colombia wrote articles for our magazine. The editing of these articles is constantly supported by student editors from six countries: Germany, Denmark, Colombia, Turkey, China and India.

We have found our presence in more than 80 countries around the world, through the articles we have published. So far in the year 2019, viewers from 77 countries have visited our website. The top 10 countries where most of our readers come from are shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1841</td>
<td>31.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1559</td>
<td>27.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>12.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>2.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Edges Research Initiative**

In the beginning of 2019, we initiated a new project: Critical Edges Research Initiative (CERI) with the aim to conduct research among the global student community on various topics that align with the vision of Critical Edges, thereby capturing the diverse perspectives of the student community.

This research initiative will help students globally to understand each other better as we try to explore different students’ nature/ideas/opinions on critical issues. By conducting the research, we will also form international student research groups where students can work together to design, conduct, and produce research results. Overall, this project aims to build up a global student network and create opportunities for international student research to co-create and share knowledge.

We have conducted two research projects so far. The first piloting project was on “Reading Habit of Global Students Community”.
Our second research project was on understanding the “Global Students Perspective on Climate Change”. For both, we designed surveys and circulated them among students globally. The collected data was analysed through various statistical tools. And we have published both of the full report findings on our website.

Based on the positive reception and feedback from our viewers, and the great learning experience we had, we want to develop the CERI project into an ongoing effort and invite more students to join us. We plan to 1) conduct research projects every three months in relation to the magazine’s Focus; 2) run ongoing collaborative research projects on topics decided by interested students. To do this, we will form student networks on different campuses and facilitate communication and coordination for collaboration to take place.

CriticalEdges in Action - a pilot initiative

When we were planning for the Climate Change Focus, we increasingly realized that simply voicing our opinions was not enough. We wanted to highlight and support students close to us to take action too. Our friend Asger, studying in Copenhagen University, had the idea of discussing issues on Climate Change with students in another country while the climate strike takes place in Denmark. So we took that as an opportunity and tried our ideas. It was a small online event, and many students from Tata Institute of Social Sciences joined for fruitful discussion. The student organizer, Asger, wrote a summary of the meeting that took place:

The first FriendsForFuture meeting has been held! This Friday students ... ... met and discussed their views on climate issues, and especially on the international measures that need be taken in order to change the current situation. "You become very aware of your own country’s role in curbing climate change," says Jakob, one of the Danish participants. One critical question that circulated in most of the discussions was that of who should finance the reforms that are needed ... ... These questions touch upon ability, blame and history and suggest the fundamental threshold of a global effort: It makes no economic sense for anyone to contribute, but everyone benefits if everyone does it. No answer emerged, but surely the need for more discussion crystallised.
Collaborations with other student magazines

Outreach work to individual students has been challenging to us, so some of our members tried to build connections with existing student magazines on different campuses. The past year, we have found 2 student-based publications Jingshi Xueren from Beijing Normal University, and Es-Spiegel from the University of Chemnitz, Germany, with whom we exchange articles periodically and translate them into English from Chinese and German respectively for our international audience. We are actively looking to build more connections with student magazine around the world.

Our goals and plans for future

We aspire to become the leading student magazine for critical students around the world to read when they want to learn about student actions, the conditions of other students, their educational experiences and their social realities in an authentic way, or when they want to find inspiration from like-minded students, through seeing students' stories, research or examples of student action. Our progress so far is still at a nascent phase when we look at our ultimate goal, and we like to grow our base and connection with students worldwide, as well as enhance the quality of our articles, and the diversity of viewpoints from different cultural backgrounds.

Our strategies forward rely on four pillars drawing from our past experiences: campus-based network building, topic-based editor groups, project-based working groups, and a democratic structure.

Campus-based outreach

We plan to reach out to all the CEA universities and work closely with students or student magazine on each campus. Further, we would also like to build collaborations with other student magazines from outside of CEA universities.

Topic-based editor groups

We want to find many student editors from different countries who can help us publish higher quality writing in our magazine, by curating content in the area they are interested in and build writers groups.
Project-based groups (#CriticalEdgesinAction)

In addition to writing and publishing, we, as a critical student community, have realized the importance of addressing and showing direct action with respect to the many problems we discuss in our magazine. We think a good way for us to begin is to facilitate and coordinate student action in our community and network and create an action-oriented atmosphere. FriendsForFuture and CERI are two examples of the kind of work we would like to do more. We call our new initiative: CriticalEdges in Action.

A democratic structure

We want to build the magazine with every student and member who works with us, by making it possible for everyone to exercise their decision making power with existing members through dialogue and collaboration. So we constantly think of new ways of restructuring ourselves. We are also in great need for many more interested students to come join us to help with our growing variety of work and projects!

These are some of the positions where we will welcome your participation. If you've had experience or have some skills and knowledge in the following areas, please get in touch with us:

- Members to join the Editorial Board (1-2);
- Editors for different fields/topics (many);
- Illustrators / artists / photographers / graphic designers (many);
- Social media and newsletter editors (2-3);
- Critical Edges community officers (1-2);
- Website developers (1-2);
- Publishing officers (1-2);
- Student research coordinators (many);
- Writers (and contributor of other forms of content) (many);
- Local university student representatives (many).

This is the first time that we share our annual work progress with our readers and friends, and we will continue to do so in the long future. The Critical Edges students believe that we will run the magazine for a long time, for it to realize its full potential: unite critical students worldwide and become an important voice for social change locally and globally. If you see this as a shared goal, we warmly welcome you to join us and find our ways forward together!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS TO CONTRIBUTORS
2018 – 19

EDITORS
Simon Täuber, Roskilde University, Denmark
Amrita Saikia, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India
Adrian Lind, Beijing Normal University, China
Shreya Urvashi, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India
Yan (Thea) Pan, (to be) University of Oulu, Finland
Julia Freya Madsen, Roskilde University, Denmark
Phelan Oksen, Evergreen State College, USA
Ushosee Pal, Jamia Millia Islamia University, India
Dogan Balta, Roskilde University, Denmark

WRITERS
Vanessa Beyer, Germany
Aishwarya Bhuta, India
Rebecca Canright, USA
Adriana Escondo, Colombia
Mariachiara Farao, Italy
Hinnerk Frech, Denmark
Jaganth G, India
Maria Imonitie, Denmark
Federico Jensen, Denmark
Vishakha Khetrapal, India
Asger Trier Kjær, Denmark
Esther Michelsen Kjeldahl, UK
Adrian Camara Ortega Lind, Denmark
Paul Lubrano, France
Malgorzata (Gosia) Luszczen, Poland
Lucie Marraffa, France
Samiksha Neroonkar, India
Daniela Negruta, Moldova
Phelan Oksen, USA
Ingrid Twenebowaah Opoku-Mensah, Ghana
Lucien Perrin, France
Pamela, China
Amrita Saikia, India
Siddesh Sarma, India
Dr. Pramod Kumar Sharma, Denmark
Lisa Trebs, Germany
Shreya Urvashi, India
Shataakshi Verma, India
Alex Witherspoon, USA

ILLUSTRATORS
Daniela Negruta, Moldova
Rosa Nan Von Leunbach, Denmark
Emma Skov, Denmark
Shirin Ørberg, Denmark
Helen Chan, Canada
Xiong Liqi, China

ANNUAL PRINT COMMITTEE

Editing Jury
Jaganth G
Adrian Lind
Ushosee Pal
Julia Freya Madsen
Shreya Urvashi
Amrita Saikia

Design and publishing team
Julia Freya Madsen
Adriana Escandon
Lisa Trebs
Yan (Thea) Pan
Ushosee Pal
Luo Xiao, Communication University of China, China

Illustration/ Photography
Xiong Liqi, Fang Kepping, Saltfish, Wang Yifeng, Wang Ziyi, Zheng Lingxiao, Chen Kexin
— Beijing Normal University, China

OTHER HELP
Zhan Welhan, BNU, China
Katrine B. Andersen, Denmark
Michael A. Peters, BNU, China
Steen N. Larsen, DPU, Denmark
Kasper R. Eskildsen, RUC, Denmark

Collaborations
Jingshi Xueren student magazine, BNU, China
Es-Spiegel, University of Chemnitz, Germany

FINANCIAL SUPPORT
We thank The Critical Edge Alliance for supporting our website and financing this printed edition. We hope in the future more students and interested members from these institutions will join us. We also thank sincerely for all the students who have voluntarily devoted their time to our magazine over the past year.

Published on June 6th, 2019,
Copenhagen, Denmark