FORUM

Transformation of Shen Kong Borderlands

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Hong Kong view from Ma Tso Lung. PC: Johnsl.

Transformation of Shen Kong Borderlands

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*I*n August 1980, the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) was formally established, along with SEZs in Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen. China's fifth SEZ, Hainan Island, was designated in 1988. Yet, in 2020, the only SEZ to receive national attention on its fortieth anniversary was Shenzhen. Indeed, General Secretary Xi Jinping attended the celebration, reminding the city, the country, and the world not only of Shenzhen's pioneering contributions to building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, but also that the 'construction of the Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macau Greater Bay Area is a major national development strategy, and Shenzhen is an important engine for the construction of the Greater Bay Area' (Xi 2020). Against this larger background, many interpreted the General Secretary's celebration of Shenzhen as putting Hong Kong in its place, so to speak; Hong Kong may have contributed to the SEZ's development, but the region's future is being shaped in and through Shenzhen.

This forum offers historical and ethnographic accounts of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong borderlands as sites where cross-border policies, situations, and aspirations continue to inform and transform everyday life. In political documents, newspaper articles, and the names of businesses, Shenzhen–Hong Kong is shortened to 'Shen Kong' (深港), suturing the cities together as specific, yet diverse, socio-technical formations built on complex legacies of colonial occupation and Cold War flare-ups, checkpoints and boundaries, quasi-legal business opportunities, and cross-border peregrinations. The following essays show how, set against its changing cultural meanings and sifting of social orders, the border is continuously redeployed and exported as a mobile imaginary while it is experienced as an everyday materiality. Taken together, the articles compel us to consider how borders and border protocols have been critical to Shenzhen's success over the past four decades. Indeed, we would argue, Shenzhen succeeds to the extent that it remains a liminal space of passage and transformation. As the Greater Bay Area once again remakes the region's cultural geography, the stories and voices herein provide food for speculative thought about today's Pearl River Delta, between and within China's domestic and international borders. ∎

HONG KONG EXTENSION

Reproduction of the Map attached to the Convention between Great Britain and China signed at Peking on the 9th of June 1898

北

灣州深
Deep Bay

大鵬灣

Mirs Bay

Toto Harbour

Castle Peak Bay

Port Shelter

龍九

東

海

HONG KONG

香港

Lantao

113° 52' E. Long

114° 30' E. Long

22° 9' N. Lat
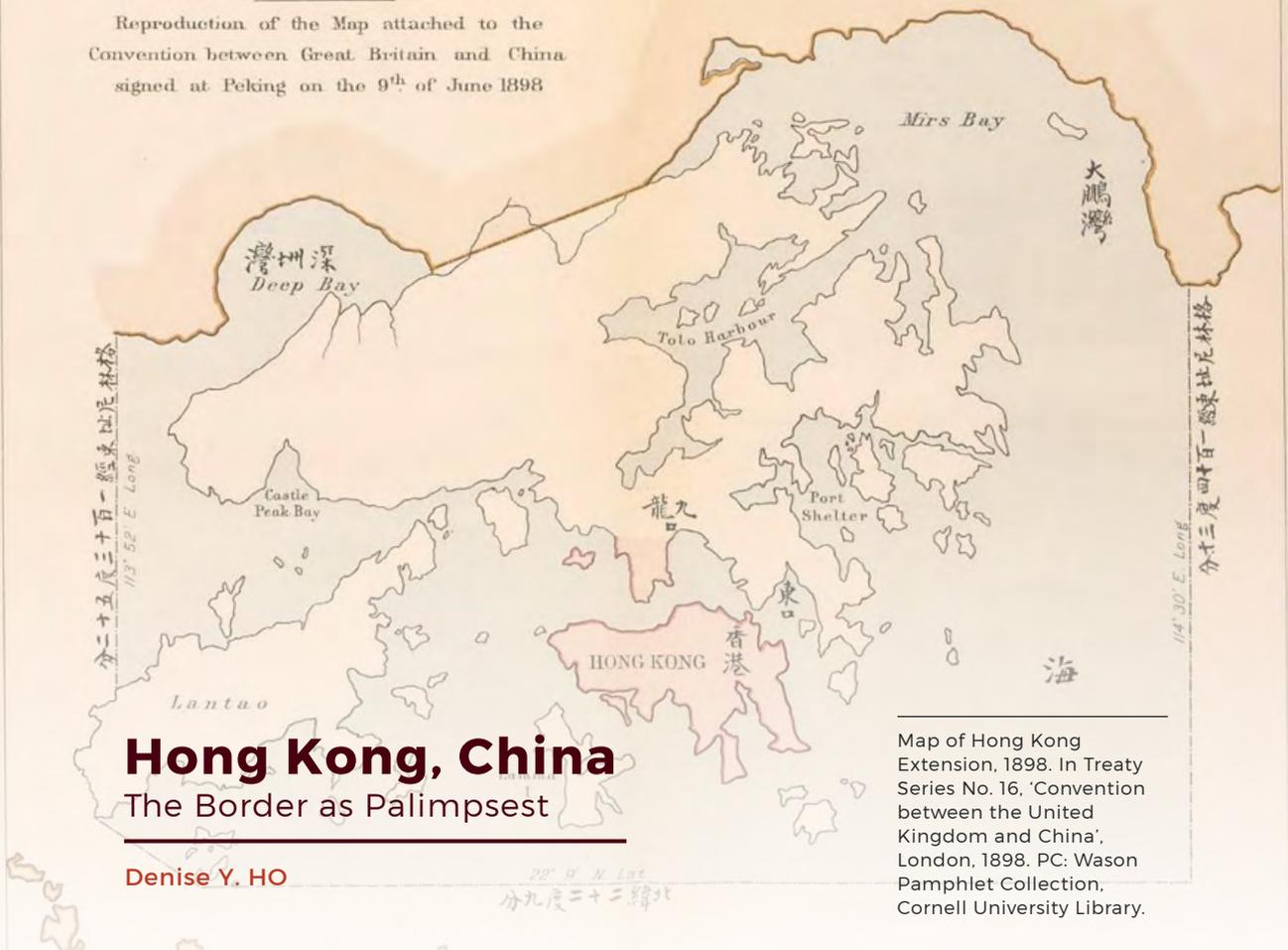
Hong Kong, China
The Border as Palimpsest

Denise Y. HO

Map of Hong Kong Extension, 1898. In Treaty Series No. 16, 'Convention between the United Kingdom and China', London, 1898. PC: Wason Pamphlet Collection, Cornell University Library.

I n the late morning of 11 March 1899, Hong Kong's Colonial Secretary James Stewart Lockhart and Huang Zongxin, a representative of the Governor General at Canton in China's Guangdong Province, met in Lockhart's council chamber. Both men produced maps of China's Xin'an (新安) County as guides to their discussion of the boundaries of the New Territories—an extension of colonial Hong Kong into China's mainland. Unlike Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula, ceded in 1842 and 1860, respectively, as a result of the Opium Wars, the New Territories were leased in 1898 for a period of 99 years. But the 1898 treaty left the exact border to be determined. At this meeting and one following, Huang was concerned with technicalities of governance, like the collection of taxes and rents, the pursuit

of pirates in territorial waters, and the location of customs stations. Lockhart, by contrast, was interested in maximising British territory. He proposed a boundary line that would not only join Mirs Bay (大鵬湾) to the east and Deep Bay (后海湾, today 深圳湾) to the west, but also extend north of the Shenzhen River and encompass the market towns of Shenzhen (深圳) and Shatoujiao (沙头角) (Colonial Office 1898–1900: 118–22).

But when Lockhart and Huang concluded their negotiations, the British did not receive any more of Xin'an County, nor did they gain Shenzhen as a strategic base (Colonial Office 1898–1900: 32–33, 130–31). The Hong Kong–China border was established as the maritime high-tide mark in each bay, the Shenzhen River and its banks, and a remote frontier with

numbered stones marking the 'Anglo-Chinese Boundary'. Two important understandings underlay the demarcation: that roads and waters were to remain accessible to inhabitants on both sides, and that the British would respect local customs and property (Colonial Office 1898–1900: 132–34).

Over its 99-year history and into the present day, the border witnessed dramatic political change. Beginning as a boundary between the British Empire and the Manchu Qing, the Hong Kong–China border went on to divide a waning imperial redoubt and Nationalist and later Communist China. With the 1997 Handover, it finally became an internal border, separating the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. Throughout, the boundary has been both physical and imagined, though even the physical border could shift with the silting of waters and the rebuilding of fences. The border was once open and later militarised, with barbed wire and restricted zones. While local residents contended with its materiality, people across Hong Kong and in Xin'an—later Bao'an (宝安)—County still lived with the imagination of it, especially those with cross-border families. For those living on either side, the border was a liminal zone spatially and temporally, always due to return to Chinese territory.

International Boundary

Long before Lockhart and Huang marked the 1898 boundary, Hong Kong was already a node in international trading systems, serving as a conduit for Britain's China trade as well as a channel for regional trade between North and South China, and between China and Southeast Asia. Historian Elizabeth Sinn describes Hong Kong as a 'space of flow', linking China with what she calls the 'Cantonese Pacific', sending thousands of emigrants to seek their fortunes in Californian goldmines and later receiving their bones for hometown burials (2013: 11, 47–50).

The lease of the New Territories accelerated the development of transportation networks, culminating in the building of the Kowloon–Canton Railway, with the British section opening in 1910 and the Chinese section in 1911 (Colonial Office 1907). A 1923 Chinese travel guide traces the railway journey, with the products for sale at each station revealing the modest agricultural communities that lined its path. On the Chinese side, Shenzhen's market town offered sugarcane, birdseed, pears, dried oysters, and peanuts. On the British side, Sheung Shui station exported salt fish for bean cakes and miscellaneous goods (*Traveller's Guide to the Kowloon–Canton Railway* 1923: 535–36). Though Bao'an County never had Hong Kong's stature as an international port, it had numerous ferry routes that connected to Hong Kong, linked further up the Pearl River to Dongguan and Guangzhou, and brought in agricultural products from Huiyang and environs. On the eve of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the county had three main public roads, with two more under construction and two in the planning stages (Department of Agriculture, Zhongshan National University 1937: 4–5). While people living along the physical border—like those in the divided village of Shatoujiao/Sha Tau Kok—endured the burden and expense of customs posts, others across Hong Kong and China benefited from the affordances of the border: the movement of people, goods, remittances, and more (Hase 1993: 157–61).

The Hong Kong–China border was thus a gateway for trade and migration. Between the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and the Japanese occupation in 1941, Hong Kong's population grew from 500,000 to 1.5 million (Faure 1997: 149). Hong Kong's relative stability during China's warlord period—before the establishment of the Nationalist government in 1927—coupled with its early industrialisation, made it a draw for Chinese labour, from men for its shipping industry to women in service work. The mobility of cross-border labour became evident in the seamen's strikes of the 1920s, when protests against British imperialism linked Hong Kong's

Chinese Seamen's Union with Chinese unions and the government in Guangdong. First in 1922 and then in 1925, striking Hong Kong workers simply crossed the border to China, where they had the opportunity to organise and rally public opinion (Tsin 2003: 78–80; Faure 1997: 166–74). But it was Japan's invasion of China in 1937 that caused Hong Kong's population to swell with wartime migrants, filling government-run refugee camps and straining the food supply. After Hong Kong fell to the Japanese on Christmas Day 1941, some refugees chose to return to China and crossed the border in the other direction. Ubiquitous in oral histories recorded in both Hong Kong and China are tales of flight, on foot and by boat. The oystermen who worked both sides of Deep Bay, for example, recall fleeing Shajing on the Chinese coast for Lau Fau Shan (罗浮山) on the Hong Kong side, returning like the tides after the Japanese passed through (Bai 2012: 27, 39–40).

As an international boundary, the Hong Kong–China border was both bounded and traversed by Chinese politics. Revolutionaries like China's 'founding father' Sun Yat-sen used Hong Kong as a base and political platform, while warlords came to Hong Kong to seek refuge from political enemies (Lary 2005: 158–59). During and after the Japanese invasion, Hong Kong was an important site for both the Nationalists and the Communists. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), driven underground and into the countryside by the ruling Nationalists, used Hong Kong both for organising military operations—including purchasing for the Eighth Route Army—and for propaganda and publishing (Loh 2010: 58–59). Perhaps the most symbolic cross-border political movement during this period was the anti-Japanese guerilla resistance, whose area of operation stretched from the Pearl River Delta into Japanese-occupied Hong Kong, and from the rural New Territories to urban Kowloon (Loh 2010: 59–63; Chan 2009). The East River Column—about 5,000 full-time soldiers under the direction of the CCP—became legend in local revolutionary lore

(*Bao'an County Gazetteer* 1960: 78–79). While later CCP history claimed the work of the East River Column was peasant resistance against imperialism, recent oral histories reveal a patriotism that was far simpler. New Territories villager Zhang Guanfu (Cheung Koon Fu, b. 1921), who joined the Shatoujiao/Sha Tau Kok squadron in 1943 by sailing across Mirs Bay to train at Yantian, remembers: 'Before I joined the guerrillas I didn't know anything ... I knew there was someone called Chiang Kai-shek and someone called Mao Zedong' (Cheung 2011). Later responsible for teaching literacy classes and manning the communication station in his home village, he remarked that joining the guerrillas was a matter of sheer survival: 'The guerrillas weren't doing anything bad, just saving the nation' (Cheung 2011).

Ideological Line

Before the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the Hong Kong–China border remained relatively open. But with the outbreak of the Korean War and the onset of the global Cold War, the border hardened. After the liberation of Shenzhen in October 1949, direct train and ferry services ended, with the automobile crossing at Wenjindu/Man Kam To (文锦渡) closing in May 1950. Travellers going in and out of China crossed at Luohu/Lo Wu (罗湖), disembarking from the train and crossing the border on foot (He 1993: 176). Both China and Hong Kong instituted a system of travel passes required to enter their respective frontier zones, with additional exit and entry permits required to cross the border itself. On the Hong Kong side, British officials instituted a quota system, allowing 50 Cantonese into Hong Kong per day, with entry permits required of all others (Director of Immigration 1965: 1–5). On the Chinese side, permits were required to enter Guangdong Province, exit papers were issued by the Shenzhen police, and a British entry permit was technically needed to pass the Chinese border officials—

though this last hurdle could be cleared with a bribe to the Yellow Ox Gang (CIA 1952). In addition to limitations on passenger traffic, the movement of goods was curtailed in 1950 and 1951 by an American and United Nations embargo related to the Korean War, as well as by the protectionist policies of the New China (Glennon et al. 1983: 1954–63).

The border as an ideological line was reinforced by restrictions on movement and goods. The divide between Hong Kong and China also hardened in material terms, with major construction on the Hong Kong frontier fence in 1952 and then at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKRS 842-12-1). The land border was guarded, but not in a continuous line: on the Chinese side, it was patrolled by border soldiers and villagers in the People's Militia; on the Hong Kong side, policemen were stationed at border posts. There were occasional flare-ups at the border, most notably at Shatoujiao/Sha Tau Kok in 1967. But everyday life along the frontier was characterised as much by porousness as by a boundary. Smuggling was pervasive, from China's encouragement to evade the Korean War blockade to streams of commodities that crossed in travellers' luggage (Thai 2018: 244, 253–59). Farmers on both sides of the border made daily crossings to work land on the other side—for example, Bao'an County peasants worked an estimated 4,000 *mu* (about 162 hectares) of land in the New Territories (Shenzhen Museum 2014: 247). In 1961, Bao'an County's Party Committee made small-scale cross-border trade a matter of policy, permitting residents within 10 kilometres of the border to make five trips a month, with
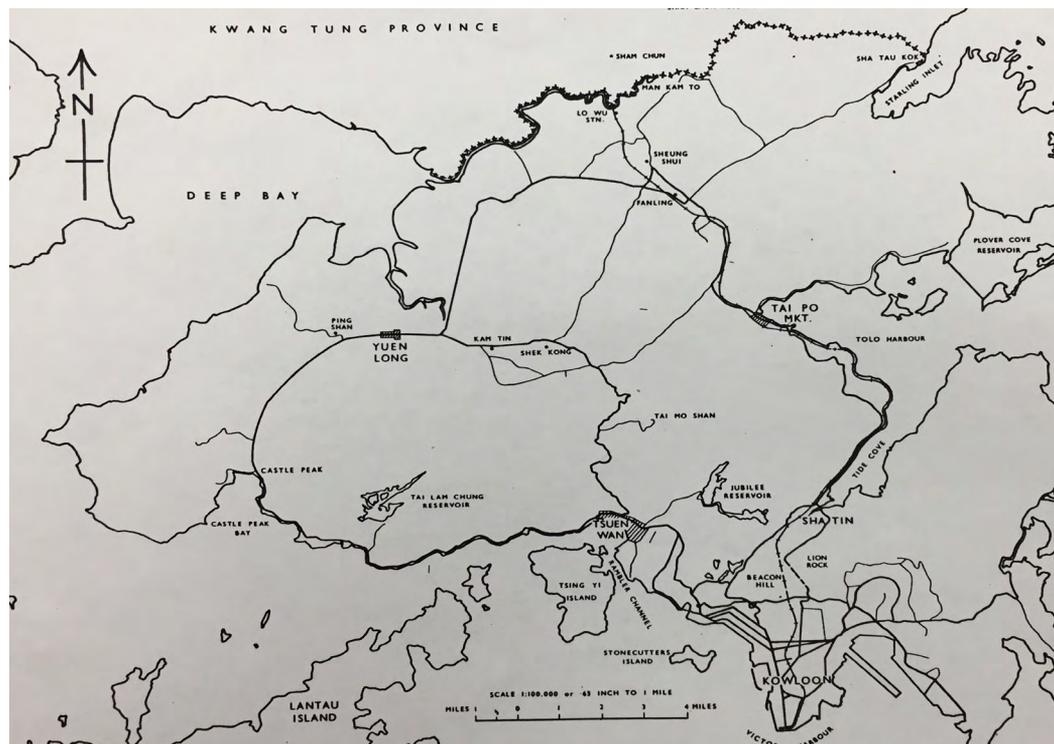
Map of Hong Kong's New Territories with border checkpoints and frontier, 1968. In *Hong Kong Disturbances, 1967* (Hong Kong Government Printer, 1968).

goods not to exceed 5 yuan in value (Shenzhen Museum 2014: 251–52). The Bamboo Curtain, like parts of the Iron Curtain, was more flexible than Cold War rhetoric allowed.

Indeed, for many whose families were divided by the Hong Kong–China border, it was less an ideological line than a bureaucratic barrier. Hundreds of thousands of people crossed at Luohu/Lo Wu every year, though regular traffic could decline in the face of China's political campaigns: in 1965–66, there were 889,249 crossings, but with the Cultural Revolution the numbers for 1966–67 fell to 565,908 (Director of Immigration 1967: 98). While outside the frontier zones it was less typical to make frequent trips from Hong Kong to China, people did travel for significant family events such as funerals. It was also customary for border officials on both sides to relax restrictions during festivals like Chinese New Year, or when school holidays permitted children to visit their parents over the summer. For local officials in Bao'an County, ties with the diaspora were channels for village investment and opportunities for United Front propaganda. Hong Kong compatriots built schools and donated goods-in-kind; a diasporic newsletter provided information on how to invest in one's hometown (*Bao'an Village Dispatch*, January 1959). At the height of China's Great Leap Forward famine, individual care packages mailed via the Hong Kong Post numbered about one million per month in 1961, with record-setting months exceeding two million (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKMS 158-1-176; HKMS 158-1-214; HKRS 70-2-217). While the customs administration focused mostly on the land border and its customs stations, the maritime border was literally and figuratively a more fluid space. Nowhere was this more evident than in Deep Bay, where oyster beds could be separated by 20–30 metres (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKRS 785-3-7), and in deep sea waters, where the Hong Kong Marine Police and the People's Militia might communicate by Chairman Mao's *Little Red Book* and together sing 'Sailing the Seas Depends on the Helmsman' (Lok 2011). Oral

histories of the Hong Kong Marine Police and the Shajing oystermen both sound a familiar note: they view the discovery of escapees as rescue—the former offering biscuits and the latter rice (Lok 2011; Bai 2012: 141).

Internal Border

While China recognised the British border of Hong Kong in official terms (Guangdong Provincial Archives 204-2-22: 27), in certain contexts it was referred to as more of an internal border and a temporary condition. For example, in official histories such as the *Bao'an County Gazetteer*, descriptions of geography opened with the acknowledgement: 'Since Hong Kong and Kowloon are still occupied [侵占] by British imperialists, our county is a strategic line of border defence' (1960: 1). Chinese newspapers criticised Hong Kong's immigration restrictions, describing them as an affront to traditional familial relationships and kinship ties (*Bao'an News*, 8 September 1956). Sometimes Chinese border guards would use such political rhetoric to thwart their counterparts. Hong Kong marine policeman Lee Fung remembers verbal battles as he tried to repatriate escapees through Luohu/Lo Wu: 'They explained that Chinese people like to do tourism in China, and Hong Kong is a place in China, so therefore we in Hong Kong should welcome them' (Lee 2011). Even during moments that could potentially evolve into international incidents, such as when the 1966 kidnapping of oystermen escalated all the way to Beijing, both the British Chargé d'Affaires and the Chinese Foreign Ministry affirmed a principle that 'border questions be settled locally' (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKRS 934-8-111). Beyond the political rhetoric that treated the border as an ideological one, the practice of the border was pragmatic: when border fences crumbled because of soil erosion, it was easier to adjust the border than to rebuild the embankment; when residents were cutting too many holes in the fence, it was better to

Map of the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and its Second Line. Courtesy of Denise Y. Ho, 2020.

paint existing holes to make them more visible (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKRS 156-1-3766; HKRS 934-6-107).

The liminality of the border and the frontier zone was reinforced by continuing tides of migration from China to Hong Kong. In the 1960s, Hong Kong's Department of Immigration estimated that about 400 to 600 'illegal immigrants' arrived monthly, with the largest influx being just over 142,000 people in 1962 (Director of Immigration 1966: 8). In 1974, Hong Kong began to require that all Hong Kong residents carry identification cards and repatriated those entering illegally. A 'touch-base' policy remained until 1980, allowing those who made it to urban areas to stay (Faure 1997: 349–50). In the years leading up to 1980, thousands fled China via Bao'an County. The Shajing oystermen describe production teams and villages where more than half the population left, recall nights when hundreds

of people stood on the shore waiting for boats, and say of the flight that 'it was like a typhoon, fundamentally you couldn't control it' (Bai 2012: 149, 284). But concurrent with the tightening of the Hong Kong border was the construction of a new and official internal border in Bao'an County—one that encircled the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone, which was established in 1980. In 1982, construction began on this 'second line' (二线), eventually creating an 80-kilometre fence guarded by 163 watchtowers and permitting passage through eight—later, 15—checkpoints (Ma and Blackwell 2017: 129; *Guide for Entering and Exiting Shenzhen* 1986: 14). From 1984 until it fell into disuse about 20 years later, the 'second line' bounded China's experiment with Reform and Opening Up, allowing those within its limits to benefit from new opportunities and barring from entry those without the appropriate passes; the 'second line' was

Map of the Greater Bay Area. Hong Kong Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau.

officially decommissioned in 2010 (O'Donnell and Wan 2017: 44). In some ways, Shenzhen residents who had long been able to use the Hong Kong–China border to their advantage could now benefit from their position between the international border and the internal 'second line'. The Shajing oystermen, for example, sold their wares on the Hong Kong side and purchased electronics and other manufactured goods, to be resold in Shenzhen and onwards to Dongguan and Guangzhou. With access to boats, navigational skills, and familial networks, they moved everything from electric wire to waterpipes, and bricks to concrete, when first Shenzhen and then the Pearl River Delta was 'one big construction site' (Bai 2012: 180, 150–51, 231, 269, 285–86).

With the creation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 1997, the boundary between Shenzhen and Hong Kong became a domestic one. Indeed, the 1997 changes tightened many of the threads stitched since the reform era, including cross-border relations at the village level (O'Donnell 2001: 423). But multiple institutions of an international border remain: a customs regime limits the movement of goods, including publications; international travellers require visas to enter China from Hong Kong; and the legal systems of each territory apply up to the boundary. Yet other innovations aided by technology blur the border: dedicated immigration e-channels speed through regular crossers, Hong Kong telecoms allow dual telephone numbers, and a 2016 cross-border investment channel links the Hong Kong and Shenzhen stock exchanges. Thus, while the physical and political-administrative border has persisted, an increased daily flow of people, objects, and ideas has expanded the zone of the imagined border. Since the era of Reform and Opening Up, anthropologists have documented cultural divides, from differences

in cross-border consumption (Ma 2012) to the anxieties experienced by cross-border families (Newendorp 2008). But as anthropologist Helen Siu (2016: 348) points out, in the past decade rising standards of living in Chinese cities have created a middle class that has more in common with Hong Kongers, laying the foundation for a cultural lingua franca. The potential for integration rests on the shared cultural, economic, and social history of the Pearl River Delta. This is the bargain of China's idea of a Greater Bay Area, which is fundamentally a political project.

Border Crossing

Yet historical experience demonstrates that borders are bridged not by political directive but by shared identities, familial networks, and mutual benefit. Chinese patriotism linked 1920s Hong Kong and Guangzhou and wartime resistance connected 1940s New Territories and Bao'an. A shared sense of destiny motivated Hong Kong students to join their Guangzhou counterparts in May 1989, with the same Shenzhen–Guangzhou train tracks serving as a site for a sit-in on 5 June (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 24 May and 6 June 1989). In the 1950s and 1960s, kinship and native-place networks provided care packages of food and remittances; these same channels were used to build factories and donate to hospitals in the era of reform. Since 1964, a material and symbolic system of mutual benefit is the East River–Shenzhen Irrigation Works, which pipes in Hong Kong's freshwater supply. However, such connections can be fragile. Unlike the 1898 proclamation to leave New Territories customs undisturbed (Colonial Office 1898–1900: 134) or the 1966 understanding to let local affairs in Deep Bay be resolved within the family (Hong Kong Public Records Office, HKRS 934-8-111), the top-down implementation of a Greater Bay Area threatens to turn the border back into an ideological one. For Hong Kong and Shenzhen—two megacities grappling with population pressures from below and political power from above—the challenge remains to create of the border a solution, rather than a problem. ∎

Landstat image of the Pearl River Delta. PC: Hong Kong Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department.
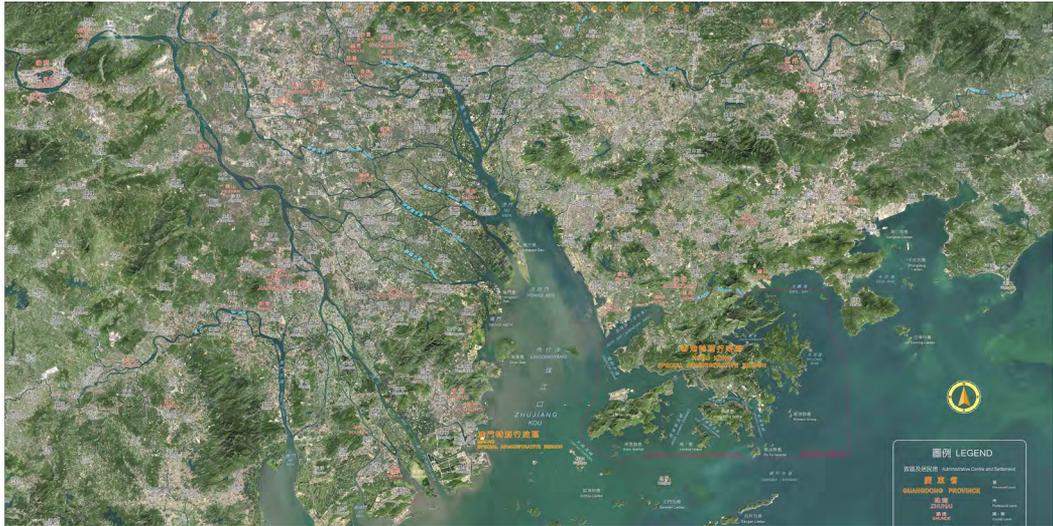
Embodied Borders

The Sino-British Maritime Frontier, 1950–1957

Alice DU Liangliang

Terror Shoals speaks of horror, the Lonely
Sea sighs in desolation
惶恐滩头说惶恐, 零丁洋里叹零丁
— Wen Tianxiang

The area that is today known as the Pearl River Delta in fact comprises two deltas, which were historically referred to as the Pearl River and the Lingding Sea. The Pearl River is formed by the confluence of three rivers, the West, North, and East. It runs through the city of Guangzhou and discharges at Humen, the Bocca Tigris. The Lingding Sea extends from the mouth of the Pearl River through the corridor between Macau and Hong Kong and ends (more or less) near Outer Lingding Island in the Wanshan Archipelago (Zong et al. 2009). Westerners may have heard of the Lingding Sea indirectly through 'Lintin Island', the common name for Inner Lingding Island (内伶仃岛), which historically marked the gateway to Guangzhou from the South China Sea. In Chinese, the Lingding Sea was made famous in the poem 'Crossing Lingding Sea' by the Song loyalist Wen Tianxiang. The poem imaginatively recounts the flight of the boy emperor Zhao Bing (r.1278–79) from Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou) to Yamen. The poem's pathos is figured by the Song's defeat at Yamen, where, despite being outnumbered 10 to one, the Yuan navy won a decisive maritime battle, ending the Song dynasty. However, the two landmarks in the poem, Huangkong Shoals and the Lingding Sea, are what suggest how northern armies experienced southern landscapes at the end of the thirteenth century. Huangkong Shoals translates as 'Terror Shoals'—a reference to a famously difficult

passage on the Gan River in Jiangxi Province. Lingding Sea means 'Lonely Sea', referring to the vast and underpopulated edges of the empire.

Five hundred years later, the Lonely Sea was no longer an underpopulated frontier. Instead, pirates, privateers, and foreign navies were competing to seize control of the gateway to Guangzhou. Coastal villages and towns occupied both coasts of the Lingding Sea, while islands and bays had been claimed by smaller groups of fishermen and boat-dwellers, who were pejoratively known as *Tanka* (蛋家). Living at the edge of agrarian society, these water-dwellers nevertheless controlled local waters and earned their living working for the highest bidder (Antony 2016). The 1898 Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory made maritime borders explicit; the United Kingdom did not simply lease territory from the Qing, but also (and more importantly) secured maritime access to Guangzhou. The convention did not, however, change the status of coastal, island, and water-dwellers, who were granted traditional water rights. During the war against Japan (1937–45) and the Civil War (1945–49) in southern China, the allied forces of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the United States relied on local water-dwellers to obtain intelligence and supply arms via ports in Hong Kong and Macau (Hou 2019).

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) rose to power on the strength of its ground forces, only forming the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) in May 1950, a month before the Korean War broke out. Unsurprisingly, the joint navies of the United States and KMT easily embargoed coastal China. Knowing that ground forces could not hold the coastline, Mao Zedong instructed People's Liberation Army (PLA) leaders:

The army must leave the coastline, stay in appropriate places to conveniently annihilate the enemy … They should train rather than guard the coastline. It is the responsibility of security teams and local armed forces to monitor spies and kill bandits. Many Communists, after fighting for more than 20 years, have suddenly forgotten their experience, building fortifications everywhere [because] they fear the enemy like tigers. (Hou 2019: 248)

Instead, another strategy—one based on CCP experience in guerilla warfare and local organising—was necessary if the CCP was to wrest control of Chinese coastal waters from the United States and the KMT. Over the next few years, the CCP would rely on its experience of land reform (in 1950–52) and the campaign to suppress counterrevolutionaries (December 1950 – October 1951) to integrate water-dwellers into its maritime defence strategy, just as peasants had been integrated into its ground war strategy. This entailed resettling water-dwellers, while blockading Hong Kong via the islands of the Wanshan Archipelago. In turn, the consolidation of the coastal frontier occurred via the transplanted fishermen and islanders. Their bodies, settlements, and labour made the Sino-British border visible, asserting Chinese claims to the coastline.

The story of Fishing One Village (渔一村) highlights how these larger processes not only transformed the cultural geography of the Lingding Sea, but also laid the foundation for the establishment of the China Merchants Shekou Industrial Zone in 1979. On the one hand, through the stories of Fishing One, we see how the so-called democratic fishing reform (alternatively known as 渔民民主改革 or 渔业民主改革) reshaped the cultural geography of the Lingding Sea. Previously, mobile 'fishing despots' (渔霸) had patrolled the water, but, after the fishing reform, boat-dwellers could no longer freely sail the seas. Instead, they worked out of fixed 'fishermen villages' (渔村), which the state could mobilise as necessary, effectively landlocking water-dwellers without giving them full status onshore. On the other hand, these stories also highlight how the region's fluid borders were first consolidated through revolutionary methods. Once the borders were secured, later development of the coast became feasible precisely because the
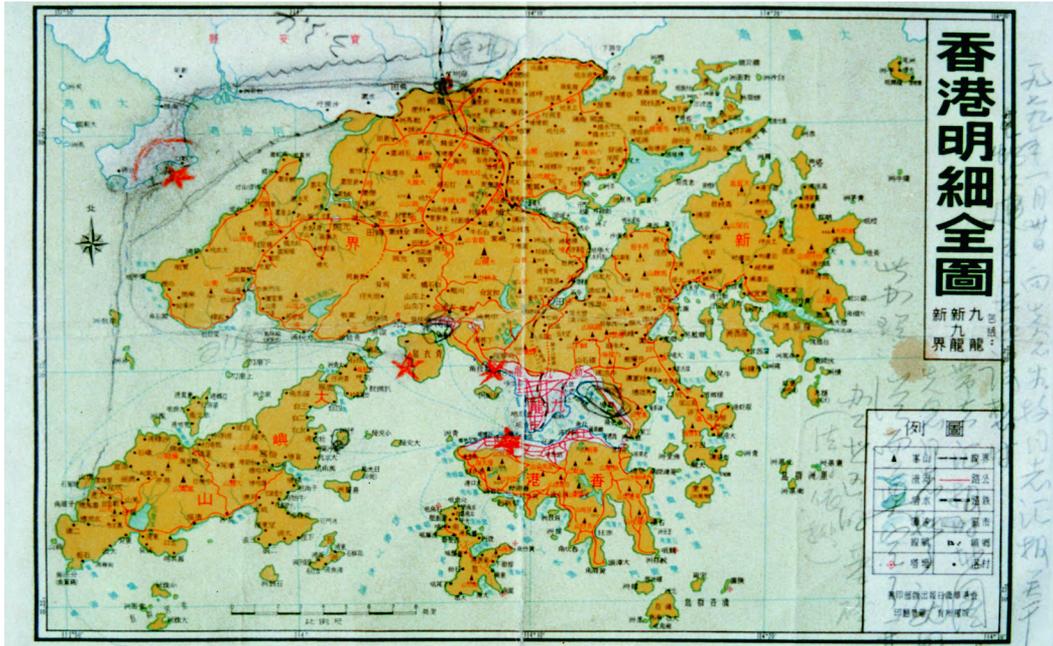
Hong Kong map used by Yuan Geng to determine the location of the future Shekou Industrial Zone. PC: Author's collection.

coastline was *de facto* located within Chinese—and not British—territory. When Yuan Geng decided to establish the China Merchants Shekou Industrial Zone, for example, the port, industrial park, and its factories not only incorporated the coastline from the high-tide mark, but also extended the coastline through land reclamation into what (at the time) were acknowledged to be British waters.

Reorganising the Lingding Sea

In 1949, the Central Committee of the CCP entrusted the task of securing China's southern coast to Ye Jianying, head of the South China Branch Bureau. The situation was daunting. More than one million people, including boat-dwellers, inhabited the coastal waters of Guangdong Province. Historically, these people had formed groups based on language and labour, enjoying relative autonomy from state oversight. Fishing reform in coastal waters (1951–54) and policy consolidation during the following three years (1955–57) allowed the CCP to occupy the southern coastline, pushing back against the historical frontier. The organisation of fishermen and territory was contemporaneous with the Socialist Transformation Movement (December 1951 to the end of 1956). Drawing on the ideas of the Agricultural Cooperative Movement, the Bao'an County Government encouraged fishermen to come ashore, aiming to enclose them within prescribed boundaries that simultaneously secured the coastline and improved the lives of the poorest fishermen. Once the fishermen were onshore, the government set up mutual aid groups, which were the embryonic form of fishermen's villages (渔民村).

In 1950, the leading organisation in Bao'an County was the Shashenbao branch of the Guangdong Military Administrative Commission （广东军事管理委员会沙深宝分会）, with Qi Feng as director. There was debate over whether islands should be administered by the Bao'an Government or by the Military Commission. Ma Lun, the Bao'an County Secretary, for example, maintained that the Bao'an County Government should only administer the territory within its land borders, while the management of waters and islands fell under the purview of the Shashenbao Committee. As a result, local fishermen's groups were not placed within the Bao'an County Government (as Qi Feng had hoped), but within the Island Administration Bureau. The two fishermen's groups in Bao'an County became the East Island and West Island offices, corresponding to the county's eastern and western coasts. That year, there were about 600 people living on Inner Neilingding Island, including more than 120 fishermen. Due to military necessity, the PLA was stationed on the island and the islanders were relocated to Shekou and Xixiang.

In January 1951, Guangdong Province set up the Pearl River District Commission Office, Island Administration Bureau, and Post Reform Management Office (珠江区专员公署海岛管理局后改管理处). Responsibility for organising fishermen's work was transferred from the Shashenbao Border Committee to the Island Administration Bureau. Jurisdiction over Inner Lingding Island, the islands of the Wanshan Archipelago and coastal islands from Zhongshan, Dongguan, and Bao'an counties was transferred to the new bureau. The Island Administration Bureau's office was set up in Tangjiawan, Zhuhai (珠海唐家湾), a coastal subdistrict (乡) in Zhongshan County. In practice, this meant that, although Inner Lingding Island fishermen had been resettled in Bao'an and their cadres were considered part of the Bao'an Government, they were nevertheless to make annual trips to Zhuhai to report on their work.

The reorganisation of previously scattered islands under one administrative entity was an important step to organise fishermen. Zhou Enlai, first premier of the People's Republic of China, and Liao Chengzhi, the Hong Kong–based official in charge of the United Front and overseas Chinese, asked the relevant departments to help fishermen establish their homes on land. Once ashore, fishermen could be assigned a political identity, land resources, and finally be organised into villages, which was the most basic unit of rural administration. To this end, the Fishermen's Association Committee (渔民协会委员会) was established in 1951. Status in the Fishermen's Association was based on physical residence. Fishing families with a fixed residence on land were defined as 'fishermen' (渔民) and would ultimately receive *hukou* (户口; 'household registration') based on that settlement. Fishing families who had no fixed residence on land and travelled between harbours in Bao'an, Hong Kong, and Macau were defined as 'itinerant fishermen' (流动渔民), ultimately receiving identity cards in Hong Kong. The organisation of fishermen was also a mobilisation of resources. The local Party committee established a democratic reform committee, which worked with local cadres to organise a work team to develop and train activists among fishermen, teaching them to distinguish between the 'enemy and ourselves' (敌我问题). In the first stage of the fishermen's democratic reform (1951–52), local political groups dealt with the smuggling of intelligence and weapons to the United States, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

In July 1952, during the second phase of the fishermen's democratic reform, the Island Administration Committee transferred the governance of islands to Zhongshan County—an administrative shift from party to government. This shift emphasised location (rather than a specific mission) as the principle for governance. On this basis, on 19 November 1952, the CCP Central Committee issued a set of 'Instructions on Fishermen's Work', stating: 'Coastal fishermen should also divide

fishermen's counties and districts according to their fishing areas, with a port as the centre' (Chen 2019: 100). According to the relevant materials, the boundaries of the fishermen's county referred to the southern Lingding Sea and included most of the islands therein. The new county would be called Zhuhai, with its county seat at Tangjiawan. In July 1953, Bao'an County designated West Sea, East Sea, Nantou, and Yantian as pilot areas to carry out the local fishermen's democratic reform. Significantly, fishing areas crossed the maritime border. The West Sea, for example, included waters near Shekou and islands in the Wanshan Archipelago, as well as near Tsing Shan, Tuen Mun, on the northeastern coast of the Hong Kong New Territories. Similarly, East Sea waters included those near Yantian and Yazhou Bay as well as near Sai Kung on the northeastern coast of the New Territories. At this time, Bao'an County became responsible for the fishermen who had been relocated from Inner Lingding and Dachan islands to Shekou and Xixiang. This was the first appearance of 'Shekou' among Chinese administrative placenames.

From 1953 through to 1954, local Party representatives organised fishermen through campaigns in democratic struggle, democratic unity, and democratic construction. Fishermen were also encouraged to join the fishing trade union, the Fishing Association, the Communist Youth League, militia, and other organisations. Organisers united fishermen according to the logic under which peasants had been united, encouraging better-off fishermen to employ poor fishermen. Although fishermen could not be classified as 'poor' or 'middle-income' based on how many tools they owned (as was the criteria for classifying peasants), some fishermen owned boats and others did not. Fishermen with boats could work alone or were encouraged to employ one or two people. During the 1954 fishery cooperative movement (渔业合作化运动), whether or not one maintained 'fisherman' or 'floating fisherman' status was based on joining the cooperative and the sharing of boats. Most residents in

the Shekou area, for example, joined friends and family in the fishing cooperative, while those who chose not to join became itinerant fishermen, taking up residence in bays along the coasts of Hong Kong and Macau. In contrast to the West Sea area, there were more floating fishermen in Mirs Bay in the East Sea area.

The differences between fishermen and itinerant fishermen were not immediately consolidated but were settled over the course of the decade. Shekou, for example, is home to two fishing villages, the aforementioned Fishing One and Fishing Two (渔二村). The root of Fishing One was the Inner Lingding Island mutual aid group. Fishermen Wu Jindi, Zhou Dezai, and several others who had lived on Inner Lingding Island and owned houseboats (罟仔艇 or *Kwu Tzu* boats) became core members of the Inner Lingding Island mutual aid group after their relocation to Shekou. Their status allowed them to receive interest-free or low-interest loans from the Bao'an County Government to update their fishing equipment. Funds were also used to set up marketing cooperatives to help these fishermen sell their products. By 1954, cooperation and a guaranteed market meant that organised fishermen could expand their enterprises. In contrast, activist Zhang Meitou set up Bao'an County's first fishery production cooperative in Shekou with resettled boat-dwellers. With government help, the cooperative purchased new fishing equipment and began deep-sea fishing. However, unlike Fishing One, which comprised members from the same linguistic group and a shared home island, fishing cooperative members came from Haifeng and Panyu. Due to the differences in customs and languages, the cooperative dissolved in less than two years. Some of the Teochew-speaking fishermen opted to return to Haifeng and become farmers, while some of the Cantonese-speaking fishermen moved to Hong Kong, becoming itinerant fishermen. In fact, it was not until 1957 that the cooperative was successfully reorganised as Fishing Two Village (Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening Up 2019).

Onshore but Not of the Land

Although islanders, fishermen, and boat-dwellers were assigned 'villager' status, they did not enjoy the same treatment and historical rights as farmers. Specifically, while farmers continued to have rights to cultivated land and housing plots via collectives that were based on historical settlements, fishermen lost their historical rights once they were relocated. In Shekou, for example, islanders were given berths only at local typhoon shelter wharfs and were not permitted to build housing on land. The question of where Inner Lingding Islanders were entitled to land arose because their jurisdiction had not been settled. In 1952, when Zhuhai was split from Zhongshan and redistricted as the fishermen's county, it was given jurisdiction over Inner Lingding Island. However, islanders were already residents of the Shekou and Xixiang areas of Bao'an County since their resettlement in 1950. Neither Zhuhai nor Bao'an was willing to take responsibility for giving the islanders onshore plots. In Shekou, the islanders' housing situation was only resolved in 1970, when Shekou Commune allocated a section of coastal land belonging to Wanxia Village (湾厦村) to the islanders. In Xixiang, those who came on land did not remain 'fishermen'. Instead, housing plots were created through reclamation of coastal fishponds and polders, which were known as *jiwei* (基围). Islanders, fishermen, and boat-dwellers on the western Bao'an coast (from Xixiang to Shajing) who received these plots became '*jiwei* people', living in shacks at the edges of landed villages. The main livelihood of *jiwei* villagers was raising fish, shrimp, and crab in coastal polders. As land reform deepened, *jiwei* people were divided into village units; however, because they did not have a traditional land residence, these new villages were given revolutionary names, including Turn Over (翻身村), Labour

(劳动村), Freedom (自由村), Settled Happily (安乐村), Peace (和平村), Happy Together (共乐村), and Democracy (民主村) villages.

In 1979, China Merchants established the Shekou Industrial Zone, which was set up for logistics and basic manufacturing. The new entity inherited not only the reorganised coastline, but also the rights to plan and develop it. Fishing One Village took advantage of Reform and Opening Up to pursue private enterprise, including selling seafood in Hong Kong and Shekou. That same year, Inner Lingding Island was reassigned to Shenzhen City. In 1989, based on its historical relationship with Inner Lingding Island, Fishing One raised 13 million yuan and borrowed 9 million yuan to invest in the construction of a resort on the island (Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening Up 2019). However, due to the unclear jurisdiction, there were frequent conflicts among Zhuhai, Shenzhen, and Fishing One over what residual rights villagers had. During a provincial survey meeting in 1993, Fishing One's head, Zhou Dezai, angrily exclaimed: 'We were born and raised in Bao'an for generations, and all of a sudden we have become Zhuhai people. What is the basis of this claim? I'll die with eternal regrets' (Shekou Museum of Reform and Opening Up 2019). His words proved prophetic and he died soon after. Unfortunately, it was not until his death that the Guangdong Provincial Government made greater efforts to clarify administrative oversight over Inner Lingding Island. It did not, however, return the islanders' native holdings and the resort project was ultimately abandoned. ■

(Translated by Mary Ann O'DONNELL)

The PLA Engineering corps entering Shenzhen in 1980. PC: Zhou Shunbin.

From the Third Front to the Second Line

The Construction Soldiers of Shenzhen

Taomo ZHOU

Shenzhen is a migrant city, and every migrant must cross multiple borders—physical and administrative, social and cultural—to fully belong in the city. The 20,000 members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Engineering Corps （中国人民解放军基本建设工程兵）, who arrived in Shenzhen between 1979 and 1982, were the earliest and largest batch of state-sponsored migrants during Reform and Opening Up. They repeatedly crossed geographical and metaphorical boundaries throughout their long journeys. The majority of soldiers came from secret or semi-secret heavy industrial sites in what was known as the Third Front (三线)—landlocked regions such as Guizhou, Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai (AMCPLA 2015: 21). These regions played a key role in Mao Zedong's Third Front campaign—an economic strategy launched in the mid-1960s to strengthen China's national

defence as well as to address the regional disparity between the Pacific-facing coast and the underdeveloped interior (Meyskens 2020). In Shenzhen, the corps' skills, originally developed to serve the military industrial complex, were adapted for the construction of civilian infrastructure, including transportation, water supply and sewerage, and public and commercial buildings. They assisted the border guards from the People's Armed Police with erecting wired fences along the 'Second Line' (二线关)—the internal border separating the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ) from the Chinese 'inland' (内地) (Ma and Blackwell 2017; Southern Weekend 2018). They built landmarks that represented Shenzhen's rapid growth, including the 20-storey Shenzhen Electronics Building and the 53-storey International Trade Centre (Du 2020: 167–70). But since their demobilisation in 1983, the ex-servicemen have benefited unevenly from Shenzhen's metropolitan development, arriving at drastically different levels of material wellbeing. This essay traces the PLA Engineering Corps' trajectory from the Third Front to the Second Line and their transformation from Mao's soldiers to Deng Xiaoping's market actors. It delineates the various borders—between the hinterland and the coast, the rural and the urban, the military and the civilian, the socialist planned economy and the capitalist market, and the winners and losers of China's economic transition—that they both crossed and constructed.

Maoist Motto, Dengist Design

By mobilising the Engineering Corps to participate in the civilian economy in Shenzhen, the Deng administration repurposed the builders of the Maoist militarised command economy to lay the groundwork for marketisation. The PLA Engineering Corps was established in 1966 for the purpose of

industrialising inland regions to protect China from perceived threats from the Soviet Union and the United States. Between 1966 and 1978, various regiments of the corps carried out projects such as the construction of the China–Pakistan Friendship Highway, the exploration for and extraction of uranium and gold in Xinjiang, and the building of oil and gas industries in the northeast and hydropower plants in the southwest (AMCPLA 2015: 28). However, in 1979, the Engineering Corps was operating under capacity due to a redirection of Chinese macroeconomic policies and a contraction of infrastructural investment. Meanwhile, in March 1983, Deng announced the decision to downsize the military in an effort to professionalise the PLA. To minimise the army's involvement in civilian affairs, the Engineering Corps was the first division to be demobilised (AMCPLA 2015: 584).

In 1979, Gu Mu, the director of the State Council's SEZ Office and the political commissioner of the PLA Engineering Corps, ordered the transfer of troops to Shenzhen to 'kill two birds with one stone': to channel the Engineering Corps out of active military duty and build infrastructure quickly and economically in the city. Whereas the Third Front construction projects were stalled, infrastructure building became an urgent issue in Shenzhen (Duan 2018: 2). The new city's geographical precursor, Bao'an County, was an impoverished border region best known as the gateway for illegal migration to Hong Kong. In 1980, the State Council created the Shenzhen SEZ and encouraged foreign investors to establish enterprises there. However, despite the allure of this new policy, the continuous flight of young, able-bodied males to Hong Kong meant Shenzhen lacked both the physical infrastructure to support economic production and the manpower to build it. After their arrival in Shenzhen, the PLA Engineering Corps jokingly codenamed the remaining residents—most of them women, children, and the elderly—as Division 386199 because, in the Chinese calendar, Women's Day is on 8 March,

Children's Day is on 1 June, and the Chongyang Festival, which honours the elderly, is on 9 September (Liu 2013: 20).

During the Mao era, the Engineering Corps was a highly disciplined and efficient labour force, known for their endurance under harsh working conditions. As this militarised labour transplanted the same engineering techniques and work style from the Third Front to the SEZ, 'Mao's invisible hand' extended its reach to the forefront of China's market reforms (Perry and Heilmann 2011). The Maoist norms of asceticism and putting work ahead of one's livelihood prepared the construction soldiers for their primitive living conditions in Shenzhen. The Engineering Corps slept in temporary bamboo huts set up at the construction sites, which barely protected them from subtropical downpours and heat and were frequently invaded by armies of rats, snakes, lizards, and mosquitoes (Du 2020: 163; Ma Chengli, Interview by author, 2019). Back in the interior, the soldiers had procured their own food and water by making use of local resources. The same principles of self-reliance and self-sufficiency guided the Engineering Corps in Shenzhen, as they recycled water from kitchens to outhouses and ate wild animals such as snakes (Meyskens 2020: 131; Liao 2003: vol. 1, pp. 48, 55). At the Third Front as well as in Shenzhen, intensive manual labour made up for the absence of modern machinery. When unclogging a sewer line in Shenzhen's city centre, the soldiers relied on basic tools such as shovels and pickaxes and, in particular, their bare hands (Meyskens 2020: 131–33; Shenzhen Museum 1999: 77).

In Shenzhen, the Engineering Corps continued to use militarised language to describe their construction of civilian infrastructure; they compared the construction site to a battlefield, equipment to weapons, and referred to themselves as 'seasoned soldiers fighting on the frontier of Reform and Opening Up' (战斗在改革开放前沿的老兵) (Meyskens 2020: 172; Liao 2003: vol. 1, p. 90). Despite the apparent mismatch between the soldiers' Mao-style rhetoric and the profit-seeking rationale

prevalent in reform-era Shenzhen, the PLA Engineering Corps served as a human buffer mediating the relationship between China and global capitalism. Although Deng resolved to put an end to the excessive ideological campaigns under Mao, he was 'determined to prevent political relaxation from leading the country to "bourgeois liberalization"' (Zhang 2015: 169). Similar to the communist cadres from the Southbound Work Team who arrived in Guangdong from northern China in the 1950s, the Engineering Corps members were reliable and trusted agents who embodied 'Deng's socialist spiritual civilization' and helped 'maintain China's communist heritage while pursuing needed economic reforms' (Vogel 1969: 51; Zhang 2015: 169). In Shenzhen, the PLA Engineering Corps was on a mission not only to build the physical infrastructure but also to consolidate the Party's authority at a remote outpost populated by 'worldly' Cantonese connected to Hong Kong through time-honoured clan and lineage ties (Vogel 1969: 21). Denise Ho's introductory essay in this special issue demonstrates that the borderland between Bao'an and Hong Kong has been a 'palimpsest' shaped by centuries of social, cultural, and economic exchanges. Yet this rich history did not colour the Engineering Corps' perception of Shenzhen as barren before their arrival. As Mary Ann O'Donnell (1999: 357) points out, the political discourses of these soldier pathbreakers played as much of a role as their labour in setting the horizon for Shenzhen's development.

The Wrath of the 'Pathbreaking Ox'

In 1983, the Engineering Corps was dismissed. At the initial stage of their demobilisation, the Shenzhen Government offered the veterans state-sector jobs, public housing, and urban household registration (*hukou*) (Duan 2018: 42–45). Among the 20,000 Engineering Corps in Shenzhen, around 8,000 Communist

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Party cadres were recruited by the Municipal Government; the remaining 12,000 were employed by a new state-owned enterprise (SOE) named SEZ Construction Company (特区建设公司), which was later privatised and renamed Shenzhen Construction Group (深圳建设集团). The organisational structure of the Engineering Corps was preserved in the new cooperative framework: different regiments were transformed into subsidiary companies under the Shenzhen Construction Group in a wholesale fashion. For instance, Regiment No. 1 became Shenzhen No. 1 Construction Company, Regiment No. 16 became Shenzhen No. 2 Construction Company, and the political commissioners or regimental commanders were reappointed as general managers (AMCPLA 2015: 605). Despite the stability of their personnel composition, these repackaged entities received significantly reduced financial support from the state and faced fierce competition in the construction market (Liao 2003: vol. 1, 72–73).

To compete against private operators from all over China, the demobilised Engineering Corps reassembled their Maoist ethics and 'guerilla-style' management (Perry and Heilmann 2011: 7). One commander turned CEO concludes that the demobilised Engineering Corps' greatest advantage was that its members 'are soldiers and remain soldiers even after taking off their military uniforms [that is, after being formally dismissed]. The troops remain well coordinated, highly disciplined, and tightly managed' (Liao 2003: vol. 1, p. 98). In the past, under the shadow of possible military conflicts between China and its Cold War rivals, the construction soldiers developed a combat style of round-the-clock operation. As civilian employees, they continued to exert themselves to the extreme to meet the demanding deadlines during Shenzhen's infrastructure boom in the early 1980s—sleeping and working on construction sites during 'wars of annihilation' (歼灭战), while applying the 'huge-crowd strategy' (人海战术) to overcome technical deficiencies with large labour brigades working like 'ants gnawing on a bone' (蚂蚁啃骨头) (Liao 2003: vol. 1, 38–43, 171). When erecting the Second Line, the demobilised soldiers used their muscle power to transport railings weighing 700–800 kilograms uphill (Southern Weekend 2018).

In the eyes of the former corps members, the 'good tradition of the PLA'—soldiers being altruistic, honest, righteous, concerned about long-term public goods rather than short-term personal monetary interests—contributed to both their successes and their setbacks (Liao 2003: vol. 1, 71, 214). In 1986, the construction sector in Shenzhen was hit hard by a recession, leading to economic difficulties among the former soldiers (Du 2020: 180). When Shenzhen experimented with a tender bidding system, the financial structure of the SOEs as well as the veterans' mentality prevented them from offering bribery or entertainment to the bid issuers or the brokers, putting them in a disadvantageous position compared with more flexible private enterprises. A regiment commander turned general manager once asked a broker whether he had a receipt when the latter asked for a 3 per cent kickback for a 150-million-yuan project. Baffled by this naive request, the contractor left, and the business was gone (Duan 2018: 215). Many demobilised construction soldiers felt betrayed because the Shenzhen Government failed to honour its promise to grant their SOEs favourable consideration when assigning government-directed construction projects. The government later altered its policy of open tender bidding for all projects and reserved some special quotas for the veterans (Duan 2018: 133).

Yet this temporary relief scheme did not stop the state's push to turn the SOEs into self-financing enterprises. After Deng's Southern Tour in 1992, the SOEs started their transformation into shareholding companies. By 2005, all the SOEs from the restructured Engineering Corps had been corporatised. One real estate company, Jian'an Group—considered to be of great strategic value—remains today under the control of the central government. The remaining companies have

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either been sold to their leaders through the management buyout process or become hybrid firms with varying degrees of private ownership. Operations not considered as having core production functions but providing social welfare, such as small factories built for the corps' family dependants (家属厂), have been shut (PLA Engineering Corps Memory and History Materials Compilation Group 2015). The privatisation process widened the gap between rich and poor among the former construction soldiers and resulted in unsettled disputes and discontent that persist today. In the course of converting public enterprises into private property, members of the Engineering Corps in leadership positions or new entrepreneurial elites with connections took the opportunity to enrich themselves through insider dealing. In contrast, the relatively less-educated, lower-skilled employees were laid off with lump-sum payments that monetised their past services (买断).

The construction soldiers' varied experiences reflect the complex relationship between the previous socialist and the present market economy in China; their individual biographies are intertwined with China's marketisation under the influence of rising neoliberalism worldwide. In November 2005, more than 3,000 demobilised construction soldiers, angry with the meagre buyouts offered by the privatising SOEs, organised a sit-in outside the Shenzhen Municipal Government building and were ultimately dispersed by riot police (SCMP Reporter 2005). They targeted the city government not only because it represented state power, but also because the office compound was where a famous statue of a 'pathbreaking ox' (拓荒牛) was located. The PLA Engineering Corps identify the pathbreaking ox as their icon and distinguish themselves from Shenzhen's economic migrants who came to the city of their own accord. Having arrived in Shenzhen at a time when the city's future was uncertain and its status very low in the spatial hierarchy of China, the construction soldiers believe they deserved preferential treatment from the state as firstcomers. Yet

not every former construction soldier received material benefits that met such expectations. Those insufficiently compensated regard the changing reward mechanism from the 1970s to the present as unjust. When they were at the peak of their productivity, their income did not follow the market mechanism but was determined by state distribution; when their competitiveness on the labour market declined due to their age and low educational levels, they were expelled from the protective shell of the socialist system. Similar to the laid-off workers at industrial bases in the northeast, Shenzhen's former construction soldiers felt left out of China's economic liberalisation even though they built from scratch the very city that is emblematic of the success of reform (Lee 2007; Hurst 2009; Cho 2013). They, as individuals, have borne the social cost of China's market transition.

Borders Within and Without

On their arrival in Shenzhen between 1979 and 1982, the construction soldiers were under strict orders to not wear their military uniforms to avoid triggering fear and suspicion on the part of the British. In contrast with the active-duty soldiers defending state borders via hard military means, the Engineering Corps served as the soft, human buffer at the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, making the two places physically more similar but socially and culturally more different. In terms of urban development, they laid the foundation for Shenzhen's rise as a city of skyscrapers resembling Hong Kong. In terms of demographics, their relocation doubled the population living within the SEZ (Du 2020: 163). The influx of Mandarin-speaking ex-servicemen—the ideal socialist subjects who had internalised the Mao-era ethos of collective good, hard work, and frugal living—in Shenzhen diluted the influence of the local Cantonese, Hakka, and other dialect–speaking communities with longstanding commercial

and family ties with Hong Kong. This unique group of soldier migrants brought with them mentalities, a work ethic, and a sense of political belonging that constituted the social foundation for Shenzhen's reformulation of its cross-border relations with Hong Kong under reform.

The transfer and long-term settlement of the PLA Engineering Corps in Shenzhen are an important bordering technique of the government of the People's Republic of China; the lives of the construction soldiers after their demobilisation were shaped by the shifting boundaries of the urban–rural divide, social hierarchies, and economic inequalities within mainland China. All demobilised corps members who stayed in Shenzhen were offered urban household registration and assigned jobs in government agencies and SOEs. Compared with later cohorts of rural migrants, their status as legal city residents positioned them as privileged. However, during the SOE reforms, many veterans received inadequate financial support from the state given the sacrifices they had made. Their public protests in 2005, rather than turning them into an interest group that the city government must take into account, made them a 'problematic population' to be regulated for the sake of social stability. Once a core labour force of the militarised command economy under Mao, the construction soldiers were transferred to the geographical edge of the socialist state in the late 1970s and early 1980s; as Shenzhen became central to the state's representation and management of reform, many demobilised corps members were increasingly marginalised. They faced the painful irony of being excluded from the new economic opportunities inside the boundaries they helped build.

Today, the demobilised PLA Engineering Corps members are a heterogeneous group. Among them are creative and daring entrepreneurs such as Ren Zhengfei, the CEO of Huawei, the world's largest telecommunications equipment manufacturer (Duan 2014: 3–26). Wang Ju and Jiang Zunyu, two high-ranking Shenzhen government officials fallen from

grace due to corruption charges, are also former construction soldiers. Yet, beyond the success stories, veterans with low levels of educational attainment have experienced downward social mobility. According to my interviews, those who have retired comfortably believe that their former colleagues complaining about unfair treatment are only experiencing 'mild' economic difficulties and have 'brought misfortune on themselves' due to accidents, health problems, or divorces. By denying structural reasons for their grievances, such as how illnesses result from a lack of workplace safety and family separations were brought about by long-distance relations during the early years of market transition, the winners of China's reform replicate the state's narrative of market triumphalism. In light of the unstable cohesiveness among the former construction soldiers, one might argue that an internal border is emerging among this group after they crossed many borders together in the past as comrades-in-arms. ∎

Border at the Centre of Myth
Fishing Village, Caiwuwei, Shenzhen

Photo montage of Caiwuwei Village. PC: Caiwuwei research team for the 2013 Hong Kong Biennale, Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism / Architecture, Curator Na FU.

Na FU

Walking alongside the Shenzhen River, overlooking the distinct difference between the two sides of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, one enters a space formed and captured by photography, maps, and monuments: Fishing Village (渔民村) in Caiwuwei, Luohu district. In fact, this is the famous 'fishing village' that Deng Xiaoping visited during his 1984 inspection tour of the Special Economic Zone (SEZ), which became the material basis for the city's founding myth. However, in contrast to the fixed certainties of the Fishing Village myth, nothing could be livelier than listening to the stories told by the villagers who have experienced the changes wrought by the border. Here, their families were torn apart, their land restructured, and their community reformed by newcomers. The story of Shenzhen's success is only part of the villagers' memories, because their natural bonds were originally aligned through kinship networks with other villages on both sides of the Shenzhen River, where connections were made through marriage, market exchanges,

local language, and farming. The border has changed the social and economic dynamics on both sides of the river, and imposed a political ideology that has transformed the space and its people. This is the story of Fishing Village's successes as it became a 'model' for inclusive growth. This is also a story about how villagers became millionaires through land development, while also taking on urban citizenship. More importantly, this is the myth about the Shenzhen miracle, where urban development has informed new identities.

Any villager can tell you how they formally and informally navigate the border, even as the meaning and political interests of the border have also transformed across time and space. They have lived on the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border by crossing and reimagining implicit and explicit boundaries between the two cities, as well as those between the village and the city proper. These borders are simultaneously material and imaginary, where different regimes of order are represented through degrees of visibility—the China–Hong Kong border, for example, is an actual fence with barbed wire, while the demarcation between the village and the city can only be discerned through local knowledge about architectural styles and familiarity.

In this essay, I examine representations of the physical border in relation to social interactions with the border itself to generate discussion about the formation of identity and its instabilities. As a material border, a 'thick' wall separates Fishing Village from the Frontier Closed Area of the Hong Kong New Territories. Yet as an imaginary border, a 'thinner' invisible border divides village and city structures, distinguishing those within Fishing Village and those without. This essay recounts three stories from the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, illustrating how differently situated bodies navigate the physical border, this iconic urban village, and the urban spaces between and beyond. I tell my story as an ethnographer peeking through the fence at the border of Fishing Village; the story of Mr Cheng, a shoe repairman, who works on the

invisible red line moving in and around the urban village and city proper; and the story of Mrs Wang, a Hong Kong aunty, who lives in Caiwuwei and crosses the border at Luohu every day. This allows me to track the visible, invisible, and often overlooked boundaries that structure everyday life between the cities.

The Border

Fishing Village is located on the northern banks of the Shenzhen River, where the villagers used to be fishermen on both the river and the tidal sea. It is a recent settlement and part of Caiwuwei Village—a large village comprising several hamlets—which became home to resettled fishing families in the early 1950s (see Du's essay in this forum). Today, Fishing and Caiwuwei villages are both considered 'urban villages' (城中村).

The location of Fishing Village was specifically chosen to connect with the Shenzhen River, the land on the other side of the river, and Shenzhen Bay, into which the river discharges before entering the Pearl River. Interestingly, there are hardly any walls on either bank, with the Shenzhen River serving as a natural border, which extends over vast untouched green space on the Hong Kong side. As such, the landscape itself manifests the separation of the cities. From the Hong Kong side, one has views of Shenzhen's high-rise cityscape, while from the Shenzhen side, the green fields and rolling hills of the Hong Kong Frontier Closed Area are breathtaking. This separation is recent and not absolute. Historically, Luohu and Futian districts in Shenzhen and the Hong Kong New Territories had a unified cultural geography. And even though the Sino-British border was drawn in 1898, it was not until the Cold War that different forms of segregation began to shape the physical border, separating Bao'an County (China) and the Hong Kong New Territories (United Kingdom). Locals, however, still remember serial flights across the border between the 1950s and the 1970s

(Ku 2004; Warner et al. 2005), when villagers swam across the Shenzhen River from Bao'an to Hong Kong in search of an escape from communism and relative poverty, dreaming of economic opportunities in the Crown Colony—a situation that came to be known as the 'Great Escape' (大逃港), with the Shenzhen River taking on a form of symbolism akin to a 'Chinese Berlin Wall'.

In terms of the geography of the period of Reform and Opening Up, Fishing Village is located near the historical Shenzhen Market and just behind the Bao'an County seat of government. During the early 1980s, as business and cross-border trade developed in Luohu and manufacturing developed in Nanshan, the banks of the Shenzhen River became a key connection between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, with export checkpoints set up at Wenjindu and Huanggang. Located on the banks of the Shenzhen River, villagers in Fishing Village suddenly had new opportunities. They smuggled in umbrellas, televisions, and even cars from Hong Kong to sell in the SEZ's booming markets, quickly accumulating capital that could be invested in the construction of a new village. In 1984, Deng Xiaoping visited New Fishing Village (渔民新村), which comprised 32 independent 'rural' homes in the middle of downtown Shenzhen. In addition to their houses, villagers showed off consumer luxury items that were not available even to ranking cadres in Beijing. Fishing Village was not only rich, but also its built environment and modern amenities made it an aspirational model for the rest of the country. This visit was publicised throughout China, making Fishing Village famous as the origin of Shenzhen's miraculous modernisation story.

On entering Fishing Village, it is possible to walk along a section of the physical barrier that separates Shenzhen and Hong Kong. This wall is short—only a couple of hundred metres long—and features a bas-relief series of images that recount the village's history. The storyboard provides a full account of Deng's 1984 inspection tour, when the village became a national economic model for successful rural development. There are small openings between the bas-reliefs with steel bars; rather than acting as barriers, these spaces seemingly invite you to view what is on the other side.

Looking towards Hong Kong, there is an endless stretch of green. Where the openings between the walls are high, you can jump and catch a glimpse of the river. As you follow the storyboard along residential gates and factory walls, weaving between the walls, the other side seems distant and unreachable. Looking at a map of Fishing Village, it is clear that though the storyboard wall is not actually on the banks of the Shenzhen River, it is intimately connected to the border walls. Here, the feeling of segregation between the two cities is profound, and the small cracks feel not only like an invitation to look through, but also an imperative that the cities remain sundered.

Star-Crossed Borders

Aged in her late fifties, Mrs Wang always has a heart-warming smile when you see her. Since the 1980s, she has lived in Caiwuwei Village. At first, she lived in a three-storey residential building; then, after 1999, when the village demolished these small buildings and erected seven-storey tenements, she rented a two-bedroom apartment for herself. Since arriving in Shenzhen, she felt that her destiny lay with Hong Kong, where many of her friends live and, in fact, where she now holds a Hong Kong identity card. Early every morning, Mrs Wang spends an hour and half travelling to Hong Kong, where she works in a metro station. She takes the metro to the border at Luohu, passing two checkpoints and traversing a 50-metre-long indoor bridge over the Shenzhen River. On the other side of the border, she continues for another three metro stations. Every night, she returns home late to sleep. Her journey is part of her quotidian rhythm—a life composed of repetitive border crossings. How do we define her? Is she a Hong Konger, a mainlander, or a dual-citizenship holder?

Like Fishing Village, Caiwuwei has been shaped in and through the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border. When talking with Caiwuwei villagers, it becomes clear that almost half of the village's population has already migrated to Hong Kong, either via the Great Escape before the 1970s or as social or economic migrants after Reform and Opening Up. Mrs Wang's story provides deeper insight into the ways the border creates a life as a permanent migrant—one's identity suspended between borders. To tell her story is not to disregard or downplay the difference between regions. Rather, it raises questions of how we understand and imagine the border, instead of an obsessive focus on what lies on either side. We have already seen that the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border simultaneously integrates and separates the two cities. On the ground, this means that the border functions to the extent that it cultivates the idea—but not the practice—of separation.

Living Off the Border

Fishing Village and Caiwuwei are two of more than 300 urban villages in Shenzhen. Like the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, the boundaries between an urban village and the city proper are imagined as absolute, but in fact they create spaces for tactical appropriation and unexpected livelihoods. Consider, for example, the story of Mr Cheng. In his home village, Mr Cheng was a bicycle repairman, gaining skills that smoothed his transition to Shenzhen, where he has worked as a shoe repairman since the 1990s. Mr Cheng does not have a store and lives in a shared dormitory-style apartment in the urban village. He sets up shop under a tree on the pedestrian street in the same spot just outside Caiwuwei Village he has occupied for more than twenty years. Both city management workers and village security guards chase him away when he is within their jurisdiction. However, Mr Cheng—like other vendors—knows that this pedestrian space is safer for unsanctioned vending because it is on the

border. City management workers and village security guards avoid each other as a matter of practice; following an unspoken rule, neither city workers nor village guards will pursue vendors outside their own jurisdiction. Hence, Mr Cheng is safe on this spot, and all his clients know where to find him. Even with an illegal and 'temporary' shop, he always returns to the same location. He relies on this thin margin to support himself and provide a livelihood for his family back in his home village. Mr Cheng has never considered moving. During the urban renewal of Caiwuwei Village, he worked next to the construction site because his clients knew where to find him. Like other vendors, Mr Cheng's livelihood depends on this border. As a group, they navigate among different spaces to find the right one, on the invisible border or beyond.

In Mr Cheng's story, we see how boundaries not only perpetuate differences, but also are strategies for governing. On the Shenzhen control map, the border between the village and the city proper is an unequivocal red line, suggesting absolute separation between two systems. On the ground, however, the boundary is not obvious. Sometimes it is located at the back wall of a factory, sometimes along a fence of a residential community, but most commonly, the boundary is a pedestrian street, which also allows people to walk around the village as if the border was not there. In fact, it was only after 2004, coinciding with a period when the government started to reimagine urban villages, that these villages appeared on Shenzhen planning maps. This meant that, for the first 25 years of Reform and Opening Up, townships and villages rebuilt and expanded independently of city government supervision. Today, villages still coordinate security, fire stations, and property management offices within a prescribed neighbourhood—informally defined as an 'urban village', as this is all that remains of historical villages. Like the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, the red line has turned into an absent presence that one brushes up against without noticing, becoming visible in specific contexts, but vanishing as

people cross between the village and the city proper every day without noticing they have left one administrative territory and entered another.

The Myth of Separation

Mr Cheng's shoe repair stand navigates between different qualities of space, finding its boundary in the fragile points of entry to his informal business. Similarly, Mrs Wang's transregional daily activity may not directly challenge the political border. However, her movement—like that of others who cross the border to study, shop, visit family, and work—does generate social norms that in turn transform political discussions. Border villagers remind us that they are connected with Hong Kong through shared surnames and via the local Weitou dialect, and that they are also connected to the rest of the world as a result of international migration. This means that, as political borders have been created and reinvented through time and place, they inevitably change (Lahav 2004). The border's material form can be seen in the physical manifestation of a concrete wall or in the less concrete competition between architectural styles. The point is that these borders are neither built overnight nor permanent fixtures of the landscape. Rather, even if the border exists to segregate different ideologies, religions, and political subjectivities, it is still mediated by the invisible 'wall' of identity, which is formed through situated practices (Bach 2015). ∎

A sign on the floor from one of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border checkpoints. PC: Harald Groven.

Narrating Mobility as an Achievement on the Shenzhen–Hong Kong Border

Dodom KIM

'Where are you from?'
Whenever this question is asked in Shenzhen, the usual expectation is that you will not hear 'Shenzhen' as a response. Rather, it is widely assumed that almost everyone is from somewhere else. As its nickname, 'city of immigrants' (移民城市), suggests, Shenzhen is widely regarded as a migrant-receiving destination. Mobility and migration no longer imply the 'illegality' they once did (de Genova 2002) and have been reconfigured as the key themes in the narratives of growth and flourishing in the city. At the municipal level, it is the arrival of migrant-

labourers and investments from overseas Chinese that has allowed the metropolis to grow. At a personal level, people often describe their arrival in the city with empty hands as a life-changing event, from which their current achievements stem.

What amplifies Shenzhen's narratives of mobility are its proximity to Hong Kong and the hypermobility of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border zone. Many scholarly works in various disciplines from both sides of the border have presented numerous accounts of stowaway migrants, cross-border families, policy exchanges, and the enormous volume

of licit and illicit traffic in humans and goods between the two territories (see, for instance, Du 2020; Huang 2017; Lin and Tse 2005; Ma and Blackwell 2017; O'Donnell 2001). The characterisation of the border as porous and unpredictable allows for the description of the city as a liminal zone that leads to a world beyond the border—an understanding that is reflected not only in everyday conversation, but also in policy experimentations that have taken place in Shenzhen (O'Donnell et al. 2017).

Previous research compellingly demonstrates that mobility in post-Mao China has turned into 'the principle and modus operandi for value production' (Chu 2010: 10) and plays a significant role in defining identities (see, for example, Ong 1999). As Julie Chu (2010) shows in her ethnography of Fuzhounese transnational migration, even those who appear socially and legally to be peasants from rural backwaters overflow with cosmopolitan aspirations. They accept mobility as a 'condition of everyday life' and a 'practice to strive for' (Chu 2010: 10), whereas they experience immobility as a form of displacement and even a moral disgrace. In this essay, I elaborate on this insight by examining how cross-border mobility operates in Shenzhen—a liminal zone that can be characterised as both a destination and a corridor for further exits. In particular, I examine the structure of discourse that renders mobility a morally salient defining feature of Shenzhen identity.

Understanding Cross-Border Mobility through the Two-Way Travel Permit

Yilin moved into Shenzhen soon after graduating from a college in one of the provinces neighbouring Guangdong. After this move, she spent most of her twenties struggling to make ends meet, returning only occasionally to her hometown. During these years, her household registration (户口, *hukou*) remained in her place of origin. It was only six years after Yilin had first set foot in Shenzhen that she finally decided to apply for a Shenzhen household registration and become a legal permanent resident. When she disclosed this decision, I asked what had prompted her to make such a move. Instead of giving a clear answer, she mumbled a list of possible reasons, including the fact that permanent residence in Shenzhen comes with a special Hong Kong travel permit. She was referring to the well-known regulation that allows Shenzhen's permanent residents to make frequent trips over the border: their Exit–Entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macau (往来港澳通行证) do not expire after one or two trips. I found her answer startling because she had rarely, if ever, expressed strong interest in travelling to or living in Hong Kong. When I asked what she found attractive about the travel permit, she alluded to some generic impressions of Hong Kong, and made little effort to make her answer particularly convincing. I did not push her for further clarification, since I was aware that she had been undergoing a sort of quarter-life crisis while trying to establish her future plans—just like many young people I have encountered in Shenzhen.

Yilin's invoking of the Hong Kong travel permit is interesting in several aspects. First, it captures the way mobility can be articulated not only through materialised movements, but also through promissory ones that may be enacted at a later point. The Exit–Entry Permit, also known as the two-way permit, endorses the permit-holder to exit mainland China and enter Hong Kong or Macau through designated ports. Although the permit is likely to deliver on its promise and grant border access in most cases, its efficacy is ultimately subject to border checkpoint policies, political circumstances, and numerous other elements. For example, Hong Kong's COVID-19 travel measures practically invalidated many two-way permits, as their duration of stay falls short of the mandatory 14-day quarantine period (see also the notice on withholding the

processing of permits: Shenzhen Municipal Public Security Bureau 2020). Considering the inherently uncertain nature of the permit, Yilin's account projects an idea of mobility that takes a subjunctive form, demonstrating the broad scope of experiences of migration and mobility.

Second, Yilin's account highlights the arbitrariness and inequality in how the border filters legitimate movement. While it is obvious that borders operate to generate different types of movement, what is peculiar here is the way the entitlement to cross the border is associated with the Chinese household registration system. Although the paperwork for the permit is known to be fairly straightforward, eligibility and application procedures are individualised based on one's legal and social status. The two-way travel permit for Hong Kong and Macau is endorsed by the Public Security Bureau in mainland China, and issuance of the permit for individual travel is limited to permanent residents of specific areas designated by the State Council. With the exception of Guangdong Province, the State Council lists 28 major cities in China, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu, Kunming, and Xiamen (National Immigration Administration 2019). A finer distinction is made for Shenzhen permanent residents, who can enter Hong Kong every seven days within the permit's period of validity through one of Shenzhen's exit and entry ports, which have expanded in number and services, most recently with the establishment of the West Kowloon Station control point at the newly built Express Rail Link (for a full list of border checkpoints, see Hong Kong Immigration Department 2020). Those who are not legally registered in the listed areas must join a group tour and follow a stricter protocol in choosing their transportation to make a leisurely trip to Hong Kong.

Moreover, it is notable that one of the key obstacles that mainland Chinese face in accessing Hong Kong is their restricted ability to make a legitimate exit from mainland China. Hong Kong border authorities have the capacity to refuse entry to mainland Chinese residents, as exemplified by the rigorous surveillance of pregnant Chinese women. However, despite the travel permit's usage as a *de facto* landing permit, it is primarily managed by the mainland Chinese authorities. The peculiarity of the arrangement of Hong Kong travel permits stands out even more when compared with the travel documents required for Taiwan, which include not only the Taiwan travel permit (commonly known as 台湾通行证) issued by the Public Security Bureau of the People's Republic of China, but also the exit and entry permit (commonly known as 入台證) issued by the National Immigration Agency of the Republic of China (see National Immigration Administration 2020; National Immigration Agency 2020). Such an emphasis on filtering exits is rather unusual in the contemporary world, where most state authorities assert their monopoly over legitimate movements at entry rather than exit points. It is worth noting here that control of entrances is a relatively recent practice that proliferated globally only in the past century (McKeown 2008; Torpey 2000).

The two-way travel permit for Hong Kong and Macau provides blatantly differentiated treatment among mainland Chinese citizens, raising an interesting conceptual challenge to the way citizenship and equality are linked to border practices. According to McKeown (2008), exclusion and equality are the two pillars that uphold what we now imagine as common border surveillance practices. He argues that the global system of migrant identification and control, which began developing only in the late nineteenth century, asserts that 'civilised' countries deserve self-rule. Here, civilisation is measured against the degree of equality and rule of law that a country is believed to have achieved within its territory. It is this principle of self-rule and the language of civilisation that ideologically justify states wielding arbitrary power at the border to exclude non-citizens. This enables states to bring together a jarring combination of exclusion and equality without having to abandon liberal idealism (McKeown 2008: 1–15). Contrary to this globalised

ideological formula, however, the two-way travel permit represents a form of inequality among mainland Chinese citizens based on their registered status—a status that people are born into. Moreover, given how Hong Kong citizens have more or less unlimited access to mainland China through their 'Home Return Permit' (see Laidler and Lee 2015), the travel permit system reveals a lack of reciprocity among different jurisdictional authorities in the borderland.

Overall, the two-way travel permit appears to suggest the exceptional character of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border zone, which does not fall neatly in line with common practices at other international borders. After all, the border zone is exceptional in that the One Country, Two Systems policy has shaped the territorial landscape. Or perhaps it is the exceptional character of the so-called Socialism with Chinese Characteristics that defies the liberalist ideals that undergird the global system described above. However, despite all of these exceptionalities, the border zone extends to a historically constituted and globally shared discursive structure that assigns particular moral values to mobility.

Simulating Mobility as an Achievement

In Hong Kong Cantonese, the word *noidei* (内地, *neidi* in Mandarin) is a neutral term that indicates what lies across the border—that is, mainland China. It is at the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border that *noidei* begins; and this is where the rule of law, freedom, nonviolence, and all other values cherished by Hong Kong society as the core of its identity are understood to stop short (see Chang 2003, 2016; Newendorp 2011). Under this formulation, Shenzhen is rarely, if ever, distinguished from the rest of mainland China in any meaningful way. Shenzhen has been viewed as a gateway to the oppressive, authoritarian *noidei* regime. Decades before the kidnapping of the Causeway Bay bookstore

owners in 2015, or the Handover in 1997, people in Hong Kong referred to Shenzhen with two characters that had the same pronunciation as the name of the city in Cantonese: *samzan* (心震)—a place that strikes fear into one's heart. In Shenzhen's colloquial Mandarin, however, *neidi* is often said to start from the outskirts of Shenzhen's Special Economic Zone rather than at the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border. Although *neidi* can be interpreted as 'inner regions'—in contrast to coastal areas—the characteristics claimed by Shenzhen suggest otherwise. Shenzhen's self-characterisation presents a striking overlap with the extant discourse on Hong Kong's identity (Chang 2017). Examples include describing Shenzhen as a place with more transparent bureaucratic and legal practices than the rest of mainland China, as a more open-minded and diverse city of immigrants, as a giant international metropolis that grew out of a small fishing village, and as an economically flourishing hub. The long list even includes the problematic epithet 'cultural desert' (文化沙漠) (Erni 2001; Cartier 2008).

This striking simulacrum effect allows Shenzhen to establish a temporal order that projects Hong Kong doubly as both its past and its future. Shenzhen perceives Hong Kong as having reached Shenzhen's own goal of modernity and prosperity; and, at the same time, it domesticates Hong Kong into the regional past through the language of preservation and tradition (O'Donnell 2001). According to O'Donnell, 'these complimentary displacements … [are what] produce a nostalgia peculiar to ShenKong: a desire for a past that entitles contemporary Shenzhen residents to Hong Kong's prosperity' (2001: 425–26). Such a configuration leads to a linear, if not teleological, trajectory, projecting Shenzhen as a halfway point—literally a special (economic) zone—that the rest of mainland China must pass through in the historical arc of modernisation and development. This linear trajectory corresponds to the widely circulating idea of civilisation or civility (文明), which is understood as measurable in terms of quality (素质), degree of modernisation, discipline, and

so on (Anagnost 1997: 75–76). It is similar to the civilisation discourse that McKeown describes in that it enacts a critical evaluation of where society stands vis-a-vis the world.

This temporal order, which is established through collective reconstruction of memories and history, buttresses a moral understanding of how movements should be made in terms of their direction and tempo. Furthermore, the discourse of civilisation identifies human efforts and achievements as among the main driving forces of such movement. As mentioned earlier, Shenzhen's official narrative often attributes its speedy developmental success—that is, the 'Shenzhen miracle' (深圳奇迹)—to the arrival of labour and overseas capital, both of which invoke hardworking Chinese pioneers. Tales of migrant labourers—including not only domestic migrant workers, but also the overseas Chinese who were once migrant labourers themselves—are studded with stories of visionary heroes who displayed courage and cleverness under the most unlikely circumstances (for example, O'Donnell 2017), and with numerous accounts of people working overtime with diligence, speed, and efficiency to support their family and better their lives (for example, Huang 2017: 65–66; Pun 2005: 77–108). In short, it was not some inevitable destiny, but rather remarkable human effort and hard labour, that moved Shenzhen at miraculous speed towards the prosperity and modernity that Hong Kong projects.

This morally binding logic of movement extends to Shenzhen's discourse on citizenship. The city's most well-known slogan, 'Once you come, you are a Shenzhener' (来了就是深圳人), gestures to the city's openness and diversity. However, many of my interlocutors, including Yilin, noted that they do not feel they belong to the city. Their life accounts suggest that, rather than an entitlement granted by physical arrival, membership in the city is an achievable status, which might be gained through hard work and effort, and especially through education. This assumption is reinforced by the city's permanent residence system, which not only filters potential member-candidates

through minimum requirements of education or financial status, but also rewards qualified 'human talent' (人才) of certain education level or occupational background with immediate perks such as cash payments. While the city's legal membership program allows both the city and interested people to maintain forward momentum, it underlines the socioeconomic inequalities into which each person is born. A failure to maintain mobility towards and beyond Shenzhen—legally, financially, or socially—is understood as testifying to a lack of effort on the part of the individual. In other words, portraying mobility as an achievement justifies the city's high demands on its aspiring residents and the lack of reciprocity accorded to those who do not make it over the threshold.

It is this portrayal of mobility as an achievement that dominates the mobility regime in the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border zone. Rather than a natural human right for fellow compatriots, cross-border mobility is a perk that comes with Shenzhen membership—membership that is tied to the broader legal citizenship system in the household registration system. Moreover, as an achievement, mobility is naturalised as inherently good and morally desirable. Through an identification system that issues endorsements such as the two-way permit, mobility becomes a sign indexing people's moral value (Chu 2010). It is within the context of this moral significance that Yilin's earlier remarks revealing her somewhat uncertain desire for a two-way permit become more intelligible: Hong Kong remains an abstract sign that does not require concrete understanding, and a hypothetical destination that fuels the desire to maintain mobility.

Exits

After Yilin obtained her Shenzhen permanent residency, I interviewed her over an afternoon snack at the Café de Coral, a Hong Kong–brand fast-food restaurant. During our conversation, she remarked that she did not find Hong Kong

particularly attractive. Recalling our past conversation, I asked what had happened to her interest in the two-way travel permit. Laughing, she answered that over the past few months, she had undergone a transformation in her mindset and was no longer prioritising material values. This change had led to her diminishing interest in Hong Kong, since Hong Kong is a material society (物质社会) that does not offer much other than shopping.

During my stay in Shenzhen, many people spoke of Hong Kong in a way similar to Yilin's description. While some interlocutors continued to express optimism and enthusiasm about Hong Kong, others said the city was great only for food and shopping. Some even argued that life in Shenzhen was better, referencing the heavily publicised photos of 'coffin homes', snobby attitudes, and discriminatory behaviours of Hong Kong people towards mainland Chinese, as well as the fact that some Hong Kong permanent residents chose to reside in or frequently visit Shenzhen. These doubts about the value of cross-border mobility were further solidified when the anti–extradition law protests broke out in June 2019. Some Shenzhen residents blamed the protestors for making Hong Kong chaotic, while others blamed the incompetency of the Hong Kong Government for mismanaging its economy and making young people so desperate as to pour on to the streets. Very few people brought up the question of Hong Kong's identity—a topic that seems mostly unrecognised, if not too sensitive to raise. Whatever the diagnosis was, it appeared that there was increasing disillusion with Hong Kong, and a derailment of the city from the place it had held on the linear development narrative.

If indeed Hong Kong is losing its attraction as a destination, Shenzhen and its people will have to reconfigure the linear trajectory along which their city was imagined to be moving. But what will a different trajectory look like, and what will be needed to make such a reconfiguration? President Xi Jinping's recent speech in Shenzhen in celebration of the Special Economic Zone's fortieth anniversary highlights integrated regional economic growth as the goal (Xi 2020). While the vision presents increased opportunities for some, it raises doubts and bitterness for others, including those who have been agonising over the possibility of making an exit from mainland China or Hong Kong. Whether purposeful or not, what is missing from the popular conversation is the potential vulnerability of Shenzhen's heavily depoliticised identity—one that was crafted in the image of Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the Occupy Central Movement, the anti–extradition law protests, and the more recent controversy over the National Security Law all demonstrate the untenability of endorsing values that lack rigorous examination of and wide reflection on their meanings and implications (Chang 2016). No matter how much positivity radiates from values such as economic growth, rule of law, openness, transparency, democracy, and innovations, they cannot prevail without substantiation by alignment with other moral values in ways that are meaningful to people's lives and political identities. In fact, amid the ongoing celebration of Shenzhen's growth and development, people like Yilin, now equipped with Shenzhen permanent residency, have already begun to question the value that Shenzhen membership can offer, and even to consider leaving the city altogether. ∎

Exterior view of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. PC: Sben Korsh, 2018.

The Enduring Importance of Space Within a Virtual Border

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange's Trading Hall

Sben KORSH

In the first eight months of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally from China, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange still managed to raise more than US$19 billion in initial public offerings (IPOs) of corporate stock. This sum was a remarkable return to form after the region was rocked by protests in 2019; less than 75 per cent of that amount was raised over the same period that year. These new corporate stocks now make up part of the exchange's total value, known as its market capitalisation, which hovers above US$5 trillion. About 80 per cent of this total value is in companies tied directly to mainland China (HKEX 2020). By facilitating the trade of Chinese companies, many of which are state-owned, the Hong Kong exchange plays an important role in the market-based ownership of China's economy. The trade of these mainland companies in Hong Kong raises new questions about China's borders: where are they, what gets out, and what gets in?

Entrance to Exchange Square and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. PC: Sben Korsh, 2019.

The trading hall that houses the exchange is a single, double-height room of more than 4,000 square metres. It is located within an office complex built to house it, Exchange Square, which stands prominently within the Central District, the financial heart of Hong Kong, at the southwestern corner of De Voeux Road and Man Yiu Street. The windowless trading hall sits above the ground floor, level with Central's robust network of elevated walkways.

Although the trading hall is accessible only by appointment, the institution is certainly not hiding. The large mass of the hall is clearly visible from the popular walkway connecting the International Financial Centre and the Central Ferry Piers with the rest of Central. On the southwestern corner of the building, at the main entrance to Exchange Square, a glass-walled lobby is wrapped by a digital marquee that scrolls through the latest stock prices.

A pair of large multicolour screens bedecks each side, looping promotional ads with facts and figures about trading volumes. Along the southeastern corner of the hall, set into the building, is a covered walkway that exposes a small section of the hall, allowing people to freely walk up and peer in through a glass-walled entrance. This literal transparency into the exchange belies the aims of the modern-era exchanges' relationship with the public: the ability to invest in an ever-expanding financialised market economy—one that yields highly unequal outcomes. It is this aspirational idea of participation—that anyone could just walk into Hong Kong's stock exchange—that exemplifies what Cecilia L. Chu (forthcoming) terms the 'speculative governmentality' of Hong Kong.

What follows is a brief account of the recent history of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange's trading hall, examining the broad institutional changes and successive redesigns of the hall from 1986 to now. The first section is on the past iterations of the space and the political economy that informed them at the turn of the century, while the last three sections focus on the present. This short summation of the elite organisation shows how its trading hall is an integral space within the economic border of mainland China—a border crossing facilitating the movement of corporate ownership between China and global financial markets.

Into the New Millennium

Before the exchange existed in its current location, four stock exchanges operated in the Central District. The Hong Kong Government led a push to unify them, with the exchange leaders ultimately obliging and the Legislative Council passing the Stock Exchange Unification Ordinance in 1980 (Schenk 2017). The ordinance created a new enterprise named the Hong Kong Stock Exchange and bestowed it with a monopoly on all stock trading in the colony.

With the unified exchange formalised on paper, the next step was to find it a home. The government placed a prime harbourfront lot in the Central District up for bidding. Hongkong Land, a real estate company that owns much of the surrounding Central District, won the bid and built Exchange Square. While P&T, a prominent design firm based in Hong Kong, designed the wider complex, the exchange hired a smaller practice, Lu, Woo & Partners, to do the trading hall interior. The cavernous hall was squared with concentric rows of trading desks facing a prominent four-sided electric quotation board that hung from the ceiling above the open trading space below. The floor was swathed in red carpet and the walls were hung with squares of red sound-deadening fabric. In the southwestern corner, a viewing

platform on the second floor allowed the public to observe the trading below. In 1986, trading officially began in the purpose-built hall, beginning the contemporary era of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

In the 30-plus years since, the stock exchange has assisted in the liberalisation of mainland China by aligning its corporate governance with global norms and integrating its corporations within global financial markets. As part of China's economic reform, new stock exchanges opened in Shanghai and Shenzhen, and both were given different listings. Shanghai received the 'red stocks', comprising the country's well-established corporations, and Shenzhen was given the emerging technology stocks. In her ethnography of the reform-era Shanghai exchange, Ellen Hertz (1998) argues that the government's near total structuring of the stock market prioritised its own interests first, with elite financiers benefiting second, and the general investing public last. This sort of top-down planning created functional differentiations not only between financial markets and actors, but also between urban economies—with cities like Shenzhen exploiting their exceptional status as a driver of economic growth (O'Donnell et al. 2017). When trading began inside Exchange Square in 1986, across the border, the first master plan for the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone was also put forward, formalising the country's material plans for increased cross-border integration with Hong Kong and its international connections.

Hong Kong was no different in this urban competition, pitching its stock market to the Chinese state as the enterprise with the proper capitalist expertise and facilities for it to use to enter global financial markets. At first, this strong market culture and unified technological infrastructure significantly contributed to Hong Kong's attraction of Chinese investment through what are called B corporations—companies traded and incorporated in Hong Kong but which maintained their true operations in southern China. Then, beginning in 1993, a new financial

product called H-Shares brought further integration by placing ownership of companies from mainland China directly on to the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. These IPOs allowed China's state companies to sell stocks outside the mainland for the first time, theoretically offering nearly half of their ownership to capitalists around the world. The exchange has since hosted countless IPOs for China's state-owned enterprises.

The rise of global financial capital brought newer technological pressures to the physical space of the exchange. Beginning with the new fibreoptic and satellite networks introduced in the Exchange Square hall, it seemed possible that the need for a physical space to house the market might eventually be unnecessary. The Automatic Order Matching and Execution System was introduced in 1993, and updated again in 1996 and 2000, further facilitating the process of wholly digital trading. This process of automating the market was a long one, moving through a complex history of technology that laid the social infrastructure for today's amorphous markets (Pardo-Guerra 2020). With this smoothing of financial transactions came a new spatial relationship with the exchange; more trading began to take place offsite, especially on new digital trading floors inside the offices of investment banks and brokerage houses. As the number of traders on the floor of the hall dwindled, remodelling was required to befit an increasingly digital exchange.

As the stock exchange neared the new millennium, under pressure from the region's financial secretary, it merged with Hong Kong's futures exchange and three clearing houses under a new parent company named Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEX). In 2000, HKEX listed on its subsidiary company, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKSE). This act of listing the exchange on the exchange itself is known as demutualisation; many other stock exchanges demutualised in the same period (Akhtar 2002). This transformed the HKSE from a member-owned non-profit into a publicly traded for-profit company. This restructuring hypercharged the exchange's self-interest in its corporate identity.

The first major renovation of the hall came in 2006, with the opening of the renamed Exchange Trading and Exhibition Hall Complex. The global design firm Aedas won the commission to redesign the interior. From a singular trading floor, the hall was divided for multiple functions. The trading floor now occupied less than half of the space. The trading desks were arranged in a circle for 300 traders and their staff. According to the design lead of the project, Dmytriy Pereklita (2017), the renovation 'transformed the previously isolated facility into a welcoming boulevard that allows visitors an unobstructed view of the elliptical trading floor on one side, and access to the new exhibition & interactive educational media spaces on the other'. The space also included media booths that television stations could hire for broadcasting—scenes of the trading floor adding to a newscast's authority. The renovation took six months and cost HK$50 million (Yiu and Kwok 2006).

The redesign provided extensive space for manifestations of the history and cultural aspects of the market. These spaces had a larger footprint than the trading floor itself. A new auditorium seating 180 people, for example, sought to create social cohesion by hosting communal lectures and conferences, while elsewhere visual displays narrated the exchange's history, and a souvenir shop catered to visitors.

Connect Hall

The most recent version of the hall has done away with the physical trading floor altogether, and the exchange hall is now primarily a space of congregation for the city's financial industry, and trading takes place digitally offsite. Yet even without a physical space for trading, the

hall continues to play the same transborder role between China and the global financial system. Most notably, the Stock Connect program facilitates stock trading between Hong Kong's exchange and the mainland exchanges in Shenzhen and Shanghai. Paradoxically, while new technologies allowed traders to work even when physically apart, the social functions of the trading hall grew. These functions have built on past forms of celebration and spectacle that aimed to solidify trust and goodwill among market investors and the broader public.

In 2014, 'the last time the exchange disclosed such statistics, trading at the hall made up a negligible 0.2 per cent of total turnover on the city's bourse' (Yiu 2017). Three years later, the trading hall was shuttered to allow the removal of the trading floor altogether. In-person trading in an established trading hall ceased nearly a century and a half after trading practices began in Hong Kong, and more than a century after traders first professionalised and moved indoors. The closure of the entire trading hall allowed for a three-month renovation, which transformed the space into the Hong Kong Connect Hall. As well as the new space, the exchange also released a new logo, graphic identity, and a strategic vision of 'connecting China with the world' (HKEX 2016).

This most recent iteration of the hall serves predominantly as a space for events related to stocks and finance, and for corporate receptions and conferences on various socioeconomic issues popular among elites. Such spaces have become the international norm in recent years, serving as symbolic centres of a stock market rather than as the material spaces of trading. The 'connect' in the new placename refers to the Stock Connect program, as well as the Bond Connect, a trading program with the China Interbank Bond Market that opened in 2017. These programs exemplify the Hong Kong Stock Exchange's strategic vision to act as a mediator between China and the world. From the nineteenth century to the present day, spaces for stock trading have played a part in

facilitating the transferral of power from Hong Kong as a paradigm of British imperialism to an emergent neoliberal China.

At the Connect Hall opening in 2018, Hong Kong's Chief Executive Carrie Lam explained: 'The Connect Hall has a double meaning, connecting all parties in the market while it also refers to the stock connect schemes between Hong Kong and the mainland' (Yiu 2018). The hall's current form increases its ability to function as a gathering point for the territory's financial community. The space is open for hire, with prices topping around US$32,000 for a full day. This attracts key people from widely diverse economic sectors. We can see this play out through the Connect Hall's location tag on Instagram, where people post photos of their awards ceremonies for business students, charity auctions, and entrepreneurship, and corporate governance conferences. According to HKEX (2018), the new hall is 'designed for maximum flexibility, capable of simultaneously hosting multiple events'. Within the hall as well are expanded media booths for broadcasting directly from the exchange. All of these functions within the exchange hall allow the exchange to reach local, national, and global audiences.

Constant Improvement and Renewal

In the new Connect Hall, roughly one-quarter of the renovated area is devoted to an exhibition space called the Museum of Finance in Hong Kong. The space displays photographs and objects from the exchange's past alongside a sweeping financial history of China. The exhibition is curated by China's Museum of Finance, a quasi–nongovernmental organisation with close ties to the Chinese state that curates and operates nine museums of finance, banking, and money across the People's Republic of China, in close partnership with local governments and the Beijing administration.

The exhibition focuses most of its attention on the financial history of China. Notable is the history of currency, which takes up a large swathe of the space. Money, as an everyday object of material culture, is a popular subject for public audiences, yet currency's prominent inclusion in the stock exchange exhibition has multiple purposes. It stretches the museum's content beyond the corporate economy of the stock market and confuses it with the far-reaching economy of currency. It acts to present the notion of an unfettered stock market as integral to the economy of main street and not, as the left asserts, the financial economy.

Shortly after Connect Hall's inauguration, local papers covered a curatorial snafu found in the new exhibition. At the exhibition entrance, a large, curved wall displays the many iterations created from the Chinese root word for money, which originates from the word for shell coins. Some of the characters featured referred to wealth and winning, but some also held negative connotations about theft and bribery. Critics across social media picked up on the unflattering choice of words and, soon after the grand opening, the exchange covered up many of them (Cheng 2018). The incident revealed the exchange's present power as an institution, the influence of the mainland, and how the market space is perceived differently among mainland officials, the Hong Kong public, and elite financiers.

In an effort to smooth over this *faux pas*, a spokesperson for the exchange told a reporter: 'The construction of the exhibition centre is a systemic work that requires constant improvement and renewal' (Cheng 2018). Few phrases sum up the exchange's history better than this. This dialectic of constant change is reminiscent of what Amy Thomas (2012), in a seminal article on the London Stock Exchange, framed as the essential paradox of a trading hall: a trading hall houses the stock market, yet that market is also embedded within a vast material geography of the corporations traded therein. It is in the exchange's own attempted consolation of this paradox, its constant improvement and renewal of the space to better fit the times, that the paradox of its existence becomes most evident.

Opening Ceremonies

In response to COVID-19, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange created a virtual format of its gong-ringing ceremony that marks the moment when a company is newly listed for trade on the exchange. The first such ceremony took place three days after an attendee of a traditional listing ceremony tested positive for the virus. The plans for a virtual ceremony had, however, been in the works for some time, with companies from mainland China having already taken their pre-listing 'roadshows'—a sales pitch to investors—online around the world. The typical pre–COVID-19 ceremony took place at the exchange hall in Central, where the strike of the gong marked the opening of the day's trading, and was preceded by a brief reception, press photoshoot, as well as speeches by executives of the listing company and representatives from the exchange.

The hall of the stock *exchange* is one staging of the stock *market*. In everyday life, the stock market is more often presented through news media across television, newspapers, and online (Clark et al. 2004). Talking heads and the stock ticker make up much of the public's perception of the market. Is it up? Or down? But it is in the physical premises of the exchange, inside the new Connect Hall, that it is able most directly shape perceptions of the market, especially through the IPO ceremonies, with triumphant speeches and champagne toasts.

The growing importance of the exchange's symbolic presence is best illustrated by these gong-striking ceremonies. The exchange began these ceremonies some eight years ago as part of a new series of services that included other forms of promotion to 'help listed companies gain additional visibility among investors' and therefore 'to assist listed companies seeking efficient and cost-effective access to capital'

(HKEX 2012). After becoming an entirely trader-less venue, the exchange acquired a new, larger gong. This new gong was inaugurated the same year the Connect Hall opened and is reportedly 80 per cent larger than its predecessor, weighing 200 kilograms, and costing US$45,000 (Shenshen 2018); it was first used for the listing of Xiaomi, one of China's largest tech companies. The gong and renovated hall parallel a fundamental change taking place in many exchanges around the world: as trading goes virtual, the symbolic importance of the exchange hall has grown. The larger gong photographs better, increasing the drama of the action of striking it, therefore amplifying the intended symbolism of a company's listing, monumentalising the practice to gigantean proportions.

While the digital gong is less dramatic, taking the gong online is important to the Hong Kong exchange because of its cherished status as the global exchange capable of raising the most capital through IPOs. This top ranking is owed wholly to its relationship to corporations from mainland China—a relationship and status it aggressively seeks to maintain as the mainland's own exchanges in Shanghai and Shenzhen grow in both capability and global investor confidence. Through the Hong Kong Stock Exchange's online and animated gong of the COVID-19 era, we can hear the performance of integration that would normally be seen within the exchange hall. Given Hong Kong's increased integration and still rising importance within the mainland's economy, we will likely see ever-more spectacular spatial and aesthetic performances like this—new forms of identity construction that seek to shore up the Hong Kong Stock Exchange as an important border crossing between China and the world. ∎

PC: Maritè Toledo.

Politically Correct Masks
Navigating the China–Hong Kong Border During COVID-19

Xin SUN

In Hong Kong and Wuhan, recent facemask-wearing policies have forced people to wear their political allegiance on their faces. In Hong Kong in 2019, wearing a mask was interpreted within the context of ongoing protests against the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In Wuhan in 2020, the same action became a signal of the efficiency of the government in handling a public health crisis. Located between Hong Kong and Wuhan, Shenzhen has become an important site for the physical mediation between these opposing interpretative contexts. Indeed, the China–Hong Kong border is both an imaginary and a physical arrangement that takes material form when individuals cross from Shenzhen to Hong Kong and back again. In this essay, I track how Chinese and Hong Kong nationalisms have materialised at the border, focusing on increasing efforts to make political allegiances visible. As we will see, the location of bodies—on the Hong Kong or the mainland side of the border—critically shapes the meaning and consequences of 'not wearing a mask'.

To Mask or Not to Mask?

The 2014 'Occupy' protests in Hong Kong were grouped around symbolic locations that were associated with specific demands. Occupy

Central, for example, aimed to pressure the government for electoral reform by occupying the city's economic centre. Similarly, Occupy Central expressed broad-based discontent with the hardline attitude of the Hong Kong authorities and police by surrounding Hong Kong Government buildings (Xiang 2015). Five years later, in 2019, the slogans 'Flowers Blooming Everywhere' (遍地开花) and 'Be Water' reflected a comprehensive social conflict that had not only spread throughout the city, but also permeated everyday interactions (Sala 2019; Yu 2019).

Protests against Hong Kong's Extradition Bill, for example, began peacefully on 9 June 2019. However, by 1 October 2019, violence and civil disruption had escalated in the Special Administrative Region. Many protestors wore facemasks to hide their identity while participating in unpermitted protests. In response, the Chief Executive in Council passed the Prohibition on Face Covering Regulation, aiming 'to facilitate police investigation and to serve as a deterrent against the violent and illegal acts of masked perpetrators' (HCAL 2945 2019). The regulation was passed on 4 October 2019, taking effect on 5 October at midnight.

On the afternoon of 5 October 2019, angry students gathered near the atrium of the Festival Walk mall, yelling the slogan 'Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of Our Times' (光复香港, 时代革命). The students were protesting the imminent promulgation of the Face Covering Regulation by distributing free facemasks. The form of the protest forced pedestrians to wear their politics on their face with no neutrality possible; those who took a mask were assumed to be acting in solidarity with the students, while those who did not were assumed to be showing support for the government. I encountered the protest in the corridor that connects the campus of the City University of Hong Kong to the Kowloon Tong metro station via the mall. I was suddenly even more aware of my mainlander status because masks had become a symbol, an attitude, and a political preference. In a profound sense, my decision about whether to take a mask would reveal me to have a political stance, even if I wanted to remain neutral.

Unmasked in Wuhan

Roughly three months after that encounter, I prepared to leave Hong Kong to celebrate the Spring Festival with my family in Wuhan. At the time, I was not worried about the COVID-19 outbreak. Although Hong Kong had reported some cases imported from Wuhan, Wuhan's experts in disease control and government leaders had publicly said that the virus was not very contagious and that there was a low risk of human-to-human transmission. On 12 January, as I boarded a train at the West Kowloon Station, public service announcements reminded any travellers to Wuhan that they should prepare facemasks. The train stopped in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Changsha before arriving in Wuhan five hours later. However, despite the volume of travellers, few donned a mask.

On 23 January, after 830 confirmed cases and 25 deaths, and after human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 was confirmed, the Chinese Government abruptly locked down Wuhan, blocking expressways and banning flights. At that time, not wearing a mask in public was designated a behaviour that went against public security. Within one day, the number of infections surged to 1,287 and the lockdown was expanded to 16 cities in Hubei Province. Under such circumstances, masks became a measure of political competence, civil responsibility, and familial intimacy. During a press conference on 26 January, for example, Hubei Provincial Governor Wang Xiaodong mistakenly overestimated the production capacity for masks three times in public statements, downgrading estimates from 10.8 billion to 1.8 billion, to 1.08 million. Medical resources were in desperately short supply and 'appeals for help' from nurses and doctors burst out across social media. My pregnant sister asked me whether I could get

some masks for her husband, a doctor on the frontline. Grounded at home, I asked friends to buy masks from the Philippines, but my order was intercepted by Hong Kong customs officials because, as of 26 January, the Chinese Government had announced that all medical resources could only be distributed by the Chinese Red Cross—an inefficient bureaucracy directed and funded by the Communist Party. The Red Cross's inefficiency during the outbreak stirred harsh political critique seldom expressed so blatantly in China.

Criticism of the government's response to COVID-19 increased on 6 February 2020, when Doctor Li Wenliang, one of a group of 'whistleblowers' who later was disciplined for 'spreading rumours', passed away after having been infected at work. On 10 February, Wuhan residents were grounded at home and all public and private transportation was suspended. On 12 February, the daily count of confirmed cases rose to 14,840 (Liu 2020), reducing the government's credibility with respect to data transparency. The opacity of information, in conjunction with concerns about political stability, resulted in a further quarantine of urban systems. Rage and grief welled up among Chinese netizens, but the relative success of the Chinese authorities in containing the outbreak in China, along with the mishandling of the pandemic in some Western countries, created a hostile international environment, ultimately creating fertile ground for nationalism (Zhang, C. 2020).

One Pandemic, Two Systems

Against the backdrop of ongoing protests in Hong Kong, the COVID-19 pandemic consolidated and accelerated the spatialised trauma of 'One Country, Two Systems'. The first change wrought by the pandemic was the tightening of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border. Since 5 February 2020, mainlanders have been required to quarantine for 14 days in Hong Kong (GHKSAR 2020), while Hong Kong residents are required to quarantine for two weeks on arrival in China. Since 25 March 2020, all border checkpoints except Shenzhen Bay have been closed to private cars and buses. Although Hong Kong International Airport, the Shenzhen Bay Port checkpoint for flight transfers between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge have remained open, the number of Shenzhen–Hong Kong border crossings, normally around 8 or 9 million per month (and even higher during holidays), dropped to a mere 36,000 per month in March 2020.

Those who do cross the border are treated differently in Shenzhen than in Hong Kong, even though the public health emphasis in both cities is designed to track individuals. People who cross from Hong Kong to Shenzhen are quarantined the moment they pass through the Shenzhen Bay Checkpoint, even if they obtained a negative test result in Hong Kong within the previous 24 hours. They are placed on a bus, sent to an assigned hotel with no choice of food, and forced to pay the costs of quarantine themselves. After the 14-day quarantine ends, they remain under surveillance through the 'health QR code' app, which is downloaded on to mobile phones and can be scanned on entering public buildings. A green code means normal; yellow means you need to be observed; red means return to quarantine. Indeed, the state's capacity to track individuals has expanded with the pandemic, permeating everyday life as private trajectories become data within public security systems. Nevertheless, because the health QR code is used throughout the country, anyone who wishes to reduce restrictions on their domestic mobility must download the app. Indeed, nearly all of Wuhan's 9.9 million citizens participated in mass testing in May 2020 because they wanted to re-enter public life.

In contrast, in Hong Kong, those who cross the border are tracked only during the 14-day quarantine period. In August 2020, for example, I passed through the Shenzhen Bay Checkpoint with a tracking wristband that connected to an

app that was downloaded to my mobile phone, as required by the Hong Kong Government. Once through the checkpoint, I took a taxi to the metro, and then the metro to a hotel of my choosing. Within an hour of arriving at my hotel, I went shopping and returned to my hotel with a take-away meal I had ordered online. I may have come into 'intimate contact' with hundreds of people before I settled in the hotel, but it would have been impossible for the Hong Kong Government to identify who they were since, although I was trackable, my mobility was not limited. On the last day of my quarantine, I received a call from a Hong Kong officer, who reminded me that I could immediately uninstall the tracking app. In September, a mass testing program supported by the mainland stretched for two weeks, aiming to find previously unknown cases as well as to prepare for unveiling a health QR code that could be mutually recognised in Hong Kong, Macau, and Guangdong Province. Only about 1.78 million of the 7.5 million people in Hong Kong participated in the programme.

Border Infrastructure

The Mass Transit Railway (MTR) is not simply a means for spatially unifying Hong Kong; it is also the means through which Hong Kong is integrated into the mainland via Shenzhen. On 2 February 2020, four months after the Yuen Long incident—when a mob of alleged triad members indiscriminately attacked passengers at the Yuen Long MTR station, presumably as punishment for participation in protests earlier in the day— two explosives were found on a train at the Lo Wu MTR station, which is linked to the border checkpoint in Shenzhen (Mok and Cheng 2020). The foiled explosive attack of anger towards the government's refusal to fully close the border to prevent COVID-19 spreading from the mainland to Hong Kong. The following day, thousands of Hong Kong medical workers went on strike, demanding a complete closure of the border to 'save Hong Kong' (Ip 2020). The strikes converged with the anti-

Kowloon Bay Station, Hong Kong. PC: Kwok Ho Eddie Wong.

mainland sentiment that had been escalating since the anti–Extradition Bill movement. From the protestors' point of view, the Hong Kong Government's proposal to address the pandemic had to display consideration for Hong Kong people, rather than subordination to Beijing. Hong Kong medical workers argued that if the border were kept open, they would soon be inundated with infected persons who would spread the virus. With limited medical resources, they refused to make sacrifices for an indifferent government, which, in their view, did not care about their lives. Carrie Lam, Chief Executive of Hong Kong, initially objected to a complete prohibition of mainlanders and a lockdown, criticising the medical workers' demands as discrimination and not in line with recommendations from the World Health Organisation (Cheung et al. 2020).

In contrast, mainland public health professionals frequently faced a conflict between acting with scientifically informed professionalism or obedience to their leaders (Mason 2016). This meant that on-the-ground responses to COVID-19 were city-specific. In Shenzhen, for example, experience combating Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and a commitment to public health as a sign of modernisation compensated for problems that arose in other cities due to initial obfuscation around the pandemic. Shenzhen's public health department activated its centralised response the day after the city's health authority network detected widespread online discussions about a pneumonia of unknown cause on 30 December 2019 (Zou et al. 2020). This decision occurred on the same day that BlueDot, a Toronto-based startup, first recognised the novel coronavirus in Wuhan (Niiler 2020).

Shenzhen's first case was detected on 8 January 2020, suggesting that public health officers were working behind the scenes even before the first infected case imported from Wuhan to Shenzhen was publicly reported on 20 January (Bai 2020). By 7 February 2020, while Wuhan's medical system was struggling to cope with the chaos of large numbers of COVID-19 cases and limited public transparency, Shenzhen had already produced and made available an online map of cases in the city. In addition, Shenzhen mobilised 720 public health personnel to find cases and perform contact tracing, with the result that the city recorded no local infections after 22 February 2020 (Zou et al. 2020). In contrast, more than 40,000 medical workers from all over China gathered in Hubei Province to suppress the outbreak, with more than 3,000 of them diagnosed with COVID-19 by 28 February (Zhang, L.-T. 2020).

Border Contradictions

Regulation of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border during the pandemic has revealed how easily cross-border infrastructure can be deployed to buttress competing—even contradictory—ideologies. In China, for example, it became common to explain foreign failures to contain COVID-19 as a failure of countries 'to do their homework' (抄作业) (Zeng 2020). The implication was that if foreign governments had emulated China's top-down strategy for responding to the virus, they would not have experienced high levels of infection. Similarly, in Hong Kong, measures to control the influx of people from the mainland overlooked Shenzhen's success in combating COVID-19, and assumed the city's experience was more like that of the rest of the country. The politicisation of the border and its deployment through mask-wearing protocols raises important questions about how One Country, Two Systems can be safely navigated on both sides of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border. ∎

Border as Sluice
Towards a Cultural Geography of the Shen Kong Borderlands

Jonathan BACH
Mary Ann O'DONNELL

It is estimated that, by 2019, more than 30,000 students crossed the border from Shenzhen to attend school in Hong Kong. PC: ejinsight.com.

When global attention alights on the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border, it tends to focus on the geopolitical significance of a boundary that has morphed from the Sino-British border, to the Cold War 'Bamboo Curtain', to the demarcation between 'One Country, Two Systems'. Most recently, Shenzhen has been given a mediating role within the Greater Bay Area because the history of experimental restructuring in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) has served as both model and means for China's expansion in international logistics and trade. Thus, when seen from Beijing, the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border sharpens the edge of its national narrative, both separating and conjoining economic, regulatory, and eventually political systems, serving to both delimit and expand

them. In turn, regional governments and planning agencies tend to see the border technocratically, strategically integrating local economies into global chains of trade and consumption.

On the ground in Shenzhen, however, the border has visceral effects, anchoring identities and permeating everyday life via the daily minutiae of businesses that buy, sell, ship, receive, manufacture, and bank across the border, as well through the activities of second-home–owners, students, daytripping shoppers, families, and friends, who regularly cross the border in the course of the day. Yet unless you work at it, along it, across it, or have other reasons to go back and forth, the physical border is mostly an absent presence. And therein lies the rub: when we think of the border

in general, we imagine fenced enclosures, flood-lit checkpoints, and ritualised protocols that secure territory and national ambitions; the border as a wall. And, yes, this architecture is an important component of the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border complex. However, as urban infrastructure, the border is less a faultline for state boundaries than it is a regulated form of connection and differentiation that locals refer to as 'Shen Kong' (深港). This expression combines the first character from Shenzhen (深圳, literally 'Deep Ditch') with the second character in Hong Kong (香港, 'Fragrant Harbour') to produce 'Deep Harbour'. Notably, both characters contain the three-drop water radical, calling attention to the region's watery origins and historical importance as the gateway to Guangzhou from the South China Sea . This neologism suggests a more fluid and porous condition than appears from a distance: the border as sluice.

In this brief concluding essay, we conceptualise Shen Kong through the analytical lens of the border as sluice. As the forgoing articles have shown, in a riparian and coastal region like the one where Shenzhen lies—with its tributaries, islands, coves, bays, fisherfolk, aquaculture, and shifting sands—controlling the relationship between water and land is at the heart of ordering space. Conceptualising the border as sluice, we submit, allows us to account for the border's polyvalence, ambiguity, and power, its historical resonance and ongoing relevance, in addition to the ways in which the border comes to be embodied, transformed, and imagined. Consider, for example, those children who reside in Shenzhen but attend Hong Kong schools. As early as October 2000, the Hong Kong Legislative Council confirmed that 2,835 Shenzhen students attended school in the Special Administrative Region's North and Yuen Long districts (Education Bureau 2001). By 2019, the number had grown to more than 30,000 students, many of whom attended schools that specifically catered to Shenzhen residents. Since Shenzhen *hukou* (户口; 'household registration') holders became eligible for annual travel passes between the

two cities, Shenzhen residents were able, for various reasons, to opt for a Hong Kong education. Within the border complex itself, there are designated lanes for students, who are brought to and from the border in 'nanny buses'. The image of lines of young children at the border, neatly dressed in school uniforms and wearing identity card pouches around their necks, speaks to the banality of border crossing; the border is not a (simple) barricade, but rather an architecture for the regulated distribution of designated people. Thus, when figured as sluice, the Shen Kong border suggests how forms of urban liminality and concomitant identities can only be situated with respect to historical geographies, changing technologies, economic desires, and imagined futures.

Knock, Knock …

Shenzhen's border architecture operates at the conjunction of sea, land, and nation, coordinating two different regimes. The first border regime functions within that of international maritime logistics. As of 2020, the Port of Shenzhen was ranked fourth in the world in terms of container throughput, behind Shanghai, Singapore, and Ningbo-Zhongshan, but still ahead of Guangzhou (fifth) and Hong Kong (eighth) (Lloyd's List 2020). That said, the combined shipping volume of the three Pearl River Delta ports makes the region an undisputed leader in the sector, not only buttressing the importance of the Greater Bay Area at home and abroad, but also shaping its physical form. In Shekou, Chiwan, and Yantian, container terminals dominate the view from seaside parks, while container trucks from neighbouring Dongguan and Huizhou flow into the city. Although container trucks have been diverted from the downtown area since 2006, they still dominate roads and neighbourhoods in subdistricts like Henggang that have not yet fully deindustrialised, reminding us not only of Shen Kong's manufacturing origins, but also of its breadth. Shenzhen 'brought in the foreign

and connected the interior' (外引内联), making any place within the SEZ a potential sluice; the city was designed to mediate between and isolate the fuzzy boundaries between 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics' and the rest of the world. The second border regime regulates everyday border crossings between Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The land border between the two cities is only 33 kilometres long, while the much longer water border extends through Shenzhen and Mirs bays, merging with the Pearl River in the east and the South China Sea in the west, and incorporating smaller islands and marine waters. This is one of the busiest borders in the world, with ten checkpoints in Shenzhen and one in Hong Kong that are integrated into the public transportation networks of both cities. People cross the border mostly in cars, buses, and trains. The now-standardised ferry routes are less used, despite the panoramic views and thinner crowds they offer.

The essays in this forum have tracked how the establishment of the border and concomitant spatial reordering transformed the 'lonely' watery edges of empire into sluices for people, goods, and capital. Two sixteenth-century events informed the structure and purpose of these architectures. First, the Portuguese established the colony of Macau, bringing Western Europe into circuits of trade that had connected the South China Sea to the Indian Ocean for millennia. Second, the Spanish discovered silver in Potosí, Bolivia. For three centuries, Potosí *reales* would be the currency of international trade, accumulating in Guangzhou before the British began pushing opium to divert the flow of silver to London. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the Royal Navy sought, cajoled, and coerced water access from the Qing—from the deep harbours of Hong Kong to lesser concessions upriver to Guangzhou, turning the shifting borders of Xin'an into not only a crucible for trade and war, but also a point of departure for a diaspora that spread through Southeast Asia, Europe, and North America. At the peak of British imperialism, as Denise Ho recounts in her contribution to this

forum, James Stewart Lockhart and friends set the Sino-British border at the high-tide mark of the banks of Shenzhen and Mirs bays, transforming piers and marketplaces into sites of cross-border exchange. Maritime access to Guangzhou made Hong Kong significant, strategic, and sustainable. Indeed, before the 1997 Handover, the Crown Colony's 78.8-mile (123-kilometre) water border was one of the few to consistently appear on international maps, as if dotted lines could stabilise a border that had been neither completely demarcated nor fully enforced.

The specificity of this cultural geography makes salient the impossibility of isolating the cities from one another. This is not merely a philosophical question, but also one of physical survival. Hong Kong imports 80 per cent of its water from Guangdong and all of it comes via Shenzhen. The image of water being delivered from the East River to Hong Kong spigots illustrates how cross-border infrastructures become flesh. The sluice here is a prosthetic that makes the national body and its multitudes materially possible.

… Who's There?

During the early Cold War, when China began to consolidate its maritime borders, the Sino-British border increasingly came to structure belonging and identity in the region. As Alice Du Liangliang explains, this process was not only administrative, but also entailed moving islanders to the mainland and settling boat-dwellers in harbours. To claim watery borders, it was necessary to ground islanders and boat-dwellers. This history offers critical insight into how the border increasingly came to anchor identities; on the ground, the border first became visible not as architecture, but as settlement. Indeed, Taomo Zhou's essay on the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Engineering Corps draws attention to the way multiple borders intersected in the embodied labour of this unusual group, which had been transferred

from the Third Front to help build the city in between the 'first' and 'second' lines. Through their bodies, we see a palimpsest of the borders across the Maoist and Deng eras, between rural and urban, between mobilisation and demobilisation, and between classes as some thrive and others languish in the new market-oriented city. The borders in Zhou's telling are often invisible—a theme that takes centre-stage in Na Fu's exploration of the border myths that shape daily life. In common parlance, borders often appear as 'hard' or 'soft' to the degree they are permeable, but Fu suggests that a better metaphor would be thick or thin, with echoes of 'thick description', as in Clifford Geertz's famous essay. Here, as with Geertz, the border appears as a web of meaning that is not reducible to its observed function. We have to look, as Fu, Dodom Kim, and Sun Xin do in their essays, at the cobbler setting up shop on the footbridge, the professional woman literally in pursuit of mobility through travel permits, or Xin's dilemma over wearing a mask near the border.

Together, the essays in this forum suggest that Shen Kong facilitates not only the regulation of differences, but also the governance of (ongoing and unavoidable) differentiation. As Fu's, Kim's, and Sun's essays show clearly, the infrastructures regulating border crossings are neither limited to border locations nor supervised only by state actors. We carry the border in our wallets and in our phones, we traverse it through virtual private networks (VPNs) and online transactions, and we inhabit its traces in the physical spaces we visit, even when, as with Sben Korsh's example of the stock exchange, it serves mainly to remind us of how virtual things have become. In other words, within and against the proliferating border, our identities are formed through mutual acts of recognition and misrecognition. Suddenly, we find ourselves confronted by Victor Turner via both van Gennep and Althusser: we are at the threshold, but we can only cross over by identifying ourselves.

On Containing Multitudes

The Greater Bay Area comprises the 11 cities of the Pearl River Delta. The name in Chinese, 粤港澳大湾区(*yuegang'ao dawanqu*), suggests a golden triangle, with Guangzhou at its apex and Hong Kong and Macau forming its baseline. It is an image that forces one to seriously consider what Shenzhen offers—what kinds of spatial and social mediation are needed to thrive in the post–Cold War era?

One approach to this question is to look at how the meaning of border-crossing shifted circa 1980. The special zone was, by design and by definition, a strategic deployment of liminality, for goods, money, and people. Identifiable neither as wholly 'capitalist' nor wholly 'socialist', the zone was itself a sluice through which the currents generated by Reform and Opening Up flowed into China from abroad, and through which export products left. Before 1979, crossing the border afforded the individual new status, including right-of-abode (in Hong Kong) or *hukou* (in Bao'an County). In contrast, since 1980, crossing the border might be seen as an inconvenient chore; one passes through quickly and efficiently. But here is the catch: crossing the border today does not entail a change in status. Instead, what was 'foreign' can remain excluded from local accounting. The transition from the Sino-British border before 1979 to the Shenzhen–Hong Kong border post 1980 thus signified a different kind of border—not one set up to protect already-existing territory from the outside, but one that created the new inside by allowing the outside to come in, on the condition that it remain liminal. The ability to accommodate multitudes that are in but not of the city, we suggest, is an effect of how the Shen Kong border operates as sluice at both the level of international logistics and the level of everyday life.

In Shenzhen's port areas, goods are stocked tariff-free in bonded warehouses awaiting transit to other locations. Exports travel from assembly line to ship via multinodal containers that can be transferred from dock to truck and back again. Money turns into bits and bytes and waits in accounts to be converted and transferred. Like goods and money, people, too, inhabit a special kind of liminal existence created by Shenzhen's borders. Except for the so-called Shenzhen second generation (深二代), who were born and raised in Shenzhen, most of the city's population remains either of the city or in the city, but seldom both. Indigenous Bao'an villagers were initially denied Shenzhen *hukou*, with their villages still under rural land law and not under municipal control appearing as blank spots on city maps awaiting development. They were thus 'of' the city but not always 'in' it. Their legendary shift from farmers to landlords led them to build tenement housing for the migrants who poured into the city to construct its buildings, cook its food, and work in its factories. This made villages home to a migrant population that was, conversely, 'in' the city but not 'of' it—the so-called floating population without *hukou* or often any authorisation to be there at all. Even today, it is estimated that more than half of Shenzhen's actual (in contrast to its legal) population lives in urban villages. In turn, these migrants often work for the privileged managerial class, who remain, in a different way, also 'in' but not 'of' the city; many have come to Shenzhen from other Chinese cities and, even on receiving Shenzhen *hukou*, still consider themselves native to elsewhere.

We have called the border a sluice, in part because it works like an obligatory passage point, forcing populations through its narrow openings, whether receiving state blessings for their exits and thus compliant, marked, and counted, or evading controls, smuggling, or crossing without permission. The hallmark of a sluice, a word derived via Old French from the Latin word *excludere* ('to exclude'), is that it never stops everything. In gold mining, the sluice separates gold from gravel, but it soaks

everything that tumbles through it as well. It channels the water, too, but water, as we know, finds its own way. Water also wears down structures. In her introduction, Ho points out how the border since its inception has been prophesising its own demise, since Hong Kong was, one way or the other, 'always due to return to Chinese territory'. Now that it has, during the phase of One Country, Two Systems, the border has been adapted seamlessly to the governance of differentiation. In terms of logistics, the water border that was central to British hegemony has dissolved, allowing for the emergence of an integrated regional system. In terms of the individual, however, the border can disappear when needed (for those on high-speed trains, nanny buses, or airport shuttles), just as it can materialise when needed (whether to stop those with or, as the case may be, without masks). Indeed, if anything is truly in and of the city, it is the border itself. Without it, there would be no Shenzhen, but like Shenzhen, it cannot stay still either. ∎

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