

**Perception of Cross Border Differences, Belief Systems,
and Quick Evaluation of Potential Conflict**

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ABSTRACT

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How conflictual realities on international boundaries are perceived and analyzed is the subject of this paper. Two techniques for evaluating conflict, belief systems and rational choice are contrasted. Quickness of evaluation is imagined as a value maximized, if possible. International relations realities are presented as ranging from the quick evaluation of Sarajevo in 1914 and subsequent forming of alliances to ordinary border conflicts. The conflict realities found in border conflict are deemed adequate for this paper's logical rational analysis. Decision making conditions are presented as changing as a result of the rise of the service sector, the information economy, Internet, social networking, and Internet personalities. Perception strengths are increasing as social networking improves emotional intelligence. The realities from the present U.S. - Canada border closure are considered as exemplifying border conflicts. Likewise, conflictual possibilities in the closure of borders in the Schengen countries are included in the paper's analysis.

This research question confronts multidimensional concepts. Assumptions about when belief systems and rational choice are decision making tools are discussed. Belief systems are assumed to offer quick decisions. Rational choice decisions are more likely used with complicated problems. If quickness is the prized virtue, belief systems are thought to be advantageous to rational choice. IT and social networking are presented as having an affect on which decision technique is chosen.

While the research problem is difficult, qualitative methods offers genuine possibilities because of the strength of narrative analysis. An image narrative of the U.S. - Canadian border closure and the Schengen border closures is devised using theoretical sampling. As issues emerged and became better defined, resampling occurred in this research. The resulting data in vivid images is thought to be well connected to montage. The imaging process that went into each image significantly increases the data stored in each image. The various images in the sample when analyzed are analogous to listening to a focus group about the research subject. A more structured analysis of the image data is possible with a cognitive mapping variant. Images are first coded according to how possibly conflictual they are. Next an attempt is made to project if they are likely reasoned with belief systems or rational choice.

The results are concerned that Internet and social networking possibly biases choice between belief systems and rational choice. The amount of information being produced by ever more sophisticated imaging techniques is found to be a significant variable. The two image narratives this research devised ask if increased information is more frequently preferencing rational choice techniques. Rational choice's production of many options need be included among changing decision conditions. There is a need to develop abilities to accept changing conditions in both perception and how conflictual realities are evaluated.

Perception of Cross Border Differences, Belief Systems, and Quick Evaluation of Potential Conflict

International boundaries tend to create differences among peoples. An important objective of an international border is to keep certain beliefs and political conditions together while controlling external influences. As borders divide people, often developments happen differently on the other side of a border. In the present day, an abundance of media influences people irrespective of borders. Inevitably, differences occur as respective governments pursue their policy ideas. Usually, these conflicts are insignificant, but instances arise when disagreements are of a more fundamental nature. This is about those ordinary cognitive mechanisms that quickly evaluate what is happening when there are disagreements. Since in most instances border conflicts successfully resolve, this paper intends to produce explanations for why this is so. This type of analysis reasonably could improve understanding of what happens in those instances where border conflicts escalate.

Potential conflicts happen from this paper's theoretical perspective in the present day. Innovations in information technology, Internet, and social networking have transformed international realities. Many former models of conflict have either become obsolete or require drastic revision to accommodate contemporary informational realities. The past never anticipated the extensive global communications that are now pervasive. Were crises of the past to happen in 2021, they would not have the same development as they originally did.

An objective of this analysis is to connect present modes of reasoning with some traditional international conflict realities. For purposes of analysis, border conflicts are adequately exemplary. There are many other types of international disagreements that have been extensively analyzed. Since this analysis is essentially a logical rational perspective, borders produce enough interaction between nations to support some reasonable conclusions.

In 2021, analysis of border conflicts is more reasonable than usual because the covid-19 pandemic has closed a substantial number of international boundaries. The border between the United States and Canada is, for example, closed at the present time. U.S. and Canada have had a long history of peaceful cooperation along the two nations' long common boarder. For the first time in history, the difficult issues surrounding covid-19 convinced the two countries that closing their border could be advantageous. An analogous situation prevails between the U.S. and the European Schengen countries. Reciprocally, citizens from the U.S. and Schengen countries are not allowed in each other's countries. The duration of these border closures is not at this time known.

From a theoretical perspective, this paper's analysis could prove useful projecting some possible implications of these extensive border closures. The model of border conflict events that this paper develops is inclusive of several current political and technical realities that influence how conflicts could happen. Bringing more traditional perspectives on international relations together with the informational realities of 2021 may assist in comprehending what developments could happen as a result of the present unusual border closure reality.

The Struggle to Improve Perceptiveness in 2021

Perception of cross border differences is influenced by other perception issues in 2021. The information economy and the rise of the knowledge worker are important factors influencing perception. As traditional industrial economies yielded to the information economy, suddenly knowledge and information became premium commodities. The service sector dramatically increased in size. Those employed in the service sector depended upon their social skills to succeed in occupations requiring much personal interaction. The drudgery of work in the industrial economy was gone, but somehow people had to acquire the informational resources that allow banter with other people. The emphasis on information increased as a demand-pull phenomena.

Often the information economy was explained on the basis of the premium value of information which made technology work. The high-end features of most technology required informational assistance to reach productive possibilities. Globalism was supported by the information economy because where this knowledge to make technology work came from did not matter. A person could as easily receive information about making high-end features of technology work from Uruguay as from Canada. Globalism accelerated because the important reality was the increased realization of technology's potential.

Information technology supported the service sector, and post industrial economic development continued. With decades of development, the service sector became ever more complex. Competitions within the service sector became the norm in pursuit of ordinary economic objectives. What was happening to perception issues as this change was occurring? Extensive service sector competition placed a premium on media that was invaluable in improving perceptive skills.

Social networking could be thought of as developing as workers perceived a need to improve their perceptive strengths. The increasing popularity and influence of social networking is reasonable as the media has great influence in how people perceive all sorts of phenomena. As the paper initially contended, perceptions about border conflicts is influenced much the same as perception of other societal realities.

The cognitive influence of vivid images, plentiful graphics, and the interactive visual experience, all integral to social networking, is recognized to be substantial. Media richness theory concludes that there is a direct relationship between image sophistication and cognitive influence. (Daft and Lengel, pp. 191-233) The increasingly sophisticated IT that supports social networking is every year increasing the image strength of communications. Contrasting the graphical content that accompanies social networking from several years ago with the present, reveals continual development in the media richness of social networking. Correspondingly, the cognitive influence of social networking has also increased.

Information economy factors have combined with demands from the service sector to produce a media that purposefully strives to improve strengths in perception. Perception can be more than simple recognition of objects, phenomena, and personalities. How the cognitive apparatus processes sensory data is included in the definition of perception. The sophistication with which basic images of reality are processed can be improved. Social networking appears to have a positive effect on how complex sensory data is processed.

This paper's analytic purposes include asking how perceptions influence evaluating border conflicts. Daniel Goleman's term, "emotional intelligence," is useful for discussing perceptions and borders. There is said to be lack of emotional intelligence when one has inadequate understanding of one's own emotions. An inability to appreciate the emotions of others is another indicator of failure of emotional intelligence. (Denhardt *et al.*, 2020, p. 23) Sophisticated cognitive processing of sensory data is almost certainly significantly influence by emotional intelligence.

Placing emphasis on emotional intelligence is useful in appreciating how social networkers anticipate improving their strengths in perception. Media richness theory is one explanation for the cognitive transformation that may be happening with social networking. Ever more vivid images presented sophisticatedly can be anticipated to transform cognitive process. (Daft and Lengel, pp. 191-233) More than that is happening, however. Social networking is also affecting emotional intelligence and making improvements to how people process sensory information.

In the preceding decade, the Internet personality phenomena was begun and now has reached a phenomenal level. A reasonable explanation for the rise of Internet personalities is improved emotional intelligence. The idea of memes acquiring substantial influence on Internet causes a search for an explanatory psychological mechanism. (Wikipedia, 2021) Concepts about transactions involving relations between persons reasoning in the adult, the parent, and the child perspective could be useful in possible explanation. (Tomlinson, 2013) Social networkers are gaining somehow from their involvement with memes online.

Possibly, failures in emotional intelligence are imagined as resolvable through the use of Internet personalities. The social networker accepts himself as a child reasoning with an adult in order to bolster

his emotional intelligence. As a phenomenon, Internet personalities become more numerous and influential. Social networkers learn that memes accomplish needful transformations in emotional intelligence. The cognitive sophistication with which perceptions are processed become more tuned to reality and more competitive.

Belief Systems or Quick Evaluation Decides Conflict?

Border conflicts are used by this paper to exemplify international relations situations where there are protagonists. Opposing forces in border conflicts may not be serious opponents, but at least in the immediate reality, there is some disagreement about basic interests. In other instances, of course, border conflicts maybe the prelude to full-scale war. For this paper's purpose, border disagreements of both sorts are theoretically intuitive.

Analysis precedes from this point assuming there are two principal techniques for appraising disagreements along international boundaries. First, perception of the nature of conflict occurs as those involved allow emergent information to react with established belief systems. This is an example of how belief systems function heuristically in the appraisal of reality. Second, border conflicts can be appraised with a rational evaluation of developing conditions. When this happens people gather as much information as possible about events. Appropriate action is then decided upon with a calculation of costs and benefits of various alternatives.

The belief system method of heuristically assessing conflict is the more traditional of the two approaches. The prevalent use of belief systems is sometimes associated with stable international relations along borders. Belief systems are developed over long periods of time and are thought to be

the product of experience and learning. Applying a belief system in appraising a potential conflict anticipates no drastic change from precedents in resolving like situations. Appraising conflict with belief systems imagines, on the basis of previous resolutions, that incremental change will happen.

Rational assessment of possible disagreements on borders is more time consuming. Information must be gathered about both the situation that is evolving and about the costs and benefits of alternatives. Procedurally, rational assessment allows options for more drastic action. Incrementalism is less likely to win out when rational assessment is the decision technique. How this decision method works effectively places a range of options on the table.

This paper's premise is that quick evaluation of border conflict is the prized value most likely maximized. Border conflict is a microcosm of all international relations conflicts. The 20th century featured astounding conflicts where quick evaluation of what was happening was crucial and determinant to subsequent events. The events following Sarajevo in 1914 could be thought of as exemplifying this difficult truth. The protagonist in 1914 had to quickly evaluate developments in the international situation and conclude alliances that shaped the First World War. Evaluation of international conflict is, of course, ordinarily altogether mundane. The frame of reference this paper focuses upon are ordinary altercations occurring as people confront the realities of international boundaries. Tariffs, migration issues, and the occasional military transgression are the conflictual realities this paper primarily addresses.

The subsequent analysis in this paper asks what is happening to trustworthy belief systems as tools for quick evaluation of boundary conflict since the rise of social networking. Perception of conflict appears the determinant reality affecting the present utility of belief systems. The information economy, the rise

of the service sector, and social networking all have implications for perception. Competitive realities in post-industrial economies have made people consumers of vast quantities of information. The social abilities to succeed in the information economy require that people know more. Perceptive skills likewise have a premium value. The cognitive apparatus needs to process emergent information. Emotional intelligence improves perceptive processing. Social networking proves invaluable in upgrading emotional intelligence and increasing the perception strengths pervasive among the people.

The research question this paper attempts to analyze is deciding how to conceptualize effects on venerable belief systems from innovations like social networking. Belief systems could prove to be more resilient than many imagine. Alternatively, social networking might be promoting more of a rational choice perspective. The emotional intelligence gains this media is producing could effectively bias decision techniques toward a more thorough evaluation of options, cost, and benefits. Whatever is happening affecting choice of decision techniques has implications for stability, incrementalism, and innovation. Answering if recent developments in IT and social networking are likely transformative in how border conflicts are evaluated is meaningful in better appreciating present international cooperation.

Qualitative Method's Ability to Conceptualize Perceiving Conflict

Were research methods to succeed optimally with this paper's research idea, a meaningful improvement in understanding about perception of conflict would result. Better perception of conflict is a commendable objective with peaceful overtones. The methodological problem in beginning to work with this research question is the multidimensionality of the concepts upon which the project is based.

The analysis in the paper intends some contrasts between decision-making based on belief systems and determinations that result from rational choice techniques.

Several assumptions complicate any research design. Belief system decisions are thought to be the more common of the two techniques. Most ordinary decisions are thought to be processed cognitively in a mechanistic manner with belief systems as the frame of reference. Rational choice decisions are imagined to occur more often when issues are more difficult. This assumption is recognized as difficult to accept, however. All sorts of variables appear to switch deciding from one technique to another. The threshold values that control application of one technique or another are difficult to define. There are many individual difference factors, and situational realities must have a great influence. The ultimate issue of which technique is more desirable hides in the background. While belief system reasoning may reflect stability of conditions, rational choice procedures are eclectic. Then there are assumptions about timing. Quick decisions clearly predominate in numbers because most situations are mundane and resolve in minutes. If this can be done well producing acceptable outcomes, one assumes belief system reasoning is advantageous to rational choice. Issues occur about the risks in moving from a basically incremental technique to a decision methods that might produce transformational outcomes. IT and social networking is assumed to be having an affect on which decision technique is chosen, and upon the outcomes with both techniques.

Methodological success would accommodate these assumptions, gather and analyze data, and make some conclusions. The results would elucidate about decision techniques given that a substantial amount of change is happening in how emergent information is perceived. Possibly, a highly satisfactory analysis would devise a complex cognitive model inclusive of all sorts of relevant variables. This cognitive model would then offer prescriptive suggestions for improved decision-

making in various situations. The model and its determinations would be continually adjusted inclusive of emergent knowledge variables and variables about changing information perceptiveness. The effects of social networking that produced perceptive shifts resulting in stronger emotional intelligence would be built into the model.

Were the ultimate of methodologies to produce a research design with purpose the results of the analysis could be programmed into a modern supercomputer. The high-speed machine innovation could then follow a myriad of international relations border decisions making suggestions that would support consistently optimized outcomes. Accomplishing all of this is within the theoretical purview of research methodology. At least for the present, the likelihood that such a sophisticated analysis could be completed is nil.

The semantics level of where this methodology discussion is leading reflects the realities of the present day. The relevant methodological question is redefined. The question becomes can qualitative methods research a complex question like this? Those who advocate methods are convinced the answer is yes. One of qualitative method's strengths is known to be an ability to research complicated research problems. The range of possible research subjects that qualitative methods is capable of reasoning is thought to be almost infinite. Clearly, qualitative methodologies would conclude that this research question about techniques for deciding and the influence of changing technology could be reasoned with qualitative techniques.

When this paper's analysis is viewed as research methods and not international relations, the important question becomes how can qualitative methods accomplish this objective? Qualitative methods is about a series of procedures capable of improving knowledge about a phenomenon. Validity is often

eschewed because demanding a high connection with the reality is at the expense of other authentic knowledge building experiences. Mix methods research designs are refused by qualitative methods purists because they inhibit achieving the full potential of qualitative methods.

The research design for this paper's research need begin with data. Once acceptable data is identified, processes of analyzing that data can be begun. Qualitative methods must remember to always allow reflexivity in all methods techniques. Theoretical sampling can be accomplished over and over as the researcher continues to work to acquire data until he achieves theoretical saturation. Data analysis procedures can likewise be revised throughout the research activity.

Qualitative Data about Perceiving, Interpreting, and Evaluating Border Conflict

A possibility exist for proceeding with this difficult research question with well accepted techniques from qualitative methods. The answer lies in using narrative data. This paper intends to include data that pertains to border closures between the U.S. and Canada and border closures involving the Schengen countries. In both of these cases, there was a strong commitment to open borders. The U.S. - Canadian border was one of the longest almost unrestricted borders in the world. The Schengen countries, predominantly the EU countries, have emerged from an integrationist international tradition that has consistently refused much border control. Present Schengen border restrictions do more than prohibit entry into these countries from external countries including the U.S. Travel among the Schengen countries is interdicted by current controls. There is a substantial amount of image data available about both of these cases. Constructing a narrative with images about both of these realities allows adequate data to begin a qualitative analysis.

The virtues of narrative as data useful in qualitative methods analysis has been supported by many experts in methods. The researcher's abilities in interpretivism and constructionism can develop out of narrative data. This data has the strength to assist the researcher in reorganizing his ideas.

(Czarniawska, p. 1) The interpretivism and constructionism that follows derives from and is based on the qualitative narrative data.

Although this anticipates the paper's conclusions somewhat, there is an excellent example of the power of qualitative data to influence analysis that happened in accomplishing this research design. This researcher had no intention of including migration variables into his analysis of perception, belief systems, rational choice, and social networking. Once the theoretical sampling required to produce the relevant narrative was completed, migration issues were undeniably present in the analysis. Not only are the Schengen countries experiencing immigration issues, asylum seeker issues are associated with the U.S. - Canadian border closure. Qualitative narrative data has influenced the direction in which this analysis has proceeded.

The strengths of narrative data can be explained to include the ethnomethodology that went in to producing the elements in the narrative. In other words, when one constructs an image narrative gains occur as each image is the product of some persons deliberate efforts to replicate reality. Imagineably, an image in a narrative communicates a substantial amount about the image's subject. Somehow the efforts the photographer made to create his image replica of the social reality can be followed in his image now in the narrative. If one thinks of image narrative data in this way, imagining an astounding amount of data in the narrative is possible.

Figure One is an image narrative about the U.S. - Canadian border closure due to covid-19. The theoretical sampling that produced this image narrative was accomplished with the present image strength of Internet. This paper has already commented about media richness theory and the increasing strength of images available through Internet and social networking. The sampling technique that produced the image narrative in Figure One is more effective because of the increasing sophistication of Internet images.

Figure One

The U.S. - Canadian Border with Closure Conditions

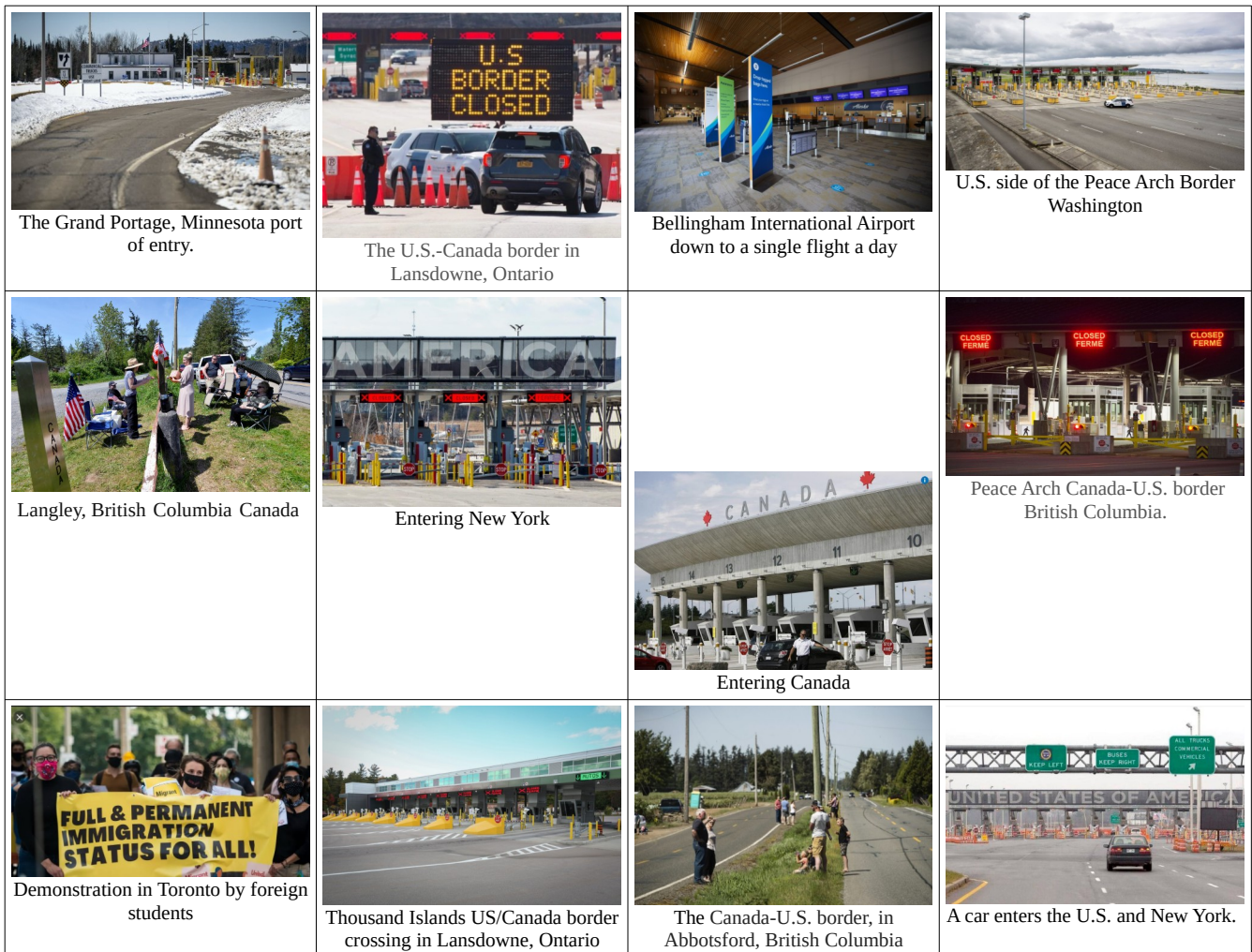
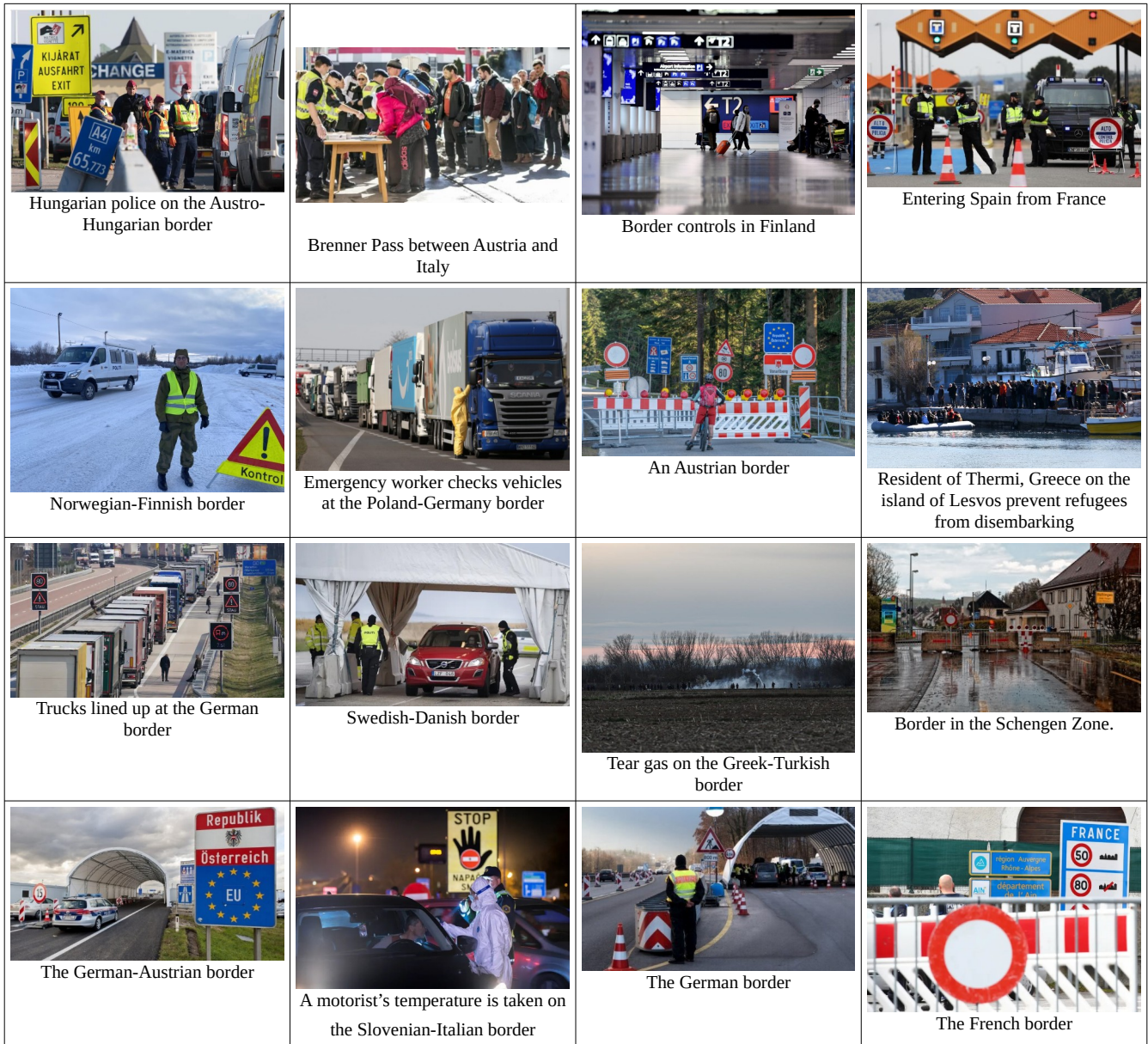




Figure Two is an image narrative that presents how border closure is happening in the Schengen countries. The theoretical sampling plan that devised this image narrative first identified images about borders and the Schengen countries. Images about both border closure procedures and major migration concerns were located. Although the researcher’s plan was to stay with border closure images, the migration images were so powerful that they found their way into the image narrative finally produced.

Figure Two
The Schengen Countries and Border Closure





Analyzing Image Narratives to Accomplish Qualitative Analysis

Narrative has the ability to revise ideas about whatever is being researched. Qualitative methods seeks data capable of transforming existing ideas about whatever phenomenon is being studied. Narrative is effective at that as the perspectives of others are introduced into one's own analysis by this type of data. Narratives in images are excellent data because they have a strong ability to reorganize the cognitive

consciousness. Imagining the process by which each image was produced reminds how much data can be contained in a single image.

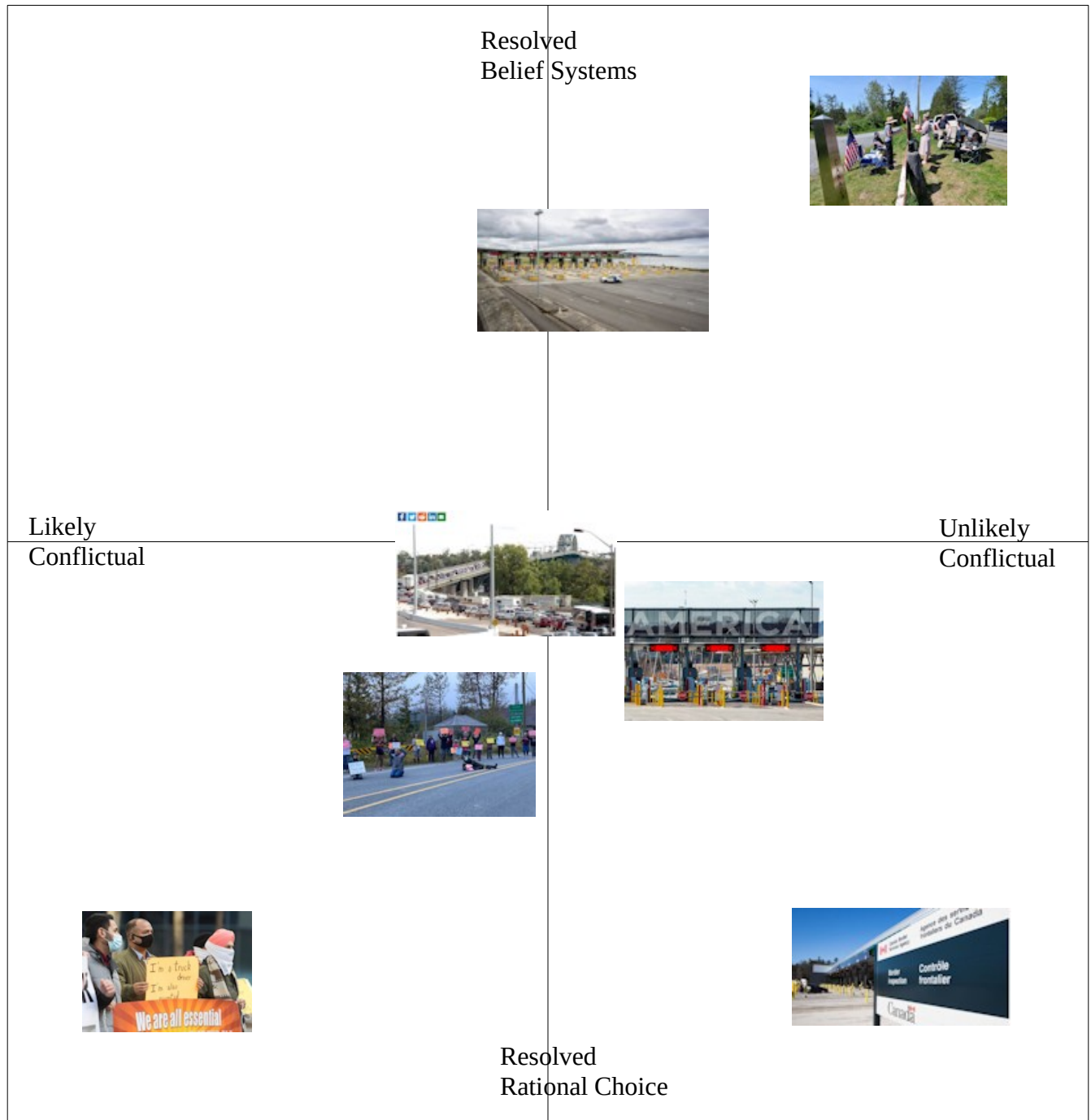
The data images presented in Figure One and Figure Two were all chosen by theoretical sampling. This sampling technique encourages resampling to happen once the initial sample is complete. Considerable resampling has gone into Figure One and Figure Two because initial theoretical sampling led to increased interest about some issues. The norms of qualitative methods claim sampling needs continue until theoretical saturation is attained. This paper's sampling continued until there were no related ideas that were left unconsidered.

Some authors emphasize how analogous qualitative methods can be to montage. (Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 7-9) An advantage of an image narrative is that the researcher is already well connected with the idea of montage when he begins his data analysis. The interpretivism that occurs when conclusions are devised based on this data is invaluable in improving concepts about the phenomenon being researched. When data analysis accepts that the objective is primarily improved concepts, some remarkable advances in knowledge can happen.

Data also has the ability to include ideas that have been overlooked or under emphasized. The type of sampling this paper has employed is not unlike a focus group. The various images included in the sample and the processes by which those images were created are analogous to listening to a group of people express their ideas about the research subject. The takeaway from analyzing an image narrative is a belief that the research subject has been thoroughly reasoned.

Other qualitative methodology would like to see more structured techniques used to move from data to conclusions. An idea that succeeds in structured analysis with this data is to formalize how the data is cognitized. A cognitive map is a schematic representation of thought processes. Concepts behind

Figure Three
How Images are Cognitized



cognitive mapping can be used to explain in a systematic manner how image data is analyzed. During the data analysis phase of this research, images can be placed on a two-axis diagram. Figure Three exemplifies coding images from Figure One on the basis of how potentially conflictual the social reality in the image is on the x-axis. The y-axis evaluates the probability events develop toward belief systems or rational choice resolutions. This schema of coding produces a continuum from likely conflictual to low probability of conflict on the x-axis. The y-axis is given over to a continuum between resolution likely based on belief systems or on rational choice techniques. In coding with this technique, one places an image on the map interpreting the variables and assigning the image a location on the map's two axes.

Implications for Appraising the Importance of Belief Systems in Quick Evaluation of Border Conflicts

This paper began with the purpose of contrasting two tools now used in evaluating international conflict. Emergent information about a conflictual reality is sometimes appraised with one's existing belief system. The cognitive ability of a belief system often quickly resolves the most effective course of action in response to anticipated conflict. A second possibility exist for processing emergent information about a conflictual reality. Rational choice procedures that examine options and weigh costs and benefits maybe utilized.

The paper intended to ponder how new realities including Internet and social networking are biasing use of belief systems or rational choice procedures. Ideally, the paper would like to make some contributions to how international relations theory conceptualizes the cognitive process that occurs when a conflictual reality is directed toward belief system mechanisms or toward rational choice ideas. The range of international relations situations where this type of assignment happens is clearly vast.

Incredibly complex realities such as choosing allies following Sarajevo are amenable to the reasoning perspective found in this paper. Ordinarily more mundane international situations make use of the cognitive properties analyzed. To allow a reasonable and manageable analysis, this paper has decided to be concerned with border issues resulting from the closure of the U.S.-Canada border and border closures within the Schengen countries.

Conceptual development toward better understanding this problem has resulted from this research effort. The amount of information being produced by ever more sophisticated imaging techniques is confirmed to be a significant variable in devising models of cognitive process about conflictual reality. Belief systems appear as workable, heuristic tools that have for many centuries directed quick and effective perception and response to conflict. Issues about ever more extensive use of rational choice techniques appear to be authentic. The possibility that increasing image strength and media richness theory work together to effect cognitive process must be realized. One cannot follow the two narratives this research has devised about border conflicts without asking if increasing amounts of information are more frequently preferencing rational choice techniques.

Belief systems possibly are inherently incremental in how they contribute to analyzing and reacting to conflict. International relations theory needs to strive to better conceptualize what likely could occur if various factors in the environment conspire to relegate belief system reasoning to a secondary role. While the concern may be premature, this paper's analysis raises questions about the consequences of ever more extensive use of rational choice evaluation. The conflict border situations data has an image richness that improves imagination of potential conflict. How we perceive conflictual realities is substantially influenced by emotional intelligence that we choose to improve with social networking.

The image narrative data found in Figure One and Figure Two belongs to an informational reality where Internet personalities bolster our emotional intelligence. Memes produce informational transactions where people receive messages from the adult to child transaction level. How we perceive conflictual reality is changing. A reasonable international future may well depend upon an ability to be more sophisticated in accepting those conditions that affect our perception and response to conflictual realities.

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