

Introduction

Theorizing Borders

Chris Rumford

ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Thinking about Borders

An increasing concern with networks and mobilities, especially in the context of thinking about globalization and cosmopolitanism, has stimulated theorizing on the changing nature of borders. It is necessary to distinguish approaches which draw attention to the changing role of political borders in a globalizing world (for example, as revealed by shifting the focus of sociology from the nation-state to the globe) from others that attempt to theorize the changing relations between borders and society. It is the latter approach that interests us here: theorizing borders also involves an attempt to understand the nature of the social. Not surprisingly, therefore, theorizing borders and the dynamics of bordering and rebordering have become key components of understanding contemporary social and political change. Many of the themes central to contemporary social theory – globalization, cosmopolitanism, networked community, mobilities and flows – have led to both a rethinking of the nature and role of borders, and, at the same time, have caused social theorists to place borders more centrally in the study of society. As pointed out by Jan Nederveen Pieterse, '[a] global sociology is taking shape around notions such as social networks (rather than "societies"), border zones, boundary crossing, diaspora, and global society' (2004: 81). In short, borders are central to the social theory agenda: to theorize mobilities and networks is at the same time to theorize borders.

Social theorists have generally favoured one of two broad approaches to theorizing borders, although these are by no means mutually exclusive. On the one hand, borders have been contextualized by the idea of the network, which has shaped much current thinking on society, particularly under the influence of globalization theories. The network, along with associated ideas of mobilities, flows, fluids and scapes, has become a key metaphor for understanding modern life in a 'world in motion'. Urry's (1999) call for a sociological shift from the study of societies to the study of mobilities, Sassen's (2002) work on networked cities, and Wellman's (2001) idea of 'networked individualism' have all helped to advance this agenda. However, the work of Manuel Castells is perhaps the most celebrated in this field. The network society is one where a space of places (the territorial nation-state) is being replaced by a space of flows, and the European Union is seen as the paradigm of the network state (Castells, 2000). In the

network vision of society, territorial borders are easily transcended by flows and mobilities which take place within globalized circuits of information and exchange. On this reading, borders remain important both because they have been rescaled by global networks and projected at a distance from the 'old' borders of national territory (in the sense that the EU provides new borders for the UK's 'domestic' economy), and because access to networks (and restriction of said access) can act as a bordering mechanism: those not on the network and still existing mainly in a space of places are excluded from important circuits of information and economic exchange.

On the other hand, social theorists have also been concerned with the meaning and role of borders in the context of societal transformations and a new spatiality of politics. Bauman, for example, sees the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as representing a symbolic end to the era of space and the primacy of territorial power (Bauman, 2002: 88). In 'global space' borders are translated into extra-territorial 'frontierlands' (Bauman, 2002: 90). The point about the two approaches not being mutually exclusive is borne out by Bauman's appropriation of the metaphor of fluids (liquid modernity, liquid life, liquid love). Ulrich Beck, particularly in his work on the cosmopolitanization of societies (globalization from within) identifies the pluralization of borders as a key development. Borders are no longer only national but may take many different forms. In this context, Beck (2004) points to the lack of separation between domestic and international and between inside and outside as being a significant dimension of the new spatiality. These themes are echoed in the work of Balibar for whom borders have become so diffuse that whole countries can now be borderlands, for example those at the margins of the EU's project of integration: once countries had borders, now they *are* borders (Balibar, 1998).

A key shift not addressed directly by any of these approaches concerns our changing consciousness of borders. No longer simply represented by lines on a map, or marked by political boundaries (security check-points, passport controls, transit points), borders and the regular crossing of borders, have become part of our routine experience, particularly in Europe where borders proliferate (between an increasing number of EU member states and non-member countries, or within countries as sub-national and city regions assert their EU-sponsored autonomy and assert a new spatial existence) but where the importance of individual borders is in many cases very much reduced. As Balibar says, 'Borders are being both multiplied and reduced in their localization and their function, they are being thinned out and doubled . . . the quantitative relation between "border" and "territory" is being inverted' (1998: 220). In other words, borders abound but they are frequently encountered as non-boundaries, and so for many people they are much easier to cross. Alongside this diminution in the importance of borders as physical barriers (or mental boundaries) is the awareness that 'hard' borders still exist at the edges of nation-state territories, brimming with security controls and state-of-the-art surveillance technology, although they are largely unable to prevent (and we have lost confidence in their ability to control) the movement of illegal immigrants, terrorists, traffickers in people and drugs or

whosoever is deemed to represent a threat at any particular time: those beyond borders are no longer in awe of them.

Moreover, debordering and rebordering accompany each other. We have become accustomed to a world where borders wax and wane, as it were, and the important borders in our lives do not remain fixed. The 'borderless world' thesis associated with some variants of globalization theory suggests that borders are being effaced in order to facilitate greater economic mobility (the borderless internal market of the EU, for example) while at the same time security concerns and worries about 'open borders' have led to the rebordering of nation-states who wish to better control flows of migrant workers, refugees and terrorists. This has led to a tension between accounts which emphasize the openness and/or the transcendability of borders as a feature of globalization and accounts which draw attention to massive processes of securitized rebordering (Andreas and Snyder, 2000). We can move this debate forward by thinking in terms of the existence of 'networked borders'. Contemporary borders are increasingly differentiated. Security borders are far more rigid than corresponding economic, telecommunication and educational borders. Indeed, one problem with the 'rebordering' thesis, which emphasizes the renewed need for securitized borders in a world of global threats, is that it relies on a rather undifferentiated notion of borders, which are intelligible only in terms of policing and security and a defence against external threats (the mobility of the dangerous, undesirable and fear-inducing). In fact, borders are not singular and unitary and are designed to encourage various kinds of mobility, particularly for certain categories of immigrants, migrant workers and students (Rumford, 2006).

Complex Borders, Networked Borders

Three examples will help illustrate the complex relationship between borders and society, and the impossibility of reducing the question of borders to a tension between open borders and securitized borders. The first example illustrates the mobility of borders themselves during the processes of rebordering, and their increasingly differentiated nature. The UK now has reciprocal arrangements with both Belgium and France to locate domestic border controls in those countries. In 2004, British immigration officials began operations in Lille, Calais and Paris, checking the documents of those seeking to travel to the UK. This arrangement was later extended to include the Brussels Eurostar terminal, and, as a consequence 'the British border now extends to the heart of Belgium'.¹ The stated objectives of these initiatives is to enhance national security by making it more difficult for illegal immigrants to cross the English Channel, and they are framed by the recognition that domestic controls by themselves are inadequate and need to be supplemented by an international network of border controls. A former Home Office Minister, Beverley Hughes, was quoted as saying that 'we are effectively moving our borders across the Channel – UK immigration officers will be able to stop would-be illegal immigrants even before they set off for the UK'.²

The efficacy of these arrangements was called into question by the apparent ease with which one of the men suspected of the failed 21/7 terrorist attacks in London managed to leave the UK and travel via Paris to Italy, even though he was being sought by police at this time. That the Waterloo Eurostar terminal has no permanent point manned by UK officials was seized on by critics of British government policy as evidence of the UK's increasingly 'porous borders'.³ Britain's mobile borders were designed to police 'one-way traffic'; mobility from Britain to the Continent not thought to constitute a national security threat.

The second example illustrates Balibar's point about borders being diffused throughout society. In September 2005 it was reported that new anti-terrorist legislation prompted by the 7/7 bombings in London would require users of internet cafés or call-centres in Italy to produce their passports before being granted access to communication networks.⁴ In particular, managers of public communication facilities will be required to record the identity and details of the activities of all customers. This development conforms to Guiraudon and Lahav's (2000) idea of 'remote control' (see Walters in this volume) where border control takes place at different points in society not simply at the territorial limits. In addition, the state is increasingly 'privatizing' aspects of border security by, for example, requiring airlines, hotel keepers and owners of internet cafés to document movements and uncover those whose presence is undesirable. As Walters, points out, migration controls exist at airport check-in desks and along motorways where haulage operators are required to check their trucks for illegal immigrants. This means that, in effect, the motorway system is a 'kind of networked border'.

Ironically, the networking of borders and their diffusion throughout society have led to a renewed importance for the land border, at least in particular instances. For example, in September and October 2005, at the borders of the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa, large numbers of Africans (up to 1,000, according to reports) were regularly attempting to cross the border by mounting mass assaults on the security fences, most of them being repulsed by Spanish military border guards, some even being killed in the process. The Africans desperate to cross into the EU equate Europe with 'El Dorado' and envisage a future of opportunities and material comfort otherwise not available to them. '[W]ith visas increasingly difficult to come by and airlines refusing to take people without valid papers . . . Europe's only land borders with Africa' offer the best chance of entering the EU.⁵ In other words, the EU's networked borders (i.e. those not necessarily located at the perimeter; airports, travel agents, railway stations) constitute a barrier to the mobility of 'outsiders' without economic means or proper travel documentation. Those seeking illegal entry to the EU then rely on the greater porosity of the land borders, which may be heavily securitized but where the possibility of crossing can still be imagined, attempted and for a small number, realized.

My third example is taken from the Mexico–US border where in August 2005 David Smith, a 'human cannonball', was shot over the Mexican border at a location close to the cities of Tijuana and San Diego, which at the time were

jointly hosting a series of public art projects. This event, devised by Venezuelan artist Javier Tellez, was intended as a 'living sculpture' which, according to Smith, was designed to explore the 'notion of spatial and mental borders'.⁶ From the artist's perspective, Smith's airborne trip was 'a metaphor for flying over human borders, flying over the law, flying over everything that is established'⁷ (although in deference to the US authorities prior dispensation for the event had been obtained from the US border patrols). The interesting thing about this event is not so much that 'Smith is the first person to be fired across an international border',⁸ but that it is illustrative of a shift in the relationship between state and society. Borders have human and experiential dimensions, and can be appropriated by societal actors for non-state purposes; signalling an important dimension of community identity, for example. It used to be the case that borders were a key apparatus of the nation-state, particularly in relation to management and regulation of the population. The control exercised by the state was more intense at its borders, even though these might be geographically remote from the administrative centre and at the margins of its territorial authority. Traditionally, borders were 'dynamic aspects of a state' and an expression and measure of state power (Giddens, 1985: 49). However, borders are now less important in terms of military defence and coercive control, and are notable for their (selective) permeability to human mobility. Borders are no longer solely the preserve of the state, and societal actors can redefine borders or appropriate them for purposes other than those originally intended. We will return to this issue below.

These examples illustrate the need to think about borders in ways which take us beyond the logic of open versus closed, or security versus network. Borders may take the form of political boundaries and securitized perimeters but they are also increasingly mobile and dispersed, and, as a consequence, more commonly encountered and frequently traversed (although not by all). Importantly, borders are not experienced in the same way by all people (Yuval-Davis, 2004). What operates as an impermeable barrier to some constitutes colourful local detail to others. Borders can be popular tourist destinations: the Berlin Wall, Niagara Falls, Heathrow Airport Visitors Centre, Ellis Island (see Walters, this volume), Hadrian's Wall. Border features can be utilized in art projects: Banksy's murals on the Palestinian side of Israel's West Bank Wall; Christo's wrapped coastline and other artworks featuring gateways, fences and walls. How we experience borders and how we think about borders depends very much on our personal circumstances: what constitutes a border to some is a gateway to others. In the following sections we will examine three important challenges for social theory in respect of theorizing borders: the new spatiality of politics; changing state-society relations; and the question of 'who borders?' These challenges are associated with the role of borders under conditions of 'post-territoriality', the perspectival dimensions of borders, and the increasingly differentiated nature of 'borderwork' in a globalizing world.

The New Spatiality of Politics

Etienne Balibar makes the important point that there has been a major shift in the relationship between territory and borders. Whereas borders were once singular and only existed at the boundary of polities, they are now multiple and are dispersed throughout societies. But this is not all. The changing spatiality of politics – represented by, for example, the emergence of supra-national governance (for example, the EU), networks of global cities, and transnational communities of fate – means that political space can no longer be equated with that of the nation-state, and, as a consequence, bordering processes have undergone concomitant changes, acquiring a spatiality beyond territoriality. The 'spatial turn' has ushered in a new theoretical lexicon: the rescaling of state space (Brenner, 2004), the rise of supra-locality (Hooper, 2004), and polycentricity (Hein, 2006; Scholte, 2004). The new spatiality of politics has also seen a shift from state-centric approaches to a concern with other, non-territorial spaces: public spheres, cosmopolitan communities, global civil societies, non-proximate or virtual communities, and transnational or global networks, none of which can be bordered in conventional ways. The new spatiality of politics has also become associated with a 'world in motion' ushered in by globalization and consisting of flows, fluids, networks and a whole plethora of mobilities (Urry, 1999).

Theoretical work on borders needs to engage more fully with the changing spatiality of politics sketched out above. In light of the increasing multi-dimensionality of space, an approach to borders which is framed narrowly by debates on a borderless world, on the one hand, or the rebordering of an increasingly security-conscious (Western) world, on the other, is less than satisfactory. One laboratory for thinking about the changing nature of borders is contemporary Europe, and in particular the EU, where recent thinking on borders has managed to go beyond the open/closed dichotomy (Axford, 2006; Delanty, 2006; Walters, 2006), and the concomitant tendency to see the EU as either a 'fortress' combining a high degree of internal mobility with an impermeable external shell, or as a 'network state' which works to connect together different levels of governance in a novel non-territorial arrangement, and where denial of access to the network is itself a formidable form of bordering (Rumford, 2006). The implications of changing conceptions of European space for theorizing borders are quite profound (see Eder in this issue) and it will be instructive to examine three approaches to the novelty of European space in this context: (1) the EU as a *monotopia*; (2) *borderlands*; and (3) *polycentricity*.

The EU conceives itself as a *monotopia* (Jensen and Richardson, 2004), a single space within which all constraints to the movement of goods, peoples, services and money have been removed. As a result of this heightened mobility, Europe is increasingly interconnected and its various component parts (i.e. member states, sub-national regions) are seamlessly woven together. There are many reasons for challenging this rather optimistic view of intra-European mobility. First, it does not recognize the fact that European space is dynamic and changing; the EU added ten more members in 2004 and this massive addition

of European space and its degree of connectivity and seamless integration are variable at best. Future enlargements will further test the monotopic 'smoothness' of the EU. Second, the image of Europe as a monotopia conveniently ignores the fact that European space is not contiguous: Greece has no land borders with any other member states, and both France and Spain possess territories which are geographically remote (in Africa and South America).

The idea of the EU as a monotopia is questionable (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Jensen and Richardson, 2004), and in relation to borders, it encourages the assumption that they can be easily superseded by mobility and connectivity. However, it does encourage us to confront the mobility of borders, their increasingly differentiated and partial nature, and the degree to which they can work to connect as well as divide. On the latter point, and aligned with the idea that EU borders are shifting, what were previously borders between the EU 15 and the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe are now, following accession, part of EU space. In the same way, current EU borders with Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey can be thought of as future EU space, a space which is already in the process of formation as a result of extensive economic, educational, and communication networks (such as Trans-European road and rail networks) which traverse those countries, and existing regional and trans-border programmes which are designed to ameliorate problems associated with marginality: today's external borders represent tomorrow's internal space.

The idea that the EU has 'borderlands' at its furthest reaches (especially in the east) has become popular in recent times, in no small part of the result of EU attempts to construct a 'new neighbourhood' policy and develop a 'ring of friends' with those countries to the east and south who are unlikely to ever become candidates for formal accession talks⁹ (Delanty and Rumford, 2005; Rumford, 2006). The EU has become aware that the imposition of 'hard' borders at the outer perimeter of the EU is likely to create problems for both those EU countries on the periphery (increased insecurity beyond the border) as well as neighbours who find themselves on the other side (economic disadvantage, curtailment of historical patterns of local trade, movement of people, etc.). The EU seeks to ameliorate these problems by 'softening' the more abrasive edges of its external borders by, for example, increasing networking opportunities with non-members and allowing for localized and routine cross-border traffic (access to local markets, etc.). The development of this new neighbourhood policy is seen as a very positive foreign policy tool by the EU and offering access to EU markets and other networking opportunities is viewed as a means of encouraging democratization and the restructuring of economies according to market principles. Former Commission President Romano Prodi claimed that the policy would allow the EU and its neighbours to 'share everything but institutions', which can be read both as a statement of the EU's desire to pursue integration without enlargement and the desire to extend EU governance to non-EU space. In relation to theorizing borders, the idea of the borderland is an important one because it signals the spatiality of borders themselves; no longer simply lines on a map or a physical frontier between nation-states, borders have their own space

and have become zones of exchange, connectivity and security (see Barry, this volume). Borderlands should not be thought of as simply a development at Europe's borders. Extending the point that borders have become dispersed throughout society Balibar (2004) argues that Europe itself is a borderland, a zone of transition and mobility without territorial fixity.

The notion of polycentricity has become a useful way of thinking about the decentred and dynamic nature of Europe, and the term polycentricity has a much wider applicability to political and societal transformations under conditions of globalization (Delanty and Rumford, 2006; Scholte, 2004). Polycentricity refers to forms of non-territorial politics which emanate from a multiplicity of sites and which cannot be reduced to a single centre. On this reading, the EU is not a superstate or supra-state, or even a form of multi-level governance, but a more decentred spatial arrangement. For example, the EU is deemed to have a polycentric capital city structure (Hein, 2006) with different functions being carried out in different 'centres': Brussels, Strasbourg, Luxembourg, Warsaw, and so on. The idea of polycentricity has also been important in moving away from the idea that the EU has been unsuccessful in preventing the exacerbation of a core-periphery pattern of disadvantage and unbalanced growth. The EU now encourages polycentric development, with a number of centres of growth within Europe, and indeed with individual member states, in tandem with pursuing territorial cohesion. In this sense, the idea of polycentricity has a clear connection with the idea of the self-image of the EU as a monotopia (Jensen and Richardson, 2004). In relation to theorizing borders, the spatial notion of polycentricity points us in the direction of the shifting borders of economic governance, borders that are being rescaled away from the traditional 'levels' found within the nation-state and towards the European city, the assumed centre of growth and site of the accommodation of the global. Urban growth, cast in terms of the desirability of polycentric growth, is the main consequence of the rescaling of the state (Brenner, 2004). Brenner advances the argument that spatial Keynesianism (dominant until the mid-1980s) has given way to more entrepreneurial forms of governance, focused on urban growth centres and aimed at building the global competitive advantage of European city regions. The post-Keynesian competition state has responded to the challenges of globalization and Europeanization by working to enhance the 'supranational territorial competitiveness of major cities and city-regions' (Brenner, 2004: 259).

Changing State-Society Relations

Thinking about borders has been greatly influenced by the transformed relations between state and society under conditions of globalization. This is also related to the 'governance turn' and the role of societal actors in political rule. The communicative networking and transnational flows and mobilities characteristic of globalization have created new 'poles of attraction for social relations, which

threaten older forms of social cohesion' (Albrow, 1996: 213). In other words, people now have greater freedom to connect with a whole range of others, wherever they might be, who share similar beliefs, fears, and preferences. The nation-state is less interested in monopolizing the regulation of public politics and far less capable of restricting access to the outside world (although it is not unheard of for nation-states to attempt to regulate access to the internet, for example). What this means is that society does not have the same boundaries as it had previously, especially so as society and the nation-state do not necessarily inhabit the same space. In Beck's words, 'the unity of state, society, and the individual underpinning the first [industrial] modernity is in the course of dissolution' (2000: 102). What we have instead is a 'non-state society, a social aggregate for which territorial state guarantees of order, as well as the rules of publicly legitimated politics, lose their binding character' (2000: 102). Loosed from its national moorings, and sustained by a multitude of transnational networks and social movements, Beck believes it is possible to talk of world society: if societies are not constrained by the imposition of national borders, then the development of a global or cosmopolitan society becomes a possibility.

The cosmopolitanization of national societies, which Beck conceives of as globalization from within, works to blur distinctions between the national and international and to superimpose previously distinct spaces, thereby creating a new kind of place. We are increasingly mobile between different cultures (through marriage, diasporic kinship networks, etc.) on the one hand, and, through the easy access to global images of disaster and suffering, for example, possess a cosmopolitan imagination through which we are able to include 'the otherness of the other in our self-definition' (Beck, 2004: 148). (However, it should be pointed out that older style territorial rebordering also induced a certain type of cosmopolitan mobility: 'there are people born in Poland, brought up in the Soviet Union and now living in Belarus who have never left their native villages'.¹⁰) The ideas of cosmopolitan societies and global spaces have important implications for the way we think about borders. Cosmopolitanism, at least in the way that Beck talks about it, draws attention to the difficulty in sustaining dichotomies of inside/outside, us/them, national/international which were staple concepts for a territorial world of nation-states. What becomes of borders in a cosmopolitan world characterized by such a high degree of mobility?

Borders and mobilities are not antithetical. A globalizing world is a world of networks, flows and mobility; it is also a world of borders. It can be argued that cosmopolitanism is best understood as an orientation to the world which entails the constant negotiation and crossing of borders. A cosmopolitan is not only a citizen of the world, someone who embraces multiculturalism, or even a 'frequent flyer'. A cosmopolitan lives in and across borders. Borders connect the 'inner mobility' of our lives with both the multiplicity of communities we may elect to become members of and the cross-cutting tendencies of polities to impose their border regimes on us in ways which compromise our mobilities, freedoms, rights, and even identities. The incessant mobility which is often seen as characteristic of contemporary life is only one part of the story. The other side

of the coin is the bordering and de- and re-bordering processes which also point to the cosmopolitanization of society.

Increased mobility in society (and between nation-states) requires new borders to regulate forms of activity which old-style territorial borders cannot achieve. Bordering is selective and targeted. For example, the EU is often said to be based on the 'four freedoms': free movement of goods, services, persons and capital within a common European market place. At the same time as there exists free movement for money transacted between banks and other financial institutions, there is much less mobility for cash carried by individuals on their person. In the UK, money laundering laws allow customs officials to confiscate large sums (£10,000 plus) if found on an individual who is not carrying adequate documentation and/or the movement of such sums out of the country has not been cleared with HM Customs and Excise beforehand, even if the money is legitimate and the property of the person carrying it. It is not only the movement of money across borders that is being controlled in this way. The movement of large sums of cash around the UK is also subject to similar intervention by HM Customs and Excise who use sniffer dogs at railway stations and on the London Underground to detect large quantities of cash.¹¹

Bailibar's comment that the relationship between borders and territory is being inverted (1998: 220) signals a multiplicity of bordering process and an increasing securitization of society. However, another interpretation is possible. According to Moises Naim, writing about drug smuggling, 'borders are a boon for traffickers and a nightmare for law-enforcement agencies' (2005: 62–3), because the increased revenues to be gained from moving illegal goods across continents makes cross-border smuggling a more attractive proposition. Coupled with this is the problem of governments failing to cooperate effectively between jurisdictions. So, while policing remains national, 'traffickers are most effective when operating *across* borders – which makes them in many ways better suited to today's world' (Naim, 2005: 63).

Who Borders?

Anthony Giddens once wrote that borders only come into existence with nation-states (Giddens, 1985: 50). Nowadays we are much less in thrall to the methodological nationalism and territorialist assumptions underpinning earlier social theory. Borders can be created, shifted, and deconstructed by a range of actors. In short, borderwork is no longer the exclusive preserve of the nation-state. The knocking down of the Berlin Wall, perhaps the most substantial symbolic border of them all, was accomplished by people who were impatient for governmental or diplomatic processes to achieve this goal. This momentous example of 'people power' and the willingness of citizens to deborder their states took place in a period when elsewhere in Europe and beyond other citizens were actively rebordering their towns and cities by building 'gated communities' to live in, preventing greenfield sites from being settled by 'travellers', and lobbying for the creation

of a new national border police (in the UK). Citizens, as well as states, have the ability to shape debordering and rebordering.

Borders can be central to the identity of social movements. 'No one is illegal' is a global network of anti-racist groups campaigning for the abolition of immigration controls and advocating free movement across borders (Papastergiadis, 2005).¹² Advocacy groups may work to change borders. For example, in the USA, borders are currently at stake in the dispute over the right of the US government to detain foreign nationals at their camp at Guantánamo Bay (in Cuba). The US Court of Appeals has ruled that federal courts have no jurisdiction to hear petitions from foreign citizens held outside US borders, although this ruling is currently being contested by some human rights lawyers for whom the USA is acting contrary to international law and denying the detainees their human rights by deliberately placing them outside US borders. Similarly, interest groups can appropriate borders for their own ends. In an echo of the situation in the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla referred to earlier, many poor Mexicans attempt to cross the 'tortilla curtain' into the USA and more than a million are arrested every year, 464 dying in the attempt in the past twelve months.¹³ This is an example of the state's capacity to regulate the 3,000 km border. Yet the flow of Mexicans crossing illegally to the USA has resulted in another phenomenon: the rise of vigilante groups who voluntarily patrol the desert borders seeking out Mexicans attempting to cross the border in remote, desert regions. A spokesperson for the 'Minutemen' described their activities as 'a grassroots effort to bring Americans to the defence of their homeland'.¹⁴

In Europe, the EU has made many decisions about what constitutes the important borders in Europe (and where these important borders should be located). One consequence is that EU members (and non-members) are much less able to decide what counts as an important border in the European context. As the external borders of the EU shift as the result of enlargement, the rebordering of Europe undergoes constant modification. Common European borders have replaced a collection of national borders, and the EU now possesses a European agency for external borders (Frontex) based in Warsaw. Previously important borders – such as the Europe-defining ones between East and West Germany, and disputed ones between Germany and Poland, have ceased to be contested or troubled demarcations as a result of EU enlargement decisions. We have witnessed the eastward movement of the 'important' borders of Europe – away from the Iron Curtain and towards the border between Slovakia and the Ukraine, or the Baltic States and Russia. This does not mean an end to attempts to re-establish an east–west axis in Europe, however. Krastev (2004) writes of a 'tug-of-war' to position the 'Kiev Wall' or the 'Schengen Wall' (same 'wall', different perspective) either within the Ukraine, or between the Ukraine and the rest of Europe. In addition, the EU has managed to re-border Cyprus in a way which creates an entirely new division between the Greek and Turkish communities (Kramsch, 2006; Rumford, 2006).

Conclusion

The 'spatial turn' in the social sciences has foregrounded the processes by which social space is constructed, and, of particular importance in the context of this volume, has focused attention on the way space is constitutive of social and political relations, not merely the pre-existing environment within which institutionalizations, governance, social antagonisms and political transformations are played out. There has been a marked spatial turn in social theory in the past decade or so, with theorists of globalization and cosmopolitanism being at the forefront of attempts to rethink space beyond (national) territory. In doing so, they have also placed the study of borders high on the social theory agenda. This is clear from a cursory reading of theorists such as Bauman, Beck, Balibar and others already mentioned. There are several other high profile works which have made clear the palpable need for theory to be more sensitive to space, and more importantly, which demonstrate the need to place the study of borders more centrally within social theory. In *Empire*, Hardt and Negri argue for the emergence of a global form of sovereignty which possesses no territorial centre of power nor fixed borders and boundaries. 'Empire' is 'a decentred and deterritorializing apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers' (Hardt and Negri, 2000: xii). Giorgio Agamben, who shares Hardt and Negri's interest in Foucauldian biopolitics, figures 'the camp' (drawn from the example of the Nazi concentration camp) as a zone of indistinction between outside and inside. 'The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule' (Agamben, 1998: 168–9).

In conclusion, there are several points to be made. One is that while the spatial dimensions of these and other works are relatively well established, the implications of new interpretations of spatiality for understanding borders is much less well researched. The spatial turn has encouraged us to look to space first, and borders second. Thus, in readings of *Empire*, the focus has been on the novel polycentricity of sovereign governance, and with Agamben's work on the internalization of external space and the breakdown of the binary structure of space, i.e. inside/outside. The contribution of these works to theorizing borders has been less well understood, and is still at a relatively early stage. This leads to a second, related, point. The spatial turn may work to subordinate borders to spaces, as if the former were somehow dependent upon a prior spatial ordering. One purpose of this special issue of *EJST* is to demonstrate that borders, and, in particular, processes of bordering, debordering and rebordering are central to any understanding of the social. Borders are not to be conceived only as the edges of territory, zones of connectivity, or even spaces of governance. As Mignolo and Tlostanova point out in their contribution to this volume, borders can shape our perception of the world: we need to think from borders, not just study them. Given that in the (post-)Western world we all live within and across borders to an unprecedented degree (and are aware that this is so), then 'border thinking' is a major component of our consciousness of the world. Admittedly, this is not

the point that Mignolo and Tlostanova are making: their concern is with ‘border thinking’ in terms of the critical and de-colonial potential of an ‘epistemology of the exterior’. From a cosmopolitan perspective, and in a spirit of pluriversality, we might want to generalize this insight and apply ‘border thinking’ to all borders (rather than assume a hierarchy of borders). All borders, each act of debordering and rebordering, and every border crossing are constitutive of social relations, and, as such, help us orientate ourselves to the world.

Notes

- 1 ‘International immigration controls’, BBC News, 15 April 2004.
- 2 Home Office, 1 February 2004.
- 3 ‘Hoon ponders new passport checks’, BBC News, 31 July 2005.
- 4 *Guardian*, 29 September 2005.
- 5 ‘Seeking Europe’s promised land’ BBC News, 29 September 2005.
- 6 ‘Cannonball man flies over border’ BBC News, 28 August 2005.
- 7 ‘Human cannonball sours across US/Mexico border’, KVOA Tucson, 29 August 2005.
- 8 BBC News, 28 August 2005.
- 9 The European Neighbourhood Policy covers Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, as well as the Palestinian Authority.
- 10 ‘Good fences’, *The Economist*, Issue 8099, 19 December 1999.
- 11 ‘Sniffer dogs track train cash’, BBC News 26, September 2003.
- 12 <http://antimedia.net/nooneisillegal/>
- 13 ‘Record deaths on US-Mexico border’, BBC News, 4 October 2005.
- 14 ‘“Vigilantes” set for Mexico border patrol’, BBC News, 28 March 2005.

References

- Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Albrow, M. (1996) *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Andreas, P. and Snyder, T., eds (2000) *The Wall Around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Axford, B. (2006) ‘The Dialectic of Borders and Networks in Europe: Reviewing Topological Presuppositions’, *Comparative European Politics* 4(2).
- Balibar, E. (1998) ‘The Borders of Europe’, in P. Cheah and B. Robbins (eds) *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (2004) *We the People of Europe: Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2002) *Society Under Siege*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U. (2000) *What Is Globalization?* Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (2004) ‘The Cosmopolitan Dimension’, in N. Gane *Rethinking Social Theory*. London: Continuum.

- Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2000) *End of Millennium*, vol. 3 of *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Delanty, G. (2006) 'Borders in a Changing Europe: Dynamics of Openness and Closure', *Comparative European Politics* 4(2).
- Delanty, G. and Rumford, C. (2005) *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*. London: Routledge.
- (2006) 'Political Globalization', in G. Ritzer (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Giddens, A. (1985) *The Nation-state and Violence*, vol. 2 of *Contemporary History of Historical Materialism*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Guiraudon, V. and Lahav, G. (2000) 'Comparative Perspectives on Border Control: Away from the Border and Outside the State', in P. Andreas and T. Snyder (eds) *The Wall Around the West: State Borders and Immigration Controls in North America and Europe*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Hardt, M. and Negri, A. (2000) *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Hein, C. (2006) 'European Spatial Development, the Polycentric EU Capital, and Eastern Enlargement', *Comparative European Politics* 4(2).
- Hooper, B. (2004) 'Ontologizing the Borders of Europe', in O. Kramsch and B. Hooper (eds) *Cross-border Governance in the European Union*. London: Routledge.
- Jensen, O. and Richardson, T. (2004) *Making European Space: Mobility, Power, and Territorial Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Kramsch, O.T. (2006) 'Transboundary Governmentality on Europe's Postcolonial Edge: The Cypriot Green Line', *Comparative European Politics* 4(2).
- Krastev, I. (2004) 'Ukraine and Europe: A Fatal Attraction', openDemocracy, 16 December www.openDemocracy.net
- Naim, M. (2005) 'Broken Borders', *Newsweek*, 24 October: 55–66.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2004) *Globalization and Culture: Global Melange*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Papastergiadis, N. (2005) 'Glimpses of Cosmopolitanism, after the Multiculturalism that Never Was', paper presented at the 'Cosmopolitanism: Past and Futures' conference, Liverpool University, 18–19 November.
- Rumford, C. (2006) 'Borders and bordering', in G. Delanty (ed.) *Europe and Asia Beyond East and West: Towards a New Cosmopolitanism*. London: Routledge.
- Sassen, S., ed. (2002) *Global Networks, Linked Cities*. London: Routledge.
- Scholte, J.A. (2000) *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*. Houndsmill: Palgrave.
- (2004) 'Globalization and Governance: From Statism to Polycentricity', *GSGR Working Paper No. 130/04* <http://www.csgr.org>
- Urry, J. (1999) *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*. London: Routledge.
- Walters, W. (2006) 'Figuring out Borders', *Comparative European Politics* 4(2).
- Wellman, B. (2001) 'Physical Place and Cyberplace: The Rise of Networked Individualism', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 25(2): 227–52.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2004) 'Borders, Boundaries, and the Politics of Belonging', in S. May, T. Madood, and J. Squires (eds) *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Minority Rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

■ **Chris Rumford** is Senior Lecturer in Political Sociology in the Department of Politics and International Relations, Royal Holloway, University of London. His most recent publications include (with Gerard Delanty) *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization* (Routledge, 2005), and *The European Union: A Political Sociology* (Blackwell, 2002). He is currently editing two books; the *Handbook of European Studies* (Sage), and *Cosmopolitanism and Europe* (Liverpool University Press), and is completing a book entitled *Cosmopolitan Spaces: Europe, Globalization, Theory* (Routledge, forthcoming). Address: Department of Politics and International Relations, Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX. [email:Chris.Rumford@rhul.ac.uk] ■