

Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century

Understanding Borders

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Introduction

Browsing through the pages of a world atlas, watching the nightly newscasts, or walking inside government offices, multinational corporations, and classrooms, one will notice that the most common map is the one where the earth's surface is divided by irregular lines called borders or boundaries. This map signifies our taken-for-granted view of the earth's surface. Now take a look at the map as seen from outer space. Borders are nowhere to be found on this map; the natural condition of the earth is borderless. The two maps hardly resemble each other, although they represent the same space. The first is a representation of the earth as we imagine it to be. The second is a representation of the earth as we observe it to be. Nevertheless, only one of these two representations—the one showing the territorial borders of two hundred or so states—became the conventional map of the world, the one with which the majority of people are most familiar. This contradiction offers a useful doorway into the exploration of border spaces.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we live divided along cultural, economic, political, and social lines, in a world of territorial borders whose main purpose is to mark differences in space. Our lives have long been spatially ordered by a nested hierarchy of territorial borders—neighborhood, city, county, region, state, and more recently supranational borders—each with various degrees of visibility in the cultural and physical landscapes. At the same time, we also live in a world defined by mobility that necessitates constant border crossing. Paradoxically, we have been busy surrounding ourselves with borders at one time only to realize that we have to cross them at another time. Contemporary patterns of spatial

interaction are creating a complex web of relationships that crisscross the fixed geography of nested borders, further complicating the relationship between borders and society. Today, our lives are spatially ordered by a maze of borders that often have no clear or stable territorial hierarchy. The result is that we have to negotiate more borders in more places and of more kinds than ever before.

State borders are arguably the best known territorial borders. For the most part, their raison d'être is taken for granted in daily life. They are seen as undisputed facts and thus are rarely questioned or challenged. Even when they are challenged, it is often to erect new borders rather than to remove them altogether. Moreover, instances in which borders have been removed reveal that many people have difficulty learning how to live without them. Patterns of social interaction in space leave lasting memories, and borders are only slowly erased from people's mental maps. Thus borders are ubiquitous fixtures in contemporary societies.

The study of borders constitutes a prism through which to examine how contemporary social, cultural, economic, and political processes impact our lives. Most people living outside border areas perceive borders as remote limits of the state, with little direct effect on their livelihoods. Yet state borders play central roles in peoples' lives irrespective of their geographical location. They reach deep into the very fabric of societies, structuring and regulating daily routines as well as long-term aspirations. Borders are the thread connecting apparently unrelated phenomena such as international trade agreements and the outsourcing of jobs, carbon dioxide emissions in industrialized countries and loss of farmland in tropical areas, uneven global development and international migrations, transnational corporations and large-scale recalls of tainted food supplies, transnational terrorism and the scaling back of democracy, consumer habits and resource wars, and deforestation in Amazonia and climate change. In some situations, borders can literally make a life-or-death difference for millions of people, such as between ethnic extermination and peaceful cohabitation, between mass starvation and abundant food supplies, and between economic opportunity and dire poverty. Understanding the dynamic of borders and the bordering processes that produce them is essential.

Recently, borders have taken on heightened significance in an era of globalization. They are central to the profound changes globalization is generating in the way people and societies relate to space at the outset of the twenty-first century. If during the early 1990s globalization pressures on state borders led some to envision the emergence of a borderless world (*debordering*), by the early 2000s it became clear that borders were retaining their significance, albeit under new appearances (*rebordering*). Despite unprecedented opening up to various globalization flows, borders are far

from fading away. Instead, they are undertaking both a qualitative and a quantitative transformation by changing their nature and multiplying in number. They are losing some of their territorially linear aspects while acquiring more regional and networklike characteristics. Simultaneously, bordering practices are increasingly reliant on electronic technologies and are becoming embedded into our own bodies through the use of biometric measurements. Border control has been unsettled as well, as more and more authority is transferred from public to private and quasi-public institutions. The outcome is that borders have become intrinsic to everyday life, affecting people and places in a highly unequal manner.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, on the World Trade Center towers in New York City constitute a milestone for the redefinition of borders in the twenty-first century. This was a moment in time and a landmark in space that brought borders to prominence on the mental maps of many ordinary citizens with livelihoods far removed from the daily realities of border life. In the aftermath of that day's events, and with the image of the wrecked place where the towers came to rest etched in people's minds, state borders throughout the world have been entrusted with a new long-term rationale of being the guarantors of our security in a globalizing world characterized by increased cross-border mobility of people, capital, goods, diseases, and ideas. In other words, borders now have to allow mobility while simultaneously protecting against its side effects. The way this challenge is addressed will affect the lives of billions of people around the world and make the difference between war and peace, between oppression and opportunity. Such broad tasks trusted upon borders assures that in the decades to come they will remain central to debates over the nature and shape of social relations.

Therefore it is not surprising that during the last two decades we have witnessed an unprecedented surge of interest in borders. The number of academic works having borders as the center of inquiry has soared, border-focused research centers and institutes have proliferated in many parts of the world, funding for border research has increased, and the media has regularly brought up border-related issues for popular consumption. Such concerted, multidisciplinary endeavors to address the problematic issue of borders have significantly furthered our knowledge of the ways bordering processes work. Nonetheless, we are still far away from a comprehensive understanding of the nature and the direction of contemporary border changes.

The primary aim of this book is to offer a critical understanding of state borders at the beginning of the twenty-first century. My intention here is to go beyond border-making descriptions and problematize borders in order to help readers uncover the inherent complexities they involve, their unfinished character, and their fundamentally contested nature. While

state borders make up the book's substance, its spirit seeks to inform discussion about the broader spaces of borders. Rather than assuming that they are a mere attribute of the state, borders are approached as a distinct spatial category that develops in relation to a multitude of social processes and institutions. Throughout this work, the analysis relies on a range of disciplinary insights including geography, international relations, sociology, anthropology, history, political economy, and security studies to explore border-making concepts, processes, discourses, and contexts from a spatial perspective meant to underscore the connections between borders and space. The book combines theoretical perspectives with empirical accounts to discuss how current world issues and events relate to borders, and to address questions that can help readers make better sense of the significance of borders for social life: Why and how have state borders emerged? How have they assumed a certain territorial shape and not others? Who makes borders and how? Who benefits from their making and how? What trends in the development of borders are we witnessing, and, most important, how are they affecting societies?

The wide scope of the argument presented in this book calls for a methodological approach that leaves little room for the detailed treatment of the numerous topics under consideration. I am hopeful the reader will find this trade-off worthwhile. Deciding what to bring in and what to leave out of this volume has proved to be a real challenge. The literature on border studies is so vast and diverse that covering it all would be futile. The spatial perspective adopted here has pushed aside some avenues of inquiry by default, thus providing one way to sort out this literature. My own limitations have played another filtering role that is responsible for additional omissions. Keeping a balance of representation between the world's major regions has been a different challenge. Despite my best efforts to draw on border-making processes and issues in all major regions, Europe and North America remain overrepresented.

The chapters in this book are arranged thematically. Each is structured in two major parts, except chapters 2 and 3, which include several parts. Chapter 1 introduces readers to the study of borders. It begins by discussing the concept of borders together with several other major concepts that are directly related to borders and border making, such as territory and territoriality, nations and nation-states, and sovereignty. These are followed by an examination of the main theoretical contributions to border studies over time and by a synthesis of the current conceptualizations that stress the socially constructed nature of state borders. Chapter 2 summarizes the development of border thinking and making from antiquity to the nation-state era while emphasizing the transition from pre-nation-state zonal frontiers to the present territorially linear borders. Next, the analysis shows how linear state borders have achieved global reach via

European colonialism and identifies a series of key twentieth-century contexts that have produced the current grid of borders that organizes Earth's space.

The question of borders in the globalization era is addressed in chapter 3. The chapter examines how global economic flows, environmental issues, the international human rights regime, and transnational terrorism, among other factors, challenge the territorial nature of state borders and their role of regulating interaction in space. The encounter between globalization flows and state border lines triggers multifaceted processes of change whose purpose is to keep borders relevant in the twenty-first century. Chapter 4 discusses how these dynamics of change are producing globalization's new border spaces. The first section analyzes the interrelated processes of de- and reterritorialization and de- and rebordering that help produce the contemporary border spaces. Simultaneously, this section emphasizes how border permeability is redefined today in the circumstances in which borders are selectively decreasing their role as barriers for certain categories of goods, capital, people, and ideas, while enhancing their barrier role for others. The second section deals with the outcomes that these processes generate, documenting how borders are becoming more diversified and dispersed throughout society, rather than fixed at the outer edges of states. This new geography of globalization's borders incorporates three main types of border spaces: borderlands, border lines, and networked borders.

Chapter 5 looks into the connections between borders and mobility from the perspective of power relationships in society. The first part shows how aspects of transnational mobility such as migration, economic flows, and terrorism have been constructed as major societal security risks to be managed with the help of borders. This view casts mobility and security in antagonistic terms and has led to the reinforcement of the control aspect of borders. The result is the privatization of numerous border functions, as well as their territorial penetration deep into the spaces of everyday life. The second part discusses how seeing borders as tools to control mobile risks works to embed borders in the human body. The body has become the ultimate mobile border that can allow the control of movement at the smallest spatial scale with the help of state-of-the-art technologies such as biometrics and radio frequency identification (RFID) tags. The chapter concludes by examining the implications these novel bordering practices have for the prospects of democratic life in the twenty-first century.

Border-bridging processes that seek to enhance the permeability of borders are the subject of chapter 6. Cross-border cooperation in particular has emerged as a common strategy used to transcend the barrier function of borders through the integration of neighboring borderlands at

the subnational level. This process often leads to the formation of cross-border regions that straddle state borders and signal changes in border territoriality. Several examples of cross-border cooperation, including Europe, North and South America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, illustrate the unevenness of cross-border region building across the world. The last part of the chapter discusses a series of directions of border changes in Europe that reflect the possibilities and the limitations of border bridging in cross-border regions with regard to the territorial reorganization of social relations across borders. A short conclusion summarizes the significance of the concept of borders to the organization of social life in the twenty-first century.

1



Making Sense of Borders

INTRODUCING BORDERS

Borders are typically understood as limits and conceived of as lines. They also carry with them a sense of division or separation in space. However, such perceptions offer limited insight into the immensely complex world of borders and boundaries. Border making, also referred to as bordering, is a much more ambiguous process than generally assumed. Nature does not offer compelling rationales to justify the erection of borders between places. Regardless, border making is an old human practice traceable to the earliest societies. This fact indicates that borders are enduring fixtures in human societies, which in turn causes border making to appear as a natural preoccupation for humans (Agnew 2007; Grosby 1995).

The view I've adopted throughout this book is that borders are social phenomena, made by humans to help them organize their lives. Humans erect borders as a way to mediate between the familiar of *here* and the unfamiliar of *there*. Throughout history, border change has been the norm rather than the exception. The meaning of borders has varied widely from place to place as well as from time to time. Borders did not exist in the same location since primordial time, nor did they perform the same functions in all places at all times. Borders are not fixed; they are transitory, and they always change in space and in time. They are not simply lines, but rather areas and networks of variable depth. Borders come in a variety of sizes and shapes, which indicates that they can be constructed based on a multitude of criteria. Thus, all boundaries are made by someone, since

individuals define the criteria by which borders are constructed. There are no natural borders to separate human beings in space.

Borders are first and foremost about power. Border making is a power strategy that uses difference to assert control over space by inscribing difference in space. Through borders, difference acquires a territorial expression. The territorialization of difference is an exclusionary power practice with profound structuring effects on societies as it determines membership in society: who belongs where, who is an insider and who is an outsider, who is part of us and who is part of them (Paasi 1996; Sack 1986). Under these circumstances, borders have traditionally served the role of ordering society. Making borders is a means for organizing human behavior in space by regulating movement in space. Thus, bordering space is a means of ordering space (Albert et al. 2001; van Houtum and van Naerssen 2002), two sides of the process by which humans appropriate space.

Some borders are primarily symbolic, cultural, or social in nature, such as linguistic and religious boundaries, or class boundaries. Humans tend to carry such boundaries with them when they move through space. Other borders are primarily physical or territorial in nature, such as state borders. These borders are often well marked on the ground to assure their visibility and stability in the landscape. Most often boundaries are both symbolic and physical at the same time, since symbolic borders can have territorial dimensions, and territorial borders can be symbolic as well. For example, linguistic criteria have been used to establish the location of state borders, while in other instances state borders mark the spatial limits of a language.

With the increase in the number of territorial states throughout the world during the modern era, state borders emerged as the quintessential illustration of borders in people's minds. Although state territorial borders are but one among a large variety of borders, albeit a very significant one, they came to assimilate all other kinds of borders and boundaries to the point that borders are typically understood above all as the geographical limits of the state.

However, state territorial borders should not be understood as the sum of all other borders and boundaries, or as the most important boundaries affecting peoples' lives. Gender, religious, or class boundaries, to mention only a few examples, transcend the simplistic inside/outside divide that state borders have established: they predate even the earliest state borders in antiquity, and they have never fit the territorial matrix of modern state borders. Rather, state borders are best understood as both similar to and dissimilar from other categories of borders. They influence and are influenced by other types of borders and boundaries. Making sense of state borders is part of understanding the central role that all borders and boundaries play in the spatial organization of modern societies.

State borders are political-territorial boundaries. They are territorial and symbolic at the same time, marking the limits of politically organized spaces, as well as suggesting a purported cohesiveness of these spaces (Newman and Paasi 1998). For example, the borders of France represent the limits of the territory of France, and they imply that the people living in this territory are significantly alike. However, the reality is more complex. In addition to the territory of France in Europe, the French state includes several overseas territories stretching from the Pacific Ocean to South America that most people often overlook when thinking about the borders of France (see figure 1.1). At the same time, people inhabiting the territory of France are not necessarily alike, as many natives of French Guyana or New Caledonia hardly identify their group as French.

State borders have the capacity to define the territory they enclose by ascribing it with meaning, while at the same time they are defined by their content by acquiring meaning from what they enclose (Anderson and O'Dowd 1999; Paasi 1996). For example, goods produced inside the borders of the United States are labeled "made in the USA" although they may have been made using parts imported from other countries or may have been made by illegal immigrants. At the same time, the material wealth of the United States suggests to immigrants crossing the U.S. border that they are crossing a gateway to a better life, yet not all Americans are wealthy, and a significant portion of U.S. wealth is generated overseas.

An essential aspect of state borders is their double meaning as lines of separation and contact in space. Whenever a line is drawn between two groups of people, that line acquires two meanings simultaneously. On the one hand it separates the two groups, while on the other it brings them into mutual contact. The double meaning of borders intensifies the complexity of bordering processes. It is impossible to address only one aspect of borders without considering the other one. Every time a border is erected to keep people apart, there will always be some that will want to cross it if for no other reason than because a border exists (Newman 2006b). This phenomenon explains in large part the challenge of tackling complex twenty-first-century issues such as security and immigration at the state's borders.

State borders both separate and bring into contact different national political, economic, and social systems. The managing of state borders across the world is codified in a variety of *border regimes* that range from entirely closed, as in the case of North Korea, where movement and exchange with South Korea is virtually absent, to quite open, as in the case of the internal borders of the European Union, where border control checkpoints have been removed. State borders can be walled fortresses and spaces of Othering one's neighbors, intended to keep insiders in

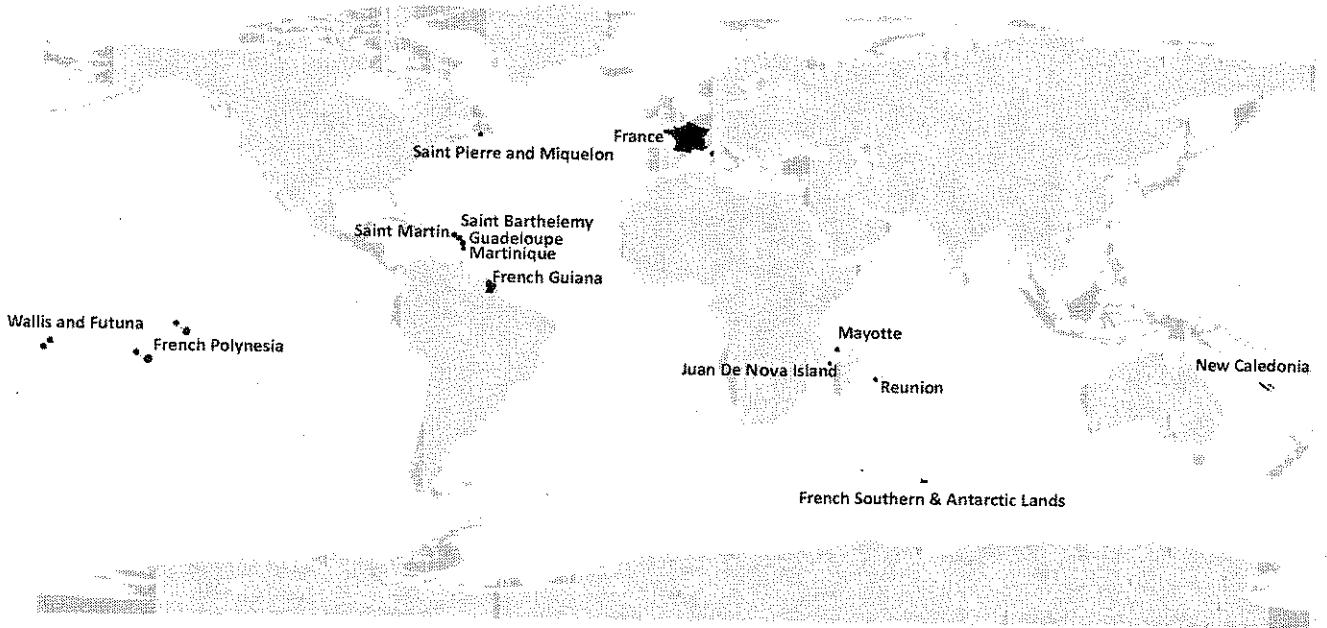


Figure 1.1 The territory of the French state. *Source:* Cristina Scarlat.

and outsiders out, or they can be windows to the world and interfaces of interaction with neighboring countries (Anderson and O'Dowd 1999; Newman and Paasi 1998). However, it is essential to avoid understanding the separation and contact functions of borders as a simplistic binary in which they operate in opposition to each other, as these functions occur simultaneously. In practice, state borders have various degrees of permeability, allowing some types of movement while restricting others. For example, despite the closed border between North and South Korea, there is South Korean cross-border investment in North Korea as well as occasional visits of North Korean delegations to South Korea.

This succinct examination of borders and boundaries illustrates the multifaceted nature of the relationship between bordering processes, space, and society. There is no single meaning or purpose behind state borders. Borders and societies are mutually constitutive processes. People decide to set and maintain territorial borders to divide society, while at the same time territorial borders have the power to shape our lives, sense of identity, and how we think about our neighbors. Understanding this symbiotic relationship constitutes the starting point in making sense of the role and the functions of borders in the twenty-first century, as well as in facilitating public involvement toward making border spaces more democratic and more inclusive of the interests of all categories of citizens irrespective of their status in society, ethnic identity, or national belonging.

Borders and Territory

Boundaries and territory are intrinsically connected concepts. Today, the most widely accepted definition of a border is that of dividing two territorial entities, or that of marking the limit of a territorial entity (Newman 2003). Borders can thus be regarded as lines of separation and contact not only between human groups but between territories as well.

Generally, the term *territory* refers to a portion of space that is claimed or occupied by a person, a group of people, or an institution (Paasi 2003b). In a physical sense, space exists without borders or delineations. The term "space" can be applied to the entire surface of the earth. However, people would not be able to make practical sense of space without the existence of borders to delineate it. Borders are discontinuities in space that render space meaningful by compartmentalizing it into distinctive units. Territory as a portion of space implies the existence of boundaries: a territory is a bounded space (Gottmann 1973). The notion of borders is intrinsic to any understanding of territory since we cannot conceive of a portion of space without conceiving of its limits in regard to other portions of space. In this sense, borders produce territory; they are constitutive of territory.

People relate to territory through territoriality. Territoriality is the process whereby individuals or groups lay claim to territory. According to Sack (1986, 1), territoriality is "a spatial strategy to affect, influence, and control resources and people, by controlling area." Territories are defended and contested against others through territoriality. Therefore, territoriality can be understood as a form of power over space (Sack 1986). However, control over a territory is typically asserted by the imposition of borders that are used to regulate access to the territory. The erection of orders around territories emerges as a crucial moment in appropriating space; thus it is a political strategy used to secure power in society (Storey 2001).

The most pervasive form of territoriality today is political territoriality, meaning that most political power in society is organized territorially through bounded portions of space. Territory is important for political governance because it provides a locus for the exercise of political authority over a range of interests. Location inside the borders of a territory defines membership to a group, instead of, for example, kinship relationships or similarity of interests among the members of the group. Hunting-and-gathering societies, for example, while employing territoriality for purposes such as delimiting and defending land, rarely used rigid territorial borders to define belonging to a community. Instead, these societies had a social definition of territoriality and of borders that was based primarily on kinship relations. Modern societies, however, have a territorial definition of society, using territoriality and borders for a wide range of purposes in order to define social membership (Soja 1971).

orders and the State

Political territoriality is most strongly manifested today in the form of the modern state. The state is generally associated with political power within territorial borders (Kazancigil 1986). According to Paasi (1996), in an empirical context the state is a specific territory with recognized orders, whereas in a theoretical context the state is a set of institutions aimed at producing and reproducing society. Thus, as a political institution that possesses territorial power, the state has an area over which it aims jurisdiction, and borders that control mobility. Today, the national state has come to represent the basic division of political space. The entire landmass of the world is parceled into roughly two hundred neatly delineated states.

States are historically dynamic artifacts. They are not universal or natural political-territorial institutions for the organization of society. Tribes, which have served in many cultures to organize society, long preceded the state. Moreover, states are not permanent. They frequently appear

and disappear from the world political map. The Polish state disappeared three times in the course of its history; Texas was an independent state before its incorporation into the United States, and South Sudan is the latest state to appear in the world in 2011 by breaking off from Sudan. These examples imply that the borders of these states underwent considerable changes as well. Also, states are not fixed. They constantly change their territorial shape. The vast majority of states existing today established their current borders only in the past fifty years.

Throughout history there have been several types of state, such as city-states, empires, and nation-states. Each type relates in different ways to borders to delineate its political territoriality. The walls of the city-states of antiquity and the medieval era did not delineate political borders, since these cities also incorporated the surrounding hinterland. City-state walls performed primarily a defensive purpose. Empires were often composed of discontinuous territories, and their borders were generally unmarked. Nation-states, on the other hand, tend to have well-delineated territories and clearly marked borders.

The nation-state is the contemporary type of state that emerged approximately two hundred years ago in the wake of the French Revolution in 1789. A nation-state is understood as a country inhabited by a group of people who see themselves as one distinct community (Paasi 1996). Its distinctiveness consists mainly in the conceptual merging of political territoriality, as expressed in the institution of the state, with ethnic and cultural identity, as expressed in the idea of the nation, so that their boundaries coincide. A nation is typically defined as a group of people who imagine sharing common elements such as language, history, ethnic background, political institutions, and attachment to a particular territory (B. Anderson 1991). However, there is little agreement as to what exactly the proportion of the mix should be, who decides when a group of people reaches the status of a nation, and where to establish the borders of a nation. As a result of these dilemmas, the number of nations in the world varies widely from several hundred to several thousand. The number of states, however, is just under two hundred.

The main predicament of the idea of the nation-state—one state, one nation—is that it assumes congruence between the territorial borders of the state and group identity (Knight 1982). As there are many more nations than there are states, the nation-state appears a theoretical impossibility. Instead of seeking to delink the ideas of statehood and nationhood, during the last two hundred years state governments throughout the world have been actively involved in a process of nation building using the ideology of nationalism. Nationalism is a territorial ideology that seeks to bind the nation and the state by creating identity based on bounded space (A. Murphy 1996). The erection of borders behind which

o build homogenous nations has been a key feature of nationalism (Agnew 2007). At its best, nationalism allows the emancipation of certain groups of people from the domination of tyrannical rulers. At its worst, nationalism is responsible for outright forms of violence as demonstrated by the 1990s' ethnic cleansing in both the former Yugoslavia and USSR, to mention only two examples.

Gradually, the nation-state circumscribed social relations inside its borders to an unprecedented extent. It became normal to imagine all the citizens of a given state forming one national society that was distinct from the ones beyond the borders with the neighboring states. Under these circumstances, the nation-state came to be seen as a container of society (Taylor 1994), with the borders of the state forming the walls of the container. Borders became major tools for regulating social relations both inside the container and across containers. However, nation building did not result in absolute control over the society contained by the state borders. The intensification of transnational flows of capital and people challenges the nation-state's monopoly of power inside its borders and suggests the erosion of the power of borders to serve as territorial containers.

Borders and Sovereignty

The principle of sovereignty constitutes the linchpin between territories, states, and borders. Sovereignty is the claim of exclusive power over a territory. A state's claims to the monopoly of power within its territorial borders have been codified in the modern principle of territorial sovereignty (Zottmann 1973). Although this situation has always been more of an aspiration than an accomplishment, these persistent claims of sovereign control within one's own borders have led to widespread association of sovereignty with bordered territoriality (Agnew 2009).

During the medieval era, sovereignty was invested in the person of the monarch and signified the divine authority of the emperor to rule over his or her subjects regardless of the territorial borders of the empire. With the advent of the modern territorial state during the seventeenth century, however, sovereignty was gradually transferred from the person of the monarch to the territory of the state (A. Murphy 1996; Taylor and Flint 2000). The divine element was replaced by the popular will of the people, at least in theory. A person's political status changed from being a subject of a ruler to being a citizen of a state. The borders of a state came to determine one's political belonging.

Borders are linked to sovereignty because they mark the formal extension of the territorial power of the state. In legal terms, borders demarcate states' sovereignty. The territorial sovereignty of one state starts at its borders and ends at its borders. Put differently, the same state border sig-

nifies the end of the authority of one state and the beginning of another's. Consequently, sovereignty is a territorially exclusive practice. A state's legal and taxation systems, social protection policies, and police jurisdiction, for example, all end at its borders, only to reemerge on the other side of the border as another state's practices and policies.

In the modern world, sovereignty has a dual aspect: it is both inward looking and outward looking. This dual status implies that the power of a state within its territorial borders cannot be challenged by other states, while at the same time, for this situation to be possible, states must mutually recognize each other's sovereignty over a bounded territory (Giddens 1987; Wallerstein 1999). Under these circumstances, territorial sovereignty has become the fundamental principle of organization of international relations. It is not sufficient for a state to declare its sovereignty within specific territorial borders, but these borders have to also be recognized by other states as well. The principle of territorial sovereignty has created an interstate system in which states are assumed to be equal. The stability of the system is derived from the fact that every state has to recognize and to respect other states' territorial sovereignty. In practice, however, this has hardly been the case (Agnew 2009). Throughout the world, states have frequently infringed on each other's sovereignty by advancing territorial claims against their neighbors or demanding border adjustments. Nonetheless, the principle of territorial sovereignty as such has not been in question (A. Murphy 1999). It is only recently that the globalization of capitalist relations of production as well as of numerous cultural and social processes have introduced considerable pressures for changing the way we make sense of fundamental aspects of state territorial sovereignty.

THINKING BORDERS

During the last two decades there has been a dramatic increase in the border studies literature across a broad range of academic disciplines, such as geography (Kaplan and Haki 2002; Kolosov and O'Loughlin 1998; Newman 1999; Paasi 1996; Pavlakovich-Kochi et al. 2004; Runley and Minghi 1991; van Houtum et al. 2005), international relations (Albert et al. 2001; Ruggie 1993; Runford 2008a); anthropology (Donnan and Wilson 1999; Michaelsen and Johnson 1997; Pellow 1996); political science (Ansell and Di Palma 2004; Brunet-Jailly 2007; M. Anderson 1996); sociology (Delanty 2006; Kearney 1991; O'Dowd and Wilson 1996); history (Martinez 1994; Sahlin 1989); and philosophy (Balibar 2002; Smith 1995), as well as across interdisciplinary boundaries (Anderson et al. 2003; Eskelinen et al. 1999; Ganster and Lorey 2005; Nicol and Townsend-Gault 2005;

this is a very basic idea of what is meant by sovereignty

Shapiro and Alker 1996). The abundance and diversity of approaches to the understanding of borders resists neat classifications and points to the multi- as well as interdisciplinary nature of recent border studies. However, some scholars notice that a unified theory of borders and bounding processes has failed yet to emerge, while others maintain that borders are unique phenomena that cannot be explained by an overarching theory. Many authors agree that while an overarching theory of borders may not be either necessary or possible, there are a series of common themes in the study of bordering processes (Newman 2006a; Paasi 2009).

This section surveys the main trends and approaches in the multidisciplinary study of boundaries with a focus on the developments taking place in the discipline of geography, where the emphasis on territorial borders has traditionally figured high on the research agenda. The emerging themes do not constitute rigid classifications of border studies as there has been constant borrowing and overlapping between various academic traditions. The goal is to provide a general orientation through the maze of border studies in order to help develop an understanding of the existing scholarship on borders.

Frontiers and Border Lines

In geography, border studies have traditionally been a major subfield of political geography where borders were thought of as the limits of the political organization of territory and as the limits of a state's territorial power (Minghi 1963/1969; Prescott 1987). During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the border studies literature consisted primarily of descriptive case studies that focused on the historical evolution of borders and on their physical features. Two major themes emerged from these early works: the differentiation among concepts such as frontier and border, and the view of borders in natural or artificial terms (e.g., Ancel 1938; Fawcett 1918).

An understanding of state borders as frontiers rather than borders was prevalent at this time. At the core of the issue has been the zonal character of the frontier versus the linear nature of borders. Frontiers are territories with variable spatial depth. Borders are simply territorial lines lacking spatial depth. It is generally accepted that the term *frontier* comes from "front," which suggests contact, and an outward orientation, while the term *boundary* comes from "bounds," which means territorial limits and separation and suggests an inward orientation (Kristof 1959). Frontiers were understood as transition zones, often sparsely populated and remotely situated in relation to surrounding centers of power. They incorporated a significant mixture of populations and cultures, were closely controlled by their political centers, and provided a gradual tran-

sition from one state to another (Prescott 1965). Although some frontiers included defensive walls and border pillars, there were few political border lines running through frontiers. Rather, the entire zone of the frontier constituted the border. From a geopolitical perspective, frontiers were seen as buffer zones that were supposed to absorb or smooth out interstate conflicts. It was common practice for nineteenth-century empires to establish buffer zones between them. Afghanistan, established as a buffer zone between the British and the Russian empires, is among the most notorious examples of such practices. However, the view of state borders as frontiers was later abandoned in favor of the linear concept of borders (Kolossow 2005).

The assumption of "natural borders" of the state dominated early thinking about borders across academic disciplines. Numerous approaches to the study of borders owed much to the organic and environmental deterministic worldviews that were used at the time in the conceptualization of the nation-state. According to Friedrich Ratzel (1897), an influential figure in early political geography, the state was an organism and the border areas formed the epidermis of this organism that both provided protection and allowed exchanges (A. Murphy 1996; Prescott 1987). Ratzel's laws of territorial growth stated that the borders of the larger areas embrace the borders of the smaller ones. In this view, borders are an expression and a measure of state power. The balance of power between countries was dependent on the character of the borders between them.

The appeal of the idea that states must have natural borders is related to the fact that physical landscape features such as rivers, mountain ridges, and seas appear to constitute sharp natural barriers or limits. It was tempting to imagine these landscape features as determining the location of state borders. The "natural borders" thesis implied that states lacking natural borders had to acquire them to enter normality (Agnew 2002). Such a perspective overlooked the fact that landscape features are not necessarily barriers to human activity. Rivers, mountains, and seas everywhere have been traversed by humans since time immemorial, and numerous civilizations have spanned river valleys, mountain ranges, and seas.

Between the 1920s and 1950s the literature on boundaries expanded significantly. The two world wars and the peace treaties in their aftermath that settled new borders provided the impetus for much of this scholarship. Border classifications and typologies were the main preoccupation in border studies in this period. Typical was the analysis of borders at the international scale and the approach to borders as fixed and stable lines that marked sharp differences between neighboring societies. Boundary studies were part of a search for causes of international conflict (Minghi 1963/1969). Boundaries were understood above all as geographical limits

of the nation-state, and their existence was taken for granted. As a consequence, many boundary studies were rich in empirical descriptions and saw state borders as natural separations between peoples (Hakli and Kaplan 2002; Newman and Paasi 1998).

Among the most enduring contributions to border studies are border-making typologies developed by Hartshorne (1936) and Jones (1945). Hartshorne differentiated borders after the characteristics of the cultural landscape they passed through. *Antecedent* borders were those established before the settlement of a region. Such borders were thought to determine later patterns of difference between settler societies on each side of the border. *Subsequent* borders were those established after the settlement of an area. They supposedly reflected the already existing ethnic and political patterns of difference. *Superimposed* borders were those imposed by colonial powers without much regard for local patterns of settlement. They were often geometric lines that divided ethnic groups and tribes, mainly in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. *Relict* borders were boundary lines that no longer marked political divisions but that were still visible in the landscape.

Concerned with more practical processes of border making, Jones distinguished four main stages in the establishment of international borders. The *allocation* stage consists in the initial political decision of the interested states to distribute territories between themselves. *Delimitation* consists in the selection of a boundary line to divide territories. *Demarcation* refers to the actual marking of the boundary line on the ground, involving exact measurements, planting border markers, erecting fences, and designating border crossing posts. The *administration* stage involves the establishment of a border regime consisting of rules and regulations for the management of the border.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, boundary studies lost significant momentum. This change is explained by the postwar decline of political geography as a discipline, on the grounds that in its "organic" form it fulfilled Nazi geopolitics (Newman 2006a). Approaches to interstate borders in this period are often characterized as "functional." Their main thrust was to examine the functions of borders in relation to economic exchange flows (Kolossov 2005). Analyses in terms of an open-closed border continuum indicated the degree of border permeability for various economic processes such as labor migration, investment, or trade. These studies aid the foundations for cross-border administrative cooperation between neighboring states and were aimed at addressing issues of common interest in border areas (Newman 2003). In addition, they introduced a more dynamic view of borders as economic and social phenomena while at the same time directing attention to the impact of local-scale border processes on surrounding regions. Nonetheless, these approaches continued

to accept state borders as a given, leaving their theoretical foundation unquestioned.

The main criticism of traditional border studies is related to their primarily descriptive nature and their lack of critical interrogation of the nature of state boundaries. Echoing these remarks, concern has been expressed that the traditional approaches and their methodology produced findings that were in conflict with each other (Minghi 1963/1969). Traditional studies were more concerned with the measurement of borders than with asking critical questions about their nature and meaning, such as why and how they were built in one location and not another, and why they looked and functioned in one way and not the other. If border disputes existed, it was thought that this was because the borders were not delineated well enough, and not because power relations existed between states and between different social groups. State borders and their role in society were conceptualized as determined by states' actions; thus the possibility that the state borders themselves influenced the actions of the state was in large part overlooked.

The Social Construction of Borders

The revitalization of interest in the study of borders after the 1980s can be attributed to challenges and changes unleashed by the contemporary round of globalization. At an empirical level, the creation of many new borders and the dismantling of some of the seemingly well-established ones throughout the 1990s created an impetus for understanding the continued appeal of the practice of making boundaries. At a theoretical level, a discrepancy began to take shape between the vision of a dynamic deterritorialized world of flows focused on mobility and exchange, replacing the static world of places focused on bounded territoriality on the one hand, and the reality of the selective role of borders, allowing flows of capital but stopping flows of labor on the other (Anderson et al. 2003). Given these circumstances, various lines of research in contemporary border studies show how understanding borders in the broader context of territoriality and their role in the production and reproduction of territorial entities contributes to the understanding of how borders are central sites where the international political system is produced (Anderson et al. 2003).

Among the initial approaches that reflected these new realities was Runley and Minghi's (1991) attempt to overcome the problems of traditional approaches to border landscape studies. They moved away from the focus on the visible functions of border lines to see border landscapes as a product of a set of cultural, economic, and political interactions that occur in space. They called for border studies to take more interest in the

symbolic qualities of the border landscapes, emphasizing the importance of the social meanings people attribute to them. They also called for approaches that see border landscapes and their problems from the viewpoint of neighboring states and their inhabitants.

The interest in border landscapes contributed to a change of focus in border studies from interstate border lines to borderlands. The term *borderland* has often been used in early border studies in close association with frontiers and borders. The main difference consists in the fact that borderlands, or border regions, are geographical areas situated along state borders. Interstate borders run through borderlands. Early frontiers had no political border lines running through them. The concept of borderlands poses that a border, because of its influence over the surrounding areas (known as a "border effect"), creates its own distinctive region. As a consequence, a border can serve not only as an element of division in space, but also as a vehicle of creating new territorial realities (Runley and Minghi 1991). Therefore, in order to make sense of state borders, there is a need to go beyond the preoccupation with border lines themselves and to take into account broader areas—the borderlands—where social processes induced by borders, such as perceptions, stereotypes, and actions, are experienced and reproduced (Michaelsen and Johnson 1997; Newman 2006a; Paasi 1996). Conceptualized this way, borderlands resemble the frontiers of the pre-nation-state era. The two can share common transition zone characteristics, such as a mixture of populations, cultural hybridity, and hybrid economies, that tend to reduce difference. Borderlands, thus, can function as bridges between societies, offering opportunities for cross-border cooperation.

Inspired by the complex cultural, social, and political characteristics of the U.S.-Mexico border, Martínez (1994) developed a typology of borderland development that sheds light on the nature and the range of possibilities of interactions across borderlands. *Alienated* borderlands are representative of hostile circumstances and closed borders between neighboring states. *Coexistent* borderlands indicate a state of mutual ignorance and parallel development of border regions. *Interdependent* borderlands are indicative of cooperative interstate relations, relatively open borders, and complementary border economies. *Integrated* borderlands point to situations where the barrier function of borders has been largely overcome and the entire border region functions as one socioterritorial unit.

In the late 1980s, the social sciences started to incorporate social theory and poststructuralist theories of culture. In border studies, the emphasis was placed on the multidimensional character of social, cultural, and spatial borders and borderlands with the aim of contributing to the debates in social science concerning the meaning and role of difference in

society (Bucken-Knapp et al. 2001; Diener and Hagen 2009). These new approaches, drawing on authors like Derrida, Giddens, Said, and later Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Agamben, and Balibar, among others, relied on the idea that borders are socially constructed to explore how changing spatial patterns of interaction between people affect the role and the meaning of borders (Berg and van Houtum 2003; Kramsch and Hooper 2004). At the same time, there was an increasing awareness of the role played by language in the social and political construction of state borders. Border studies became increasingly critical of the uncontested nature of borders as ostensibly natural divisions between societies. They highlighted the fact that the process of bordering is essentially political, and that this political dimension permeates border making at all scales, from the daily life of individuals to international relations (Paasi 1996).

These postmodern and poststructuralist approaches found their way into boundary studies in the late 1980s, inducing major breakthroughs in the conceptualization of borders. One of the early insights was the conceptualization of the connection between collective identification (or group identity) and border making, which led to a view of borders as indeterminate, mutable, and socially constructed (Paasi 1999; Pellow 1996; Williams 2003). Borders were considered now to have multiple dimensions and were approached contextually (Newman 1999; Paasi 1999). In the first case, multidimensionality acknowledges that there are numerous facets to borders other than the territorial limits of the state. The presence of a border influences society across a multitude of scales and impacts different people in different ways. In the second case, contextuality means that borders cannot be properly understood outside of the context in which they exist. Borders acquire their roles as barriers or bridges from the context in which they are erected and in which they function.

At the same time, there was a broader preoccupation with the process of bounding in general (Newman 2003; Williams 2003), which led to the idea that even invisible borders matter because they are perceived by people who experience and then reproduce these borders in the form of visible borders (Conversi 1999). Boundaries and borders were approached not only in their visible, physical aspect, but also in terms of their symbolic, less tangible meaning. This transformation led to the understanding that borders mean different things for different people in different circumstances.

What the new approaches to border studies pointed to was the fact that the processes of bordering rather than borders themselves were essential for the understanding of border spaces. Borders are never finished, instead they are always in the making, always being imagined and reimagined. What matters more is the border-making process rather than the shape borders assume at one time or another. This shift in thinking led

to new questions about borders. Why, how, and by whom are borders erected? Whose interests are served, and whose interests are hurt by the existence of borders? How do borders acquire their meanings in people's minds, and how do people navigate the multiple meanings of borders? Questions such as these inform the quest for a critical understanding of the socially constructed nature of borders.

To illustrate the breadth and depth of the contemporary border studies literature, the following section sketches the main directions of border research since the 1990s. The four broad directions presented here are by no means exhaustive or mutually exclusive. In fact, most of the themes are interrelated.

Discourses, Borders, and Identity

Borders are today largely seen as discursively constructed (Newman and Paasi 1998). In the social sciences, discourses are typically understood as constituted by a collection of theories, writings, public speeches, and popular media broadcasts that create a specific context that dominates the interpretation of a given issue (Tyner 2005). Discourses are inevitably biased representations of reality. The notion that discourses play crucial roles in the construction of borders shows that the existence of borders requires a process of continual discursive production and reproduction in order to maintain borders' relevance in people's lives. Geography and history textbooks, images of border-crossing checkpoints or fences, patriotic songs, national maps, and passport control booths all constitute powerful symbols that serve to perpetuate and reinforce state borders in people's minds.

Borders are not mirrorlike reflections of the divisions existing in the physical-cultural landscape but are fabrications people make to legitimate distinctions between them (Eskelinen et al. 1999; Paasi 1996). Consequently, the production of borders is a geographically and historically contingent process, and therefore the study of borders must be contextual. Paasi (1996, 1999) suggests that the proper context for the study of borders is situated not only in the adjacent borderland areas but also in the continual process of nation building, the process that provides a narrative account for the identity of the nation-state. At the same time, local experiences and narratives of the border also inform bordering discourses and provide the appropriate context for the understanding of borders.

The idea of the discursive creation of borders prepares the ground for the conceptualization of the "chicken and egg" mutually enforcing relationship" (Newman 2003, 130) between borders and identity, where borders are viewed as identity-constitutive, yet at the same time they can also be erected as a result of discourse-constituted group identity. Drawing

on Said's (1978) conceptualization of the role of space in the construction of Otherness, the current literature on borders stresses that the collective territorial identity is not generated naturally but is achieved through the erection of borders by exploiting "us-versus-them" type discourses (Albert et al. 2001; Donnan and Wilson 1999; Paasi 1996).

Paasi (1996) establishes an analytic framework to explain how group identities are constructed through the use of territorial borders. He identifies four discourses:

- We/here—employed to suggest integration within the borders of territorial units such as the nation-state.
- We/there—demonstrates intention to integrate social groups beyond borders, such as separated minorities.
- We/they within a territory—designates refugees and Others inside the borders of a territory.
- Other/there—used to inscribe difference on social groups situated outside the borders of a territory.

The implications of these sociospatial discourses for the understanding of phenomena such as nationalism and ethnicity, for example, are paramount. Borders and borderlands emerge as central sites for exploring the construction of various collective identities and of the ways these identities influence and are influenced by the context of the borderland (Bucken-Knapp and Schack 2001).

Borders and Power

Borders are sites of power where different political, economic, and social systems come into contact. Border landscapes with barbed wire, watchtowers, and checkpoints are a very visible aspect of this power (Donnan and Wilson 1999). However, not all power is visible in border landscapes. Borders are present in various cultural and social practices in which power is invisible (Amoore 2006; Paasi 1999; Paasi and Prokkola 2008). Borders may conceal power resulting from political or economical factors that belong to a multitude of scales beyond and below the national scale. In this way, borders appear to be responsible for various issues that affect peoples' lives that in fact arise from the desire of one group to dominate another. Moreover, groups that desire to gain or maintain power over other groups and territories can resort to the erection of borders on the grounds of ethnic or religious difference in order to mask their goals of domination. In order to unearth the power of boundaries, we need to ask whose interests are being served by the imposition and maintaining of various borders.

In contemporary approaches, borders are often understood as mechanisms that render power emerging from human interactions visible. They are expressions of power relations, and they can be perceived as "flows of power" given their dynamic nature (Paasi 1999). Borders embody a variety of contradictions and conflicts that are the result of the arbitrary circumstances of boundary making (Anderson et al. 2003; Newman and Paasi 1998). As a result, understanding borders as sites of power helps us to understand the forces behind various social conflicts, and this in turn can help us to better manage or prevent them.

Borders as Institutions

Underlining this approach is the idea that borders are the institutional outcome of boundary-making processes that shape the surrounding region. The construction of border lines is part of the construction of territorial units in space. It is through the process of institutionalization that territorial units receive their borders that distinguish them from other territories (Paasi 1996, 1999). Borders are found in institutions such as education, mass media, ceremonies, and others. National education in history and geography, for example, serves to preserve the idea of interstate borders.

As institutions, borders perpetuate difference in space. The institutionalization of borders formalizes inclusion and exclusion in society by inscribing difference into law. An individual's identity is stamped in passports and recorded when she or he crosses international borders. Order and control of society are achieved through the regulation of movement across space that is stored into databases at border-crossing checkpoints in order to keep track at all times of one's presence in or absence from his or her designated place.

The institutional approach stresses the multiple and changing meaning of borders in different historic and spatial circumstances. Borders are evolving institutions that acquire their meaning in relation to a host of events taking place at local, national, or global scales (Newman and Paasi 1998). Borders as institutions develop their own history. At one point in time, state borders may be relatively open, such as before World War I; at another they may be relatively closed, such as during the Cold War; and yet at another they may reopen again, such as at the end of the Cold War.

The institutionalization of borders brings about a multiscale hierarchy of borders. Different levels of government are present in border areas, imposing different jurisdictions on the inhabitants of borderlands. While much attention is paid in general to the all-too-visible state borders, regional and local boundaries, such as administrative or municipal

borders, may often have a key importance in the lives of many people (Newman 2003).

Borders and Globalization

Globalization-inspired border studies cover a vast array of topics that raise the question of the future role of state borders confronted by the growing power of a transnational economy and by global cultural influences (Hakli and Kaplan 2002; Newman 2003). Initially, the "borderless world" thesis has provided an influential account of globalization's impact on state borders (Ohmae 1990). Much of this literature tends to view borders as obsolete barriers affecting the free movement of various global flows, and to assume that in a global world the mobility of social relations will ostensibly replace their territoriality. Consequently, globalization is understood as leading to the deterritorialization of the system of territorially sovereign states, which in turn will lead to the fading away of state borders.

The borderless-world thesis has been vigorously criticized by many geographers on the grounds that it presents a simplistic and idealized vision of globalization (Toal 1999). Far from fading away, it appears that the more territorial borders fall apart, the more various groups around the world cling to place, nation, and religion as makers of their identity (Harvey 1989). In other words, the reduction in capacity of territorial borders to separate and defend against others often elicits adverse reactions in numerous populations. Difference between people and places may be socially constructed through the erection of boundaries, but this does not mean that it is not deeply internalized by the members of a society. So far, the consumption-dominated rhetoric of globalization has done little to uncouple the feeling of difference that borders create from the formation of people's territorial identities.

If the "space of flows" of globalization is to replace the "space of places" of nation-states, this would imply the emergence of a global polity and an end to territorial bordering as a mode of controlling and ordering society. There is little evidence that this process is plausible in the foreseeable future (Anderson et al. 2003; Taylor 1995). In reality, both spaces have coexisted for a long time without one totally replacing the other. If some of the globalization flows deemphasize territorial borders, this does not inevitably entail *deterritorialization* and the disappearance of boundaries (Newman 1999, 2006a). Rather, we are witnessing a *reterritorialization* of political power that includes a selective reduction of the barrier role of state borders for specific categories of flows, as well as a restructuring and reorganization of state territorial sovereignty to include other political organizations beyond the nation-state. The increased mobility of social

relations has not displaced their territoriality. Instead, it has modified it. State borders are becoming more complex and differentiated rather than withering away. They exist simultaneously on various spatial scales, in a myriad of practices and discourses included in culture, politics, economics, and education. Borders, thus, remain central to the process of globalization since "they are where the 'space of flows' meet (or collide?) with the 'space of places'" (Anderson et al. 2003, 10).

The ambiguous role of state borders under contemporary globalization is best revealed by the distinction practiced by governments around the world between politics on the one hand and economics on the other. The key argument here is that while national political regulation most often stops at state borders, the seemingly nonpolitical economic activities can easily cross state borders and elude national regulation. This disconnection has been typically dealt with through a circular logic in which borders are seen to cause problems and then new borders are required to fix these problems. For example, governments commonly invoke the territorial limits state borders impose on their capacity to control the adverse effects that certain global flows have on domestic markets, only to attempt to expand these borders into cyberspace as a strategy to address this issue.

Security-related approaches constitute another important perspective on the impact of globalization on borders. In the post-9/11 world, border *securitization* discourses have gained a firm grip on many decision makers' minds. These discourses—in existence before September 11, 2001, as well—see state borders as the ultimate line of defense for societies confronted not only with transnational terrorism but also with migration flows and a variety of other "threats." Overall, border securitization marks a movement toward reinforcing state borders to make them more difficult to cross for certain categories of people. This process is in stark contrast to border-opening processes, and it is most evident in North America and Europe, which previously experienced the greatest degree of border opening (Andreas and Biersteker 2003). The outcome of border securitization is to hinder interaction across borders and to reinforce retrenchment behind the illusory comfort of territorial borders. However, this is not to be understood as a reclosing of borders in the sense of a return to the past. It is difficult to imagine the rigid control of borders as an appropriate answer to issues generated by globalization (Brunet-Jailly 2007). Additional explanations are needed to adequately understand the role of state borders under globalization.

To this end, state borders have recently been likened to filters or firewalls that can control mobility by "purifying" it. Borders are seen as acquiring network characteristics and becoming territorially networked as well as digitized. Behind this approach is a recognition of the fact that

borders and border functions are becoming dispersed through society rather than remaining concentrated at the edges (Baillar 2004, Rumford 2006a; Walters 2006a). Border functions that were once performed at border-crossing checkpoints can now take place anywhere inside the territory of a state. In numerous instances, people's identities are screened or prescreened before they even reach the state border, that is, when they apply for visas, for special border passes, or at a bus station when they embark for a border-crossing trip. Biometric identification of people as well as other technology-driven procedures are increasingly becoming common border-crossing experiences. In this way, state borders are becoming more personal in a very real sense. These bordering practices lead to the multiplication of borders in society and to an increase in their complexity. People are now encountering borders in more places and more often than before. In the end, the networking of borders increases their power of ordering people's lives precisely at a time when these lives are becoming more mobile in space due to the time-space compression that accompanies globalization.