

Borders and Border Studies

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There are more international borders in the world today than ever there were before. This is a significant fact when one considers the impact of these many borders on the ways in which the billions of people encompassed by them live, work and travel. As important a development as this multiplication in international borders is, however, it alone is not the guiding imperative behind the origin and evolution of comparative border studies in scholarship worldwide. The proliferation of borders, and the many forces that have created and fostered their development, together have drawn scholars from all the humanities and social sciences to a mutual interest in what happens at, across and because of the borders to nations and states, and in extension to other geopolitical borders and boundaries, such as those of cities, regions and supranational polities. Their interest has been as much in what happens at specific borders, frontiers and borderlands as it has been in what borders help us to understand of major forces of change that seem to be sweeping the globe, forces often included as aspects of globalization, but which may also be seen as neoliberalism, neo-imperialism, late modern capitalism, and supranationalism. Within these interests and perspectives, border studies scholars enter into dialogue with all those who wish to understand new liberties, new movements, new mobilities, new identities, new citizenships and new forms of capital, labor and consumption. Border studies have become significant themselves because scholars and policy-makers alike have recognized that most things that are important to the changing conditions of national and international political economy take place in borderlands – as they do in like measure almost everywhere else in each of our national states – but some of these things, for instance those related to migration, commerce, smuggling and security, may be found in borderlands in sharper relief. And some things of national importance can be most often and best found in borderlands.

This book, a collection of essays that represent views both of where border studies have come from and where they are going, reflects the current state of border

studies, or perhaps this might be better expressed as the current states of border studies. In particular, it shows how scholarly attention to political and social borders has grown apace with the growth in numbers of borders, states and the peoples who live in and cross borders, borderlands, frontiers and boundaries. Once principally the focus of geography, the study of territorial, geophysical, political and cultural borders today has become a primary, abiding and growing interest across the scholarly disciplines, and is related to changing scholarly approaches to such key research subjects and objects as the state, nation, sovereignty, citizenship, migration and the overarching forces and practices of globalization. All of these approaches to borders and frontiers have been complicated by various attempts to understand and express identities, an effort often related to the investigation of hybridity, creolization, multiculturalism, postcolonialism and many other central concerns of social theory today.

Scholarly and political interests are not alone in the recognition of the increasing prominence of borders in the lives of many people in all parts of the world. Borders have become a master narrative and hegemonic symbol in popular, commercial, youth and liberation cultures. Borders have captured the fancy of the peoples of the world and they function as a grand motif in everyday life, everywhere. This is true of some people all of the time, others just some of the time, and perhaps seldom for still others. It is difficult in today's world to avoid public debates over borders, or to ignore the many ways in which borders figure in a great deal of popular discourse. This is not just the result of a borders numbers game. While more borders than in years past frame our collective lives today as a consequence of the removal and strengthening of various state and other political borders, it has also been the mix of populations and the agencies of the state and others where countries and their peoples meet, and the metaphorical borderlands of hegemonic and minority identities, that spark so much popular interest. There is every indication that the scholarly fascination with this intersection of the metaphorical negotiations of borderlands of personal and group identity (in what has come to be known as "border theory") with the geopolitical realization of international, state and other borders of polity, power, territory and sovereignty ("border studies") has mushroomed of late and continues to grow.

This scholarly turn is not simply a reflection of ivory tower musings, but is provoked and challenged by real events that have affected us all over the last 20 years. A list of these events that revolve around changing borders would include, but be far from complete with, the fall of the Iron Curtain; the expansion of the European Union (EU); the rise of new and old ethnonationalisms; the creation of many new states and regional trading blocs to rival the EU and the United States; the rise of new global forces, from neoliberal economics to New World Political Orders; the clash of civilizations; and new engagements between developed and emerging countries and hemispheres. These have all made borders and borderlands new sites of empirical investigation, of processes of localization and globalization in the face of so many forces of change. Borders and frontiers are also elements in the transforming dimensions of culture, politics, society and economics at every level of social and political complexity, experience and expression across the globe. Recent events and ongoing dilemmas brought on by 9/11, the war on terror, and the new security, environmental, health and economic problems and opportunities of world populations on the move, all indicate that the related notions of borders, boundaries

and frontiers will attract more attention in future from scholars, policy-makers and other peoples of the world who must negotiate and cross the barriers and bridges that borders represent (see Donnan and Wilson 2010).

The timeliness and relevance of border studies is one theme which runs through the essays in this volume, but there are other thematic motors which have driven us collectively. In the volume our authors show repeatedly that border theory, which seeks answers to questions about how identity, territory and the state are interrelated in the formation of the self and of group identification, has much to offer scholarship on the political economies of geopolitical entities that are encapsulated and in some instances defined by their geophysical borders. But the converse is true too, as our authors also show repeatedly, where the confluence of territory, power and the state is instrumental in many issues of identity and culture, locally and also farther afield. As our authors show through their historical case studies and historical framings of contemporary issues, border studies have proliferated along with borders, and the speed with which border studies are changing and expanding is both remarkable and significant.

This *Companion* is thus a freezing in time of what can best be described as mercurial: who knew in the 1980s how global political and economic order would change, and so drastically, and who knew in the 1990s that so many borders, new and old, in the world would be configured as they have been in the wake of so many epochal events in the global landscape. Some case studies here are offered to illustrate forces at work in those borderlands and in those regions which we anticipate will have corollaries elsewhere and will help to inform scholarship in more distant areas of the globe. Other essays in the volume take a much more explicitly comparative and theoretical view of borders. But we realize too that as soon as a volume like this presents “state of the art” essays, that the “state” and that “art” will change. Our task here is to try to make sense of where we are and where we have been in border studies, to offer some choices for those whose interests and works will make the future changes to the state and the art of border studies. Our introduction is thus both retrospective and prospective and locates the likely future trajectories of border studies within the themes and approaches of the present and the recent past.

In the remaining sections of the introduction we review some of the key features in the border studies which we entered in the early 1990s. These earlier border studies, which were particularly influential on us, were deeply entrenched in geography, but history, political science and sociology also contained much of interest to us, which helped us to formulate our own ideas and to chart our own path. This was especially beneficial to us when we began our assessment of border and boundary studies within our parent discipline, anthropology. But earlier border studies also helped us to fashion the beginnings of what we saw as an interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and perhaps even postdisciplinary approach to so much that mattered to scholars and others around us, most of which was related to the changing nature of the territorial dimensions to the state and the nation. In the final section of this introduction we examine what border studies are today. Using our authors as inspiration, we explore how contemporary border studies have in the main eschewed single case studies in favor of explicitly or implicitly comparative analyses, and have largely moved beyond the constraints of their own disciplinary borders to read widely and

consider seriously the evidence and arguments offered by like-minded scholars in other disciplines and from other national traditions.

Border studies today are a “field” made up of many fields and yet no one field in particular. Border studies are akin to what we study: rooted in space and time they are also about process and fluidity. They reflect intellectual convergence as well as scholarly differentiation, and through them we can begin to see not only the interstices of nations and states, but those of a new world understanding of scholarship, where academics increasingly seek cooperation, collaboration and intellectual fellowship across those same borders we are drawn to study. But all of this, as far as we have seen since the 1990s, while quick in the making, has not been without its own variations. Before considering how border studies have changed over the last two decades, and to illustrate some of the difficulties to be faced by scholars in any discipline in their attempt to pursue scholarship at what might be seen by many to be the margins of their own discipline, we turn first to the anthropology of borders, then and now. We do so to offer an example of how border studies have evolved from individual cases seen through the lens of one scholarly discipline to a more comprehensive and comparative perspective on other borders and other intellectual traditions.

OF DISCIPLINES AND CASE STUDIES

In the 1990s when we began our collaboration in border studies, after we had each done separate ethnographic field research in borderlands, it was widely asserted in certain academic circles, associated with what has become known variously in scholarship as postmodernism, cultural studies and globalization, that the world had become smaller, time and space had been compressed, there had been a speeding up in global movement of almost everything significant, and the preeminent institutions of modernity were no longer as powerful and unassailable as they once were. Foremost among these waning institutions, so it was asserted by a host of scholars eager to chronicle and understand the seismic shifts in a globalizing world, was the national state, that is, that particular state conglomeration of government and governance dedicated to the creation and defense of its nation. The predicted withering away of the national state as the preeminent political structure of modernity also was believed to herald the end of institutions and actions dependent on the national state and the dissipation of the affective dimensions to national identities and state identifications. It was expected that the filtering down of these effects would dilute traditional political, social and cultural structures and associations within equally traditional and threatened territorial entities, such as nations and regions. These effects were expected to be devastating for some and liberating for others.

This sort of globalization and postmodernist rhetoric continues to capture the imagination of scholars and policy-makers alike. At times this rhetoric is also used to support scholarly treatments of neoliberalism, now just as pervasive a concept as globalization in the provision of oft-asserted but seldom demonstrated causes of so much that promises salvation or ruin to people (among them scholars) in the world today. Changes in individual and group loyalties, associations and identities have

fueled the new politics of identity, in which the definitions of citizenship, nation and state vie with gender, sexual, ethnic, religious and racial identities for prominence if not preeminence in new national and world orders. Or at least vie with each other in the imaginations of scholars who study such things. The gist of much of this sort of approach to the nation and state as it affected the study of borders was that we were all living in a world where state borders were increasingly obsolete, where porous international borders no longer fulfilled their historical role as barriers to the movement of aliens and citizens, and as markers of the extent and power of the state.

While this sort of argument was heady and persuasive in the 1990s, and moved us in scholarly directions which have led us to this *Companion*, it also persists today in many areas of scholarship. This is so despite so much evidence to the contrary, namely that there are more states, more state institutions, more state intrusion into the daily lives of citizens and denizens (through the utilization of new technologies), and more state intervention into global political economy. Today there are still many scholars globally who argue that the state, as an ideal and abstraction, is weak and in decline. And while we are well aware that there are so-called failed states, the definition of that failure must be held against some standard, some test case of success. The vast majority of states, in the real rather than the ideal, are successful, and there is unlikely to be any form of political and social integration to take the place of the national state for the foreseeable future. (As we write this, the eurozone crises are putting great stress on the European Union, in what may be the only model extant of a possible supranational successor to a world order of states.)

When we began our own foray into comparative border studies, we recognized that globalization and deterritorialization were alternative interpretative slants on politics and power in the contemporary world. We argued that the growing interest in the new politics of identity and transnationalism was incomplete (Donnan and Wilson 1994, 1999; Wilson and Donnan 1998). It needed the corrective offered by modernists and traditionalists, in geography, history, political science and sociology, to renew the commitment to the concrete manifestations of government and politics, at local levels and at the level of the state. In our neomodernist view, definitions of the “political” which articulated self, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity within discussions of sign, symbol, contestation and representation risked underestimating the role the state continued to play in the everyday lives of its and other states’ citizens. We recognized that the institutions and personnel of the nation and the state had been increasingly excluded from much anthropology (and also to some extent in cognate disciplines), but we concluded as well that the nation-state had been rather more successful in weathering the storms of postsocialism, postcolonialism, and globalization than many scholars had credited. As we moved into border studies, with an interest in what the lives of borderland peoples were like at the end of the twentieth century, we wondered why there were so few scholars, in our and in other disciplines, who were equally interested in investigating how the state sustained its historically dominant role as an arbiter of control, violence, order and organization for those whose identities were being transformed by world forces. We realized we were not alone in our interests in theorizing the intersections of borders, place, power, identity and the state, and that such interests had been pioneered before us by scholars in geography, history, politics, sociology and anthropology. But we were

also aware that the end of the Cold War and the new globalization scholarship seemed to distract so many more scholars away from the political economy of territory.

It was our contention then, and it remains so today, that a globalized and deterritorialized world of identity politics is a world too of many more and, in some cases, stronger states, where the new politics of identity is in large part determined by the old structures of the state. The politics of representation and resistance, whether couched in national electoral terms or those of new social movements, need the state as their principal contextual opponent. In our view it has always been the intention of political anthropology to position symbolic politics alongside all other sorts of politics, to enforce the proposition that all politics is by definition about the use of power to achieve individual or group public goals. The symbolic of culture and identity is the symbolic of power, whether that power is found in interpersonal relations or in the hands of agents of the government. The physical structures of territory, government and state have not withered away in the face of the scholarly onslaught that asserts that people are now freer to slip the constraints of territorially based politics. Border studies in anthropology in the 1990s as we saw it needed to focus on the visible borders between states, on the symbolic boundaries of identity and culture which make nations and states two very different entities, and on the politics of the liminal and interstitial that rested both easily and uneasily between nation and state.

Many things have made an anthropology of borders distinctive. Anthropological ethnography focuses on local communities at international borders in order to examine the material and symbolic processes of culture. This focus on cultural constructions of everyday life which give meaning to the boundaries between communities and between nations was often absent in the perspectives to be found in other social sciences at the time. The anthropology of borders helped to remind social scientists in and outside of anthropology that nations and states are composed of people who should not be reduced to the images that are constructed of them by representatives of the state, the media and academics. We argued that the anthropological study of the everyday lives of border cultures was simultaneously the study of the daily life of the state, particularly through the implementation of economic and security policy in borderlands. When ethnographers study borderlanders, they narrate the experiences of people who are tied culturally to many other people in neighboring states. Thus, the anthropology of borders simultaneously explored the permeability and permanence of borders by focusing on the adaptability and rigidity of border peoples and states in their efforts to control the social, political, economic and cultural fields which transcend their borders. We cannot review the field comprehensively here or rehearse again the history of the anthropology of border studies. Substantial reviews exist elsewhere (Alvarez 1995; Donnan and Haller 2000; Donnan and Wilson 1999). But it is nevertheless important for our argument in this introduction that we sketch the broad parameters of approach, first in the anthropology of borders and subsequently in the other social science disciplines.

Early work in the anthropology of borders owed much to Fredrik Barth (1969), whose paradigmatic ideas on ethnic boundaries stressed their relational nature as socially constructed boundaries marking affective and identificatory as well as structural, organizational and sometimes territorial disjunctures. It was informed too by the historical anthropologists and ethnologists who examined how cultural landscapes

transcend social and political divides (e.g., Bohannan and Plog 1967; Cohen 1965). But perhaps the first major milestone to focus explicitly on state borders was Cole and Wolf (1974). Their field site in the Italian Tyrol was specifically chosen because its successive historical partitions allowed them to explore the transformation of local political loyalties in relation to nation-building and thus to widen disciplinary perspectives by demonstrating the need to situate local communities within the larger polities of which they are a part. The anthropology of borders was transformed as a result and later anthropologists explored this relationship in various ways. Some studied border areas as a way of examining how proximity to an international border could influence local culture. Others focused on the voluntary and involuntary movement of people across borders as traders, migrants and refugees. And yet others concentrated on the symbols and meanings which encode border life. Regardless of theoretical orientation or locale, however, most of these border studies in anthropology focused on how social relations, defined in part by the state, transcend the territorial limits of the state and, in so doing, transform the structure of the state at home and in its relations with its neighbors. Such work demonstrated the growing importance of a border perspective in which the dialectical relations between border areas and their nations and states took precedence over local culture viewed with the state as a backdrop.

Despite such novel developments, a “localism” continued to influence the border anthropology of this early period so that the state and the nation and even the border were sometimes underplayed in the ethnographers’ efforts to bound their “community” study. So too and for similar reasons comparison was often underutilized, in spite of its rhetorical centrality to the discipline more generally. A good example of this is early ethnographic research at the Mexico–US border, which was subject to the same limitations, although this was the one border at the time to have generated a systematic and sustained body of work. While many of the studies carried out there used the border to frame their focus, the border itself was rarely a variable in the analysis, nor was it compared to borders elsewhere. However, this did not preclude the Mexico–US border from becoming the touchstone for analyses of other borders, as a kind of “hyperborder” that epitomized processes that other borders seemed to share (Romero 2008). As the anthropology of borders began to grow (especially in Europe in response to post–Cold War EU expansion), border scholars looked to research on the Mexico–US border for theoretical and conceptual stimulation to such an extent that this border took on – and to a considerable degree still occupies – iconic status as *the* template for border studies in whatever part of the globe border research is carried out. A brief look at the number of entries for the Mexico–US border in the index to *Borders* (Donnan and Wilson 1999) will quickly bear this out. Yet the comparisons rarely flowed in the other direction and insights from European border studies, for instance, have only belatedly begun to inform systematically those conducted by anthropologists – as well as other social scientists – at the Mexico–US border, as Roberto Alvarez suggests in this *Companion*.

It was probably the early 1990s before the wider political and economic contexts of international borders featured in analyses of the Mexico–US border, where the issues of underdevelopment, transnationalism and the globalization of power and capital, among other aspects of culture, increasingly occupied the growing number

of historically informed and wide-ranging ethnographic accounts (see Heyman in this volume). Much of this research focused on the implications of the economic asymmetry between the United States and Mexico, whose wage differentials continue today to draw labor migrants northwards and ensure the profitability of locating unskilled occupations on the Mexican side. Migration across and increasing urbanization along this border have both been major topics of study, particularly within applied anthropology, and have generated research on a broad range of related issues such as local labor markets, health, pollution, and the environment (Alvarez 1995: 454–456). Nevertheless, discussion frequently lapsed into straightforward description of the region and how it might develop economically, with researchers “constantly pulled toward the specific, the unique (sometimes the folkloric), and the problematic” (Fagan 1984: 271) and thus continuing to eschew comparison for a focus on more local and immediate concerns (Alvarez 1995: 463).

First generation studies in the anthropology of borders thus largely centered on a localized, particularistic and territorially focused notion of borders. This was in keeping with anthropology’s hallmark emphasis on culture in its ethnographic study of society through long-term residential research. All of the work alluded to above emphasized the local setting and cultural context, stressing the meaning and experience of borders in the lives of those who lived and worked there. Above all else perhaps, anthropologists brought to the study of borders a sensitivity to the role of borders in daily life and to people’s narratives of these meanings and the ways in which borders were marked in and through their everyday practice. It is in this emphasis on how borders are constructed, negotiated and viewed from “below” that the value and distinctiveness of an anthropology of borders arguably initially relied. It is not that these characteristics were wholly absent in the other social sciences – disciplinary boundaries have always been much less clear-cut than sometimes implied – but they were arguably less prominent there than other core themes, concepts and questions that animated research on borders in these disciplines, as we outline next. Not surprisingly, like anthropology the other social sciences largely concentrated on their particular disciplinary concerns and interests. And like anthropology, they too looked most often to the body of research on the Mexico–US border as their template and stimulus.

Geography, for instance, has been drawn to the study of the spatial dimension to borders and to the ways in which territory and the physical environment interrelate with the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of nations and states. Geographical research initially focused on the classification and function of different kinds of borders and on clarifying concepts such as “boundaries” and “frontiers” which were seen to separate territories that are subject to different sovereignty (see Prescott 1987). The analysis of “border landscapes” was one way in which geographers sought to move beyond simple description and categorization of borders to grapple with the complex relations between boundaries and the physical and human environments which shape them and which in turn are shaped by them. The concept of border landscapes – those areas contiguous to the state boundary which are molded by the human and physical environment, including the boundary itself, and which in turn shape the environment – spawned a range of different kinds of case study (Prescott 1987: 161–173). Although this generated an impressive set of themes, it did

not lead to a major breakthrough in the role and importance of geographical border studies within the discipline of geography more generally, nor had it much influence beyond the discipline. The case study approach in political geography tended to fall into set categories, such as the study of disputed areas, boundary changes, the evolution of boundaries, boundary delimitation and demarcation, exclaves and tiny states, maritime boundaries, disputes over natural resources and internal boundaries (Minghi 1969). It remained descriptive and was not interested in understanding social and political process or in developing border landscape theory (Rumley and Minghi 1991: 1–4). By the 1990s a new border geography argued for a reorientation by border landscape geographers to wider comparative and theoretical issues, recognizing that “too little concern [had] been given to conceptual developments in the other social sciences which might have some relevance to an understanding of border landscapes” (Rumley and Minghi 1991: 4). This call for a reorientation has been answered by many scholars who have recentered border studies in geography and who continue to foster interdisciplinary approaches through their calls to modify their ways of “graphing the geo” (Sparke 2005; see also Amoore 2011).

While geographers wrangled with the spatial dimension to the definitions of borders and their roles in nation and state relations, in part in an effort to construct the beginnings of a comparative study of boundaries and frontiers, historical studies pursued similar objectives from a temporal perspective. Frederick Jackson Turner’s 1920 essay on “The significance of the frontier in American history” (Turner 1977) is clearly a landmark in border studies, but it was not until much later that historians began to question how to mold the unique case studies that result from frontier histories into a framework for comparison, generalization and theory building. Here once again the Mexico–US border played a major part. Between 1930 and 1974 historians of this border had viewed it as a frontier and concentrated on its explorers, economic development, missionary activity, armies and fortifications, administrative structures and role in international relations (Almaráz 1976: 10). But like the geographers and anthropologists, by the 1990s historians were looking for ways to develop models of borderlands to facilitate regional and global comparison. Oscar Martínez (1994) was at the forefront of such scholars and his insightful history of the Mexico–US border recognizes how borders share functional commonalities with other borders worldwide because they are there to regulate, prevent and control the economic, political and social interactions between people in both states. Through his concept of the “borderlands” milieu, Martínez constructed a typology that distinguished four kinds of interaction at borders to facilitate comparison: alienated borderlands, coexistent borderlands, interdependent borderlands, and integrated borderlands (1994: 6–10).

Borderlands were understood here as the region bisected by the boundary line between states, which in comparative perspective is presumed to encapsulate a variety of identities, social networks and formal and informal, legal and illegal relationships which tie together people in the areas contiguous to the borderline on both of its sides. Analogous to geographers’ border landscapes, this concept of borderlands provided a similar function in history as landscape did in geography, which was to focus on the border region and its people as active participants in their state and as important forces in their nation’s and state’s relationship to their territories (as

McDougall and Philips show here for the historical emergence of the US-British border).

As a tool to facilitate cross-cultural and international comparison, borderlands began to occupy a central place in the historical study of borders and to open up novel lines of inquiry. Other scholars, for example, pointed out that while much had been written on how states deal with their borderlands, “historians have paid much less attention to how borderlands have dealt with their states” (Baud and van Schendel 1997: 235). Some thus argued in favor of a new view of borders from the perspective of a state’s periphery, a view which recognizes the active historical role and agency of borderlands and the ways in which they play a part in the formation and consolidation of the nation and the state (Sahlins 1989). By the 1990s these evolving relations between territory, identity and sovereignty emphasized by historians had also become the concern of political science.

Culture has not been a principal focus in political science analyses of power, territory and politics at international borders, although culture’s role in facilitating cross-border political and economic cooperation, as well as its place in the definition, recognition and behavior of ethnic groups, have become important parts of recent political scholarship. This reflects the evolution of political science as a discipline, and in particular a turn toward a concern with history, locality, ethnicity and regionalism. At the Mexico–US border, the politics of international boundaries initially focused on political culture – the attitudes and values that enable individuals and groups to be socialized into the ways of their political system – while in Europe greater attention has always been paid to the policy implications of boundary making. Yet here too culture was recognized as a factor in transfrontier collaboration, even if it was regarded as subsidiary to the politics and institutional frameworks which allowed orderly and predictable forms of international cooperation (see Anderson 1982).

Since the 1970s these interests have coalesced around the notion of “border regions,” a concept with evident similarities to both geography’s border landscapes and history’s borderlands. Case studies of border regions explored a range of cross-border policies, with studies on the environment, transportation and communication, immigration and border controls, policing crime and terrorism, and regional development. Border regions were recognized by political scientists as places and processes of identity and policy, including their making and meaning and, like geographers and historians, political scientists have become part of the wider theorizing about what culture can tell us about the role of borders in the shifting relationships among identity, territory and sovereignty. Although Anderson’s *Frontiers* (1996) ranges far and wide in comparative and empirical scope, it is significant that it highlights the role of identities in understanding international borders, as well as the role borders play in shaping identities such as ethnic, local, class, religious and linguistic. This emphasis reflects intellectual processes in political science that have parallels in the other social sciences, where the precise correspondence between nation, state and territory that was once assumed is being challenged through concepts such as border regions, borderlands and border landscapes. Like other scholars, political scientists, often through consideration of new theories of constructivism, are having to grapple with the proliferation of identities in a postindustrial and globalizing world, one in which the meanings of national and ethnic identity and their relations to territory

and sovereignty are no longer the self-evident givens that they were once taken to be. As part of these new initiatives, political scientists and political sociologists have turned to the consideration of multi- and interdisciplinarity (Brunet-Jailly 2005; Newman 2006a).

Sociologists have been subject to the same pressures to conform to the methods, theories and professional interests of their subject as have the proponents of the other social sciences. The study of social groups, institutions and movements has been the hallmark of international boundary studies in sociology. These studies are often framed as analyses of minority groups at and across state and subnational borderlines. This attention to minorities was due in part to the resurgence in ethnic identities in the 1960s and 1970s, and continues today as one of the major themes in the sociology of borders, although the ways in which minorities have been contextualized have changed. Earlier studies of assimilation, nation-building, migration, and ethnic conflict and accommodation have given way to studies of ethnic and national identity, the politics of identity, regionalism, the role of local social groups and institutions in cross-border cooperation, and border communities which straddle borderlines (for a review of perspectives in the sociology of international borders at this time, see Strassoldo 1989). The ambivalence of border life has been regarded by some sociologists as a defining feature of border societies (Strassoldo 1982: 152). Border people may demonstrate ambiguous identities because economic, cultural and linguistic factors pull them in two directions. This ambivalent border identity affects the role that border communities play in international cooperation and conflict.

Like other social scientists, sociologists have increasingly had to accommodate the fact that old definitions of sovereignty, which were dependent on the twin bases of state and territory, have given way to new ones which incorporate various versions of territory, statecraft, culture and identity (O'Dowd 2010). And as in the other disciplines so too in sociology, culture and identity have come to occupy a new prominence in the latest wave of border studies, reflecting their centrality in contemporary social research more generally (as may be seen in the work of Vila 2000, 2003, 2005 and Salzinger 2003; and in calls such as that of Turner 2007 to study the sociology of immobility in enclave societies; and of Burawoy 2003 to revisit ethnography). In fact, sociology has adopted ethnography as one of its principal methodologies to a degree that the boundaries between sociology and social anthropology across a wide range of interests are blurred, as may be witnessed in a review article on global ethnography in the *Annual Review of Sociology*, wherein much of the ethnography cited, especially in regard to borders, was done by anthropologists (Gille and Ó Riain 2002).

Disciplinary differences and similarities are not our prime focus here, however, because in our view the comparative study of borders need not concentrate on academic disciplines if the goal of research is to chronicle and understand how borders, and border cultures, societies, politics and economies, are not only changing due to major transformations in the global political economy, but also how borders often play key roles in these changes. We have focused so far in this introduction on the evolution of the anthropology of borders and the other social sciences over the last generation of scholarship as an example of how all of our scholarly disciplines have moved from a concentration on the discipline's major concerns, which often excluded

the theories, methods and results of other academic disciplines, and on individual, sometimes iconic, case studies, to what we argue here is the current state of affairs in border studies. In border studies today there has been a convergence in theoretical and methodological interests on a more interdisciplinary pursuit of comparative border studies, whether these are explicit or implicit. In these ways border studies may provide a productive way forward in how the social sciences and humanities may truly build the synergy in research and practical application of academic work which now seems to be so important in policy and university circles.

We still hold that, when in 1994 (Donnan and Wilson 1994) and in 1998 (Wilson and Donnan 1998) we asserted that an anthropology of borders was distinctive in a number of ways, we were both correct and prescient. But our conclusions then must now be weighed against what was also happening in our cognate disciplines, most notably among sociologists and geographers, who were drawing closer to anthropology through the widespread adoption of ethnographic methods. But we also want to acknowledge that our claim for distinctiveness of an anthropology of borders was as much directed at anthropologists, many of whom in our view were moving away from studies of the political economy of nation, state and territory, as it was directed at other social scientists, in order to draw their attention away from their own disciplinary concerns to recognize what anthropologists were doing.

Our aim then as it is now was to stress that in the study of borders multiple perspectives are invaluable, if not essential. These perspectives require flexibility and adaptability, to respond better to the needs and concerns of multiple populations who live and work at and across borders, but also to those of many academic disciplines and scholarly approaches. Thus the multiple perspectives we invoke and which are represented in this volume often involve one or more of the following: an ethnographic sensibility that is simultaneously sensitive to political economic context; ethnographic and other methodological approaches that are holistic insofar as they can draw out the interconnections among border phenomena while remaining problem oriented; micro- and macro-comparisons, both narrow and broad, across space and through time; and a recognition of the limitations of a perspective whose starting point is a Euro-American understanding of borders and states. This multiplicity in approach is now largely taken for granted in much contemporary writing in border studies, but it was not always so. The dynamism of life and work at borders and among border peoples, and the changing dimensions of global political economy, have pushed border studies to challenge disciplinary compartmentalization. As a result, border studies today offer a heady mix of disciplinary concerns with multiple disciplinary perspectives, in a provocative fusion of theories, methods and comparison.

BORDER STUDIES TODAY

Up to and including the 1990s, while the other disciplines each in their way looked at borderlands, border regions and border landscapes in much the same way as anthropology focused on border identities and cultural contact and mixing, the social sciences had all adopted approaches to international borders which predominantly

avored single case studies that reflected the theories and methodologies pertinent to that field. However, over the last decade or so there has been a shift in border studies, heralding a set of approaches less constrained by past disciplinary boundaries.

It would of course be misleading to draw this contrast too sharply, and prudent to indicate that elements characteristic of the different moments in the periodization we presented above are still present to varying degrees throughout border studies today. Thus, for example, and often for good reason, the emphasis on case studies of particular border localities persists and their analysis generally continues to be directed at discipline-specific questions and concerns. Similarly, and unsurprisingly, comparison was also a feature of border studies in the past, as we note above, if not perhaps to the same extent as at present. Thus we wish to stress that the evolution of border studies which we describe here has been both gradual and punctuated by growth spurts and slowdowns, wherein case studies of particular borders, border peoples and border programs and policies continue to provide much of the lifeblood of border studies, which after all are still driven by a desire to chronicle what happens in borderlands. But border studies are also equally driven by the desire not only to chronicle but to understand if not predict other changes in which borders are both caught up and instrumental, as for example in regard to such contemporary key issues as citizenship, migration and security, and hence the increasing emphasis in border scholarship on comparison. Therefore we have no cataclysmic event to show the before and after in border studies, within and across the disciplines. Rather, we examine instead early and emergent themes in border studies in order to reflect better the convergences that are represented in the following chapters of this *Companion*.

Nevertheless, it is possible to summarize in ideal typical terms the features of the first generation border studies outlined above, together with their core differences from the present approach. Thus, as we have seen, the emphasis of earlier studies was (1) on the Mexico–US border as main focus or chief comparator; (2) on the relation between nation and state; (3) on borders as geographical and political “peripheries”; and (4) on engaging the key issues of interest to the discipline concerned.

Now, however, the emphasis has shifted, with border scholars sharing a number of features which previously may have distinguished them. This entails a new cross-discipline adoption of a focus on (1) culture and, as a corollary, (2) an emphasis on ethnographic methods. It has also involved a shift in epistemology, with (3) borders seen as “process” as much as “product”; (4) states regarded as incomplete, fragmented and embedded through everyday practice; (5) border(ing) understood as within as well as at the edges; (6) and “margins” as the new “centers” (e.g., Horstmann and Wadley 2006). Furthermore, with the expansion of borders research, examples and case studies have been much more far-flung, and from the few iconic studies focusing on the Mexico–US border and some parts of the Middle East and Europe, we now have studies from throughout EU and non-EU Europe, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, North and South America, as well as of colonial, pre-colonial, indigenous and pre- and postsocialist borders. The conceptual approach does, though, still remain largely Eurocentric, but the chapters in this *Companion* certainly point some ways forward as to new approaches which may chip away at the Western-oriented ways in which border studies have developed.

If border studies are to be more than a collection of fascinating case studies, or more than a subfield within the parent disciplines of its practitioners, they must address a set of unified thematic, conceptual and theoretical concerns and questions. This does not necessarily mean a quest for a general theory of borders, an objective toward which some are rightly critical given the need to understand borders contextually (Newman 2006b: 156; Paasi 2005: 668). But it does imply an ability to be open to the work of others not in one's own field. The current openness toward cross-disciplinary conversations in border studies, if not indeed a new approach and perspective, suggests a willingness and readiness to engage global comparison and the work of other scholars that we maintain is clearly demonstrated by the contributors to this *Companion*.

The chapters here exemplify a range of types of comparison that are worth identifying. Some of the comparisons are implicit, evident only through their use of terminology and concepts developed in one setting to analyze another. But most are explicit, or a combination of implicit and explicit, and endeavor to compare at different levels and different scales. These include comparison of global border cities disembedded from their states as they become the hub of regional and international trade and the global flow of capital (Nugent; O'Dowd), as well as comparison at the level of the regional, national and the global. Thus some chapters in the *Companion* compare different borders within a single state (for example, the chapter by McCall), others compare borders within a region (Coplan; Pelkmans), and yet others draw comparisons between continents (Alvarez; Asiwaju; Brunet-Jailly; Coleman; Nugent) or more globally (Anderson; O'Dowd; O'Leary). Some chapters also range far and wide across both space and time, exploring the relationship between nationalism and imperialism by drawing historical comparisons between Europe and its colonies (Kramsch), by emphasizing the need for multilevel comparisons from social practice to the geopolitical (Scott), and by tracing the historical transformations of a single border through "border biographies" (Megoran) or through the border representations of academics and policy-makers (Rabinowitz).

Many of these use comparison for a similar end: to enhance description and facilitate analysis of a particular case rather than to generalize. The "cultural turn" across the social sciences has arguably loosened the grip of a style of comparison typical of positivistic social science, in which comparison is used to test hypotheses and identify functional correlations between societal and cultural variables as a means to generalization (Holy 1987). Nevertheless, the cultural turn has not weakened the enduring allure of this kind of comparison. The seductive promise of generalization coupled with policy and governmental interest in borders research which continues to expect some form of generalizing, and upon which research sponsorship may depend, have ensured that many scholars continue to practice it. As evidenced in these pages, some researchers thus continue to struggle with the methodological and technical challenges of devising a generalizing social science (of borders) that does not decontextualize the subjective, experiential and socially constructed nature of human social life. For interpretivist and constructivist social scientists this is particularly challenging, since relations of similarity and difference are not empirical givens but are created through the process of comparison in the first place, which classifies them as one thing or the other (Holy 1987: 16).

The chapters in this *Companion* also stress the value of cross-disciplinary dialogue. Anssi Paasi (1996: 5, 6) notes that the 1990s “witnessed a surprising interest in boundaries and frontiers within different academic fields” and a “new interdisciplinary interest in boundary studies.” According to Paasi (1996), several factors stimulated this new interest: the “structural background,” which he sees as the changing economic and political conditions created by increasing globalization, mobility and global flows; and the “intellectual background,” which are the novel concepts generated by scholars who seek to interpret this changing world (concepts such as “time-space compression” and “disorganized capitalism”). Our contributors take Paasi’s ruminations forward in several respects. One relates to the relationship he posits between social theory and empirical conditions. The early 1990s were tumultuous years for international borders and it would be easy to conclude that the former straightforwardly reflects the latter. From this perspective, early border perspectives might be seen as lagging far behind empirical circumstances and as being propelled by them to develop more innovative and imaginative approaches. For example, it could be argued that existing border concepts and theory were taken unawares by the collapse of socialism and were outpaced by the acceleration of world events.

In this sense, border studies were always running to catch up with how “real” borders were being modified and transformed (cf. Parker and Vaughan-Williams 2009: 586). The same might be said of the expanding interest in border surveillance, security and biometrics post-9/11, with technological developments of border control in the 2000s sometimes outrunning scholarly analyses of them (as in Cunningham and Heyman 2004). At other times, though, it is conceptual developments that drive the agenda, and while recognizing like Paasi that border studies may lag behind world events, the contributors here also note how progressive social theory may overtake them, anticipating what the issues might be and how conditions are likely to look in the future.

Paasi’s review also raises a second issue of relevance to this *Companion*: the suggestion that the new interest in border studies in the 1990s was interdisciplinary. In the 1990s, borders began to feature more frequently as a topic of research among a greater range of disciplines. However, this often resulted in an uncritical accumulation or juxtaposition of different perspectives which in itself did not advance the study of borders very far. To be “interdisciplinary” the disciplines need to be receptive to one another and to reflect critically on their complementary but sometimes conflicting disciplinary perspectives on borders. In the 15 years since Paasi’s review, the context for this exchange has often been provided by large-scale collaborative interdisciplinary research projects in border studies, especially in Europe where much of this research has been stimulated by EU funding (e.g., Leontidou et al. 2005; Meinhof 2002). While there have been attempts to do similar research across member states of other international and supranational arrangements, such as in MERCOSUR (Ferradás 2004, 2010; Grimson 2000, 2003; Gordillo and Leguizamón 2002) and in the North American Free Trade Agreement area (Cunningham 2004, 2010; Helleiner 2009, 2010; Sparke 2005), this work has not been financially supported to the same extent as in the EU, nor has it captured the imagination of policy-makers and other elites as it has in Europe. The chapters in this *Companion* exemplify this reflective interdisciplinary approach within which researchers strive not only to acknowledge

different disciplinary perspectives but to engage, assess and incorporate them critically in order to advance conceptually, theoretically and methodologically the field of border studies.

The interdisciplinary ambitions of the contributors here are thus succinctly summarized by Marilyn Strathern's threefold definition of interdisciplinarity as "a *self-consciousness about the ability to mix knowledges*; a 'common framework shared across disciplines to which each contributes its bit'; and as *a tool (a means) to address problems seen to lie athwart specialisms*" (2005a: 127, emphases in original). It is the receptivity to other disciplines and the critical borrowing and dialogue with their concepts and understandings that distinguishes the essays in this *Companion* and that we maintain will be the future of border studies as a novel and magnetic field of study rather than just a mix of disciplines.

But there remain many reasons to be skeptical about interdisciplinary research in border studies, as in other fields. While scholars regularly reiterate that border studies is now an interdisciplinary field, they rarely explain precisely what this entails (e.g., Kolossov 2005). One risk is that interdisciplinarity becomes simply a re-citation of ideas from other disciplines, which are endlessly circulated with each new publication as a genuflection rather than engagement with whatever "big idea" on borders a particular discipline might have produced (e.g., borders as discourses, practices, as verb rather than noun). In other words, interdisciplinarity becomes a fashionable branding rather than an approach that significantly underpins border studies practice. It can also risk downplaying fieldwork by encouraging the production of texts by means of other texts, repeatedly recycling the ideas of colleagues rather than gathering new border material (cf. Paasi 2005: 668–669). Even knowing how to recognize that *interdisciplinary* research has actually taken place can be problematic, as too is identifying the evidence which confirms that the interaction has been valuable and productive: publications may be cited but "explanatory power, aesthetic appeal [and] comprehensiveness" are more rarely articulated (Mansilla and Gardner 2003: 1–2, cited in Strathern 2005b: 82–83). The processes through which certain disciplinary traditions come to occupy a central place in interdisciplinary thinking may also be obscured. Interdisciplinarity might mean little more than a weak or poorly represented discipline adopting the theoretical vocabulary from a stronger one. Interdisciplinarity might thus entail a "nesting" model of theoretical capacity whereby a theoretically weaker discipline "nests" within a more powerful one, which in turns nests within one more powerful still. Disciplinary hegemony and intellectual imperialism might be the outcome rather than mutually beneficial interdisciplinary exchange.

Although interdisciplinarity characterizes current scholarship in border studies, the multiple styles, motifs, methods and theorizing that may be associated with the relative convergence in border studies around certain themes lead us to see border studies as approaching a postdisciplinary state. The comparative turn which border studies have taken is a good example of this. As we have discussed above, contemporary scholarship on borders has adopted as a principal method of analysis and explication both explicit and implicit comparison, across sometimes long and wide times and spaces, in a manner that distinguishes it from the classic studies of borders and from many more discipline-based case studies conducted before the 1990s. This comparative turn reflects the other approaches we noted above as marking current

scholarship, namely the emphases in border studies today on culture; various forms of ethnography; process rather than structure and institutions at borders; and new relations and processes of bordering, rebordering and “borderization” as aspects of changes in territorialization and marginalization that are particularly visible under regional integration (Scott; Grimson). It also reflects the pressing need to explore how borders are always an ongoing process socially, politically and epistemologically (Green).

But what has driven this new convergence around these themes and the widespread reliance on various forms of comparison? Real world events are key forces at work in all of the ways we now conceptualize borders, and scholarly approaches to borders are no exception to this. In an era of globalization theory and rhetoric it is not surprising that scholars should look globally for examples that are relevant and that capture the imagination of audiences eager to see local–global connections. The overall turn to culture as a relatively free-flowing aspect of (post)modern life also supports the scholarly questioning of borders and invites us to conceptualize them not just in terms of physical place but as spaces of struggle between inclusion and exclusion wherever such struggles are found (e.g., see the notion of “borderscape”; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007). Several of our contributors thus rethink the classic associations between place and boundedness and their limitations for understanding and representing flows (Ballinger; van Houtum). In this view, borders are seen as processes, as floating signifiers, as waypoints and conduits in the flow of peoples, ideas, goods, capital and threats to the body politic. Seeing borders in these ways also liberates scholars from too close a reliance on the specificities of geography and history in their comparisons: one need only find a few points of comparison depending on the problem being raised. The correlated and apparent demise of the nation-state within certain ways of thinking about globalization – an assertion regarding the national state which we dispute, in line with scholars such as Michael Mann (2007), who insists that the state form of polity, and especially strong states, are more powerful and intrusive in the lives of citizens than ever before in history – also gives rise to comparisons of new forms of governance which shape the new forms of citizenship and identity that are carried by the many groups of people who are labeled as refugees, migrants, tourists and terrorists, all of whom are involved in important relations with borders. These new forms of belonging and nonbelonging include shifts in what border regimes allow in or keep out following what Borneman (this volume) refers to as the “victory of capitalism,” as well as the deterritorialized zones of exception like the offshore detention centers described here by Mountz and Hiemstra. As Chalfin’s chapter suggests, such developments are arguably the outgrowth of a free-flow “borderless” capitalism rather than a radical departure from it.

A global political economy, a new world order, the war on terror, new imperialisms and late-modern capitalism have also combined to create new forms of region and culture within recognizable and distinct geopolitical entities. One reason why the Mexico–US border no longer functions as the iconic border universally is because of the proliferation in the numbers and types of borders worldwide, but especially in Europe and Asia, where most of the new national states arose in the last 20 years or so and where the most successful experiment in supranationalism, the European Union, moves forward, despite its continual state of crisis. Indeed, European

integration has been one of the defining features of a great deal of border studies, due to the emphasis in the EU on cross-border development, on the free flow of capital, goods and people across its internal borders, on the new forms of governmental and police cooperation to thwart crime and threats to national and continental security, and on the construction of new forms of European culture and identity which are meant both to transcend national borders and to create a new affective dimension to European citizenship and residence. These new forms of border and bordering in Europe have been seen by some scholars as creative of a new European identity and spirit, wherein many groups and institutions do the “borderwork” in regard to territorialization and sovereignty that was once presumed to be the almost sole domain of the state (Rumford 2006).

Martin Kohli (2000), for example, has looked to Europe’s borderlands as the best hope for the fostering of a truly postnational European identity. The rhetoric of a borderless Europe is at the core of a similar rhetoric of a borderless world, but the examples of such a world keep us coming back to the EU. And while the borderless world has come in for some healthy criticism (for example, by one of our authors in this collection, O’Dowd 2010), Europe is still seen by many to be a space where rebordering and reterritorialization have created new niches for peoples on the move (as may be seen in the works of another of our authors, van Houtum 2005). In these ways the global ethos to be found in so much scholarship and media and government narratives has more concrete manifestations in the “unidentified political object” (in the words of Marc Abélès 2000) that is the EU, and as part of this ethos in Europe international borders have become of intense scholarly interest as if they too are unidentifiable political, economic, social and cultural objects.

The expansion of interest in multilevel governance, in multi-sited research and in multidisciplinary might have a great deal to do with the professional and academic response to great global changes in capitalism and global politics, and to regional rearticulation of sovereignty and citizenship in experiments such as the EU, but the central thread running through both individual case studies and comparative approaches to borders is still that of the nation-state, whether that state be a relatively more homogeneous national state or a multinational and multi-ethnic one. Here, too, nations without states are also implicated, as they also have over time more or less sought the borders of homeland and statehood. And while the multiplication tables of scholarship seem to be working overtime in the theorizing of global, national, regional and local borders, there has been little change to the number and types of methodologies employed in border scholarship, wherein case studies and other more synthetic scholarly studies remain implicitly comparative.

However, as we have noted, much that is comparative in today’s scholarship is far removed from the more controlled comparisons that supported model building and hypothesis testing of past generations of scholars. In its place we are often offered instead episodic story-byte comparisons. Yet border studies today rely on both approaches to comparison. The global study of the politics of identity has adopted the metaphors of borders and borderlands to understand the relations between people and territory in postmodern life. Approaches such as this in border theory vitalize and enrich any social science of borders precisely because so much that pertains to national and international culture and identity happens in stark relief

in the interstices of nations and states. The use of “borderland” as an image for the study of cultures has opened up social and cultural theory (e.g., see Rosaldo 1989), but has often done so by underplaying changes in local and more global political economy.

This is why case studies of borders, as shifting, porous and mobile as they have been seen to become, are still at the center of comparative border studies (cf. Wastl-Walter 2011). National states are changing in this new global political economy – and here we repeat that changing does not necessarily mean dying – and these transformations lead to new relations of power between and among states. We agree with Josiah Heyman (1994: 46) who has argued that to address how dual but unequal state power operates at borders, and how cultural relations develop historically at frontiers, we must return to a localized and territorially focused notion of borders. But case studies of borders have become case studies of multiple borders, of multiple sites at the same borders, and of a multiplicity of experiences at those borders, which might just as easily be conceived as being at airports, floating customs and immigration checks, immigration and passport offices, armed service installations and internal revenue institutions, as being at the geopolitical lines agreed to in treaties between empires and states (cf. Balibar 2009). Indeed, immigration control, for instance, has come increasingly to be understood as a feature of governance in general, potentially enforceable everywhere and not just at the border itself, as many of the contributors argue (see Coleman; Ford and Lyons; De Genova).

The multiplication of borders on the world stage, and of sites and experiences of borders, has resulted too in a multiplicity of ways to inscribe and perform these same borders, by so many more people than the organs and the agents of the state, with whom it was once presumed those prerogatives lay. This is one reason why so much that we have discussed here as border studies is imbricated in border theory. But we must also not forget that the state remains the major player in border studies, and it too has a role to play in the performances of culture and identity. As Mark Salter has reminded us, “The border is a primary institution of the contemporary state, the construction of a geopolitical world of multiple states, and the primary ethico-political division between the possibility of politics inside the state and the necessity of anarchy outside the state” (2011: 66). And the state is still associated in most people’s minds worldwide with their nations, so much so that in most places in the world today there remains a marked preference to have national solutions to national problems, including those related to securing borders (as Newman shows in this volume and as may be witnessed in recent European reactions to debt crises and to the changes in the governments of some non-European Mediterranean neighbors (Bialasiewicz 2011)). As building blocks and bulwarks of nation and state, borders require continual reinscription and reperformance, on the part of citizens, governments and other institutions and groups both within the state and beyond it. As Salter puts it, this necessitates three registers of border performativity, that of the *formal*, where borders are delimited and defended, the *practical*, where the processes of filtering people, goods and ideas occur at borders, and the *popular*, wherein the meanings of borders are disseminated and contested (Salter 2011: 66). If all the world is a stage, then borders are its scenery, its *mise en scène*, its ordering of space and action, wherein actors and observers must work at making borders intelligible

and manageable, and must do so in order for the drama to proceed. It is not surprising then that some of our authors (Coplan; Kaiser) have approached borders along similar lines of performance, and have done so by treating them as “discursive/emotional landscapes of social power” that are related to historically framed national practices, discourses and ideologies (Paasi 2011: 63). All of these appreciations of the performance of borders, at borders, must address the tensions inherent in the institutional, technical and emotive aspects of territory, state and sovereignty wherever and whenever geopolitical borders are encountered. And these encounters are as multidimensional, multivocal, and multisemic as anything that nations and states have ever fashioned for themselves. It is no wonder that border studies today have proliferated as quickly and as widely as have the subjects and objects of their interest.

CONCLUSION

In 2005 Anssi Paasi challenged border scholars “to reflect on our concepts of the theory rather than trying to develop a general theory of borders. This is best done in relation to other categories inherent to geography and the social sciences, such as region, place, space, territory, agency and power, to social practices such as politics, governance and economics and to cultural processes such as ethnicity or national socialisation (education)” (2005: 670). This *Companion* is testament that the inter- and multidisciplinary study of borders has come of age, in great part fulfilling Paasi’s call to multiple forms of analysis and theorizing. So too comparative studies, or at least those which seek to be passively or implicitly comparative in aid of theorizing global and regional approaches to borders, have come of age. In border studies it is no longer sufficient or advisable to focus solely on a specific border locale, at least not without framing the analysis with reference to other borders and to theories and methodologies once associated with other scholarly disciplines. The engine of conceptual developments in border studies today is now both comparative and multidisciplinary.

Thus border studies represent what we suggest is a new postdisciplinarity, a convergence in approaches, theories, conceptualizations and methodologies that has been building steadily over the last decades. This is evidence that scholarship in the humanities and social sciences has much to benefit from transcending the boundaries of national intellectual traditions and national academic disciplines. We acknowledge, of course, the international character of scholarship which has molded all of our academic approaches: who could conceive of the social sciences without reference to the European classical theorists? And each of our disciplines has its own genealogy and origin myth, which traces itself back to other countries and various theories. Anthropology, for example, has shaped its own contemporary character largely through the dialectics among British, American, French and German anthropologies. But the border studies to which we draw attention in this introduction and volume show too that the European-North American nexus no longer needs to be the sole or even the main one in collaborative scholarship. Border studies show that all continents, all nations, all states have something to offer us in the quest to understand the changing nature of territory, power, governance and identity, within both national and more

global frames of reference. They also show how resilient and adaptable borders themselves are, in ways sometimes that make them more successful at weathering the storms of global forces than other aspects of their nations and states. This is especially apparent when one considers that the processes of bordering that owed so much to the state institutionalization of geopolitical borders are now also largely found distant from the borderlines themselves, and are often in the hands of people divorced from or resistant to more hegemonic ideas and practices associated with nations and states.

As we have reviewed above, and as Amooore (2011) also sees it, borders are no longer the main or sole agents for disciplining citizens and aliens through various forms of prohibition, enclosure and proscription, precisely because borders must now facilitate movement in order to serve the interests of the nation. But the demands for movement must be matched against the needs of security, all of which reside in virtual space as much as they do in the landscapes that instantiated border studies in the past, and which regulate the flow of everything from bugs to thugs and drugs (Smart and Smart; Cunningham; Raeymaekers; Goodhand, respectively). Border studies then must expand their view, to look at but also to gaze away from the geopolitical borders that gave them their name and focus for so many years, to focus now too on other practices and sites as elements of a “novel modality of power” (Amooore 2011: 64). Border studies can no longer just ask us to “see like the state.” Now we must see beyond and within the state to mark the extent of geopolitical borders, and to recognize the multiple forms of disciplining in the bordering work done within and between nations and states, and within and between other political, economic, social and cultural entities (van Houtum; Coleman; De Genova). It is no wonder then that the multidisciplining of border practices has led too to the multidisciplining within border studies, wherein many scholars search for more coherent interdisciplinary agendas, as in a recent suggestion by Corey Johnson and Reece Jones (2011) to focus this interdisciplinarity on the interconnected themes of place, performance, perspective and politics. These themes are both welcome and well represented in this volume, and may be found within the organizing themes of “sovereignty, territory and governance,” “states, nations and empires,” “security, order and disorder,” “displacement, emplacement and mobility,” and “space, performance and practice” that are offered here. But we are aware, and remind our readers, that as soon as a set of such themes is proffered others will spring to mind, as we in border studies seek to recognize and capture the mercurial nature of the geopolitical borders which many people still perceive as fixed in time and place, but which just as many others see as mobile and timeless.

Today, in border studies, concepts developed in one field, one discipline or one locale now inform work in other fields, and provide inspiration if not provocation to be less insular, less dogmatic and less introspective. Where once there was an iconic border or two, such as the Mexico–US border or the border between Israel and Palestine, today these are cases to be placed alongside so many more, to appreciate what borders are and what they represent in the lives of the millions of people who live at and cross them daily. This *Companion* offers a range of scholarly approaches to border studies and a variety of disciplinary and multidisciplinary ways to understand how borders work and function as causes and effects within regional, national and

international contexts. But this *Companion* does not seek to provide a state of the art, full-scale compendium of all that is worthwhile in border studies. Rather, its authors offer their versions of the state of the art in their own border studies. It is our hope that these glimpses into the rich landscape of border studies will foster more global attention to the borders which separate and connect us all.

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