Politics of walled territories: A critical analysis of space, politics and security

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Abstract

We live in a world of borders and walls. In the 23 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, 27 new walls and fences have gone up on political borders around the world. These walls are built by both totalitarian regimes and democracies, including India, Thailand, Israel, South Africa, and the European Union. Invariably, the barriers are justified in the language of security the country must be protected from the terrorists, drug cartels, insurgents, or suicide bombers lurking on the other side.

Despite the external focus of these justifications, in most instances these walls and fences are actually the result of internal reasoning, from establishing sovereignty over ungoverned or unruly lands, to protecting internal wealth, to preserving cultural practices from the influence of other value systems. The decision to build the 664-mile barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, although often presented as primarily in response to drug-related violence and terrorism, is largely due to these internal factors. Borders constitute the international system of states. Accordingly, states will, from time to time, take assertive measures to secure the border, with among the most aggressive strategies being the construction of physical barriers, which we refer to as "border walls". Using original data on man-made border wall construction from 1800 to 2013, we theorize and find that in many cases wall construction is about economic-security. Significant economic disparities between the states will create incentives to illegally transport people or move goods readily available in the poorer country but highly regulated in the richer country.

We find that economic disparities have a substantial and significant impact on the presence of a physical wall that is independent of formal border disputes and concerns over instability from civil wars in neighbors. We employ the case studies (On the basis of empirical studies) of the Apartheid Wall in Israel-Palestine and the US-Mexico border security wall to inform my analysis, giving particular attention to the en gagement of border security walls in processes of racialization.

Keywords: Walled territories; space; politics; security

An overview of the study

Walls are symbolic and material manifestations of political boundaries. This Intervention builds upon recent work in political geography that considers borders as sovereign sites of security as well as mobile places of encounter (Johnson et al., 2011; Jones, 2012; Mountz, 2011). Walls may fulfill divisive state agendas through "conflict infrastructures" as Wendy Pullan describes in her Intervention. Throughout history, walls and fences have served to secure and defend populations by re-configuring the political-economic and security space. The objective of this manuscript is to identify and examine the various functions of border security walls in the contemporary solidification of capitalist social relations. It seeks to demonstrate how walls, as a part of a spatial strategy of governance and security, construct conditions for exploitation and the accumulation of wealth. Economic violence and oppression under capitalism have given rise to expressions of resistance, and it is upon this backdrop that I posit border security walls as techniques of pacification. The overviews of Minghi and Prescott clearly paid significant, if not primary, attention to the question of the where. Where is the border located, how did it came about, evolve, change over time, became the topic of (military) disputes and what are the political consequences of its (changes in) location. These were the central questions of the debate in the late nine- teenth century and the first half of the twentieth century and hence of their overview. As argued above, the balance in the present boundary/border studies, is now leaning towards border studies. More precisely, boundary studies (where the border is) and border studies (how the border is socially constructed) have in fact grown apart, have become detached from each other to become separate subfields. Both subfields have their own institutional expertise centres, their own journals and their own leading figures.

There is hardly, and much to my regret, any overlap between the two sub-fields anymore. Re- reading Minghi and Prescott's works, I believe, it would be a shame, if the many possible syne rgies that could emerge from an open discussion between the two subfields, were not sought after more. The knowledge of both subfields is needed to understand the historical context and critical evolution as well as conflict management of a border, the societal The Geopolitics of Borders and Boundaries structural and (im)moral consequences and representations of that border, and a possible (land- artistic) re-visioning of the border(land). The synergy could also inspire the on tological and epistemological discussions on borders and boundaries. It could lead to fresh debates on what lines in spaces mean for human beings, and how we attach to, and can break away from geometry and it could invoke what is often lacking in the current border debates, that is, an alternative vision on the b/ordering of space.

On a more subtle level, bordering is about a politics of difference. Border narratives, for example, have always, consciously and sub-consciously, thrown up the notion of difference which exists on both sides of the border. In the classic chicken and egg situation, either borders are created to reflect existing differences between groups and cultures and are thus imposed upon the landscape (be it geographic or social) to institutionalize and perpetuate that difference, or borders are imposed upon 'virgin' uninhabited spaces and, in deterministic fashion and are thus responsible for the evolution of difference on either side of the line of separation (which is equally a barrier to communication and movement). However, a closer analysis of cross-border narratives would indicate that the opening of borders highlights, rather than diminishes, notions of difference Looking back on the history of cross-border co-operation within the EU, multilevel institutional mechanisms for transboundary co-operation in South Asia appear to have contributed significantly to the development of new interregional and trans-national working relationships (Perkmann 2002). The popularity of the SAFTA, SAARC and ASEAN concept is undeniable. These associations are now a ubiquitous feature along the EU's external borders as well in many non-EU European contexts (Bojar 2008).

In recent years, borders have taken on an immense significance. Throughout the world they have shifted, been constructed and dismantled, and become physical barriers between socio-political ideologies. They may separate societies with very different cultures, histories, national identities or economic power, or divide people of the same ethnic or cultural identity. As manifestations of some of the world's key political, economic, societal and cultural issues, borders and border regions have received much academic attention over the past decade. This valuable series publishes high quality research monographs and edited comparative volumes that deal with all aspects of border regions, both empirically and theoretically. It will appeal to scholars interested in border regions and geopolitical issues across the whole range of social sciences

Research highlights of the manuscript

- The human' is a political stake that is produced through struggles to de/value people, spaces and politics.

- Cross-border conflict is associated with unhappiness of the people, society and generations and at the same time co-operative cross-border attitudes are associated with happiness among the

citizens of the both the nation.. Cross-border ties have both adverse and protective effects on mental health.

- We investigate whether lending by the Unites State's political interests based on political affinity using panel data for over the 1970–2010 period.

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Introduction:

Inception of the Walled Territories across the Nations:

The 1990s were marked by an assertive `spatial turn' in the human and social sciences, one which applied a far-reaching critique to basic categories of space, time and the social constituted under the era of modernity (Soja, 1989; Massey, 1994; Gregory, 1994). Without naming it as such, at the same time geography underwent a `social-discursive' turn by adopting various social theoretic, particularly (post)structuralist and feminist approaches. Foundational to both sets of literatures was the insight that space is socially produced; rather than a mere physical container for the play of social forces and temporal relations, space is conceived at once as both the medium and presupposition for sociality and historicity (Gregory and Urry, 1985). In this context we would aver that the tension-laden qualities of borders sketched in the previous section are a specification of the inherent spatiality of social life. Moreover, to thus claim that borders are socio-spatially produced clarifies the role and positioning of borders within wider academic debates. For just as at the start of the previous decade Smith and Katz (1993) gestured with bemused concern at the promiscuous deployment of spatial concepts throughout the social and human sciences - `space' having sprung the boundaries of its proprietary discipline, geography, to thrive in departments of art history, comparative literature, and gay/gender studies. We cannot but be similarly intrigued by the widespread recourse to `borders' as a productive metaphor within the vanguard spheres of social theoretical inquiry in the academy today. For instance, for some years now the `border' has been mobilized as a strategy among those wishing to destabilize bounded categories of class, race and gender in the service of a new cultural and spatial politics attuned to multiplicity and `difference ' (Anzaldua, 1987; Hicks, 1991; Giroux, 1992; Keith and Pile, 1993; Dworkin and Roman, 1993; Schedler, 2002). Rather than view the resulting imbrication of cultural studies and traditional border research as a further dilution of disciplinary focus or flight from an appropriately `grounded' political praxis, however, we believe the field of border studies should strongly embrace the possibilities offered by the crossing of disciplinary boundaries, seeing in the creative `mediations ' between the material and metaphorical narration of borders an opportunity to expand the imaginative scope of what has until now constituted a rather empirically-oriented domain.

European Union integration policies aimed at the promotion and funding of cross-border regions have been vital in setting the context for contemporary research on borders in Europe since the early 1990s.

It is not by accident that European cross-border planning initiatives have occurred in tandem with the emergence of a European wide network of research institutes devoted to the study of political borders and transboundary regions, themselves often located outside metropoles in less central cities often situated on or near nation-state borders. For the editors of this volume, one means of keeping this intellectual space of border knowledge open to the flow of new insights and voices has been to invite not only distinguished colleagues in political border studies but leading human geographers who do not necessarily place the theme of b/ordering at the heart of their respective research agendas. It is precisely this view, from a well-informed but distant position, with the intention to bridge divergent research fields, that we as editors were keen to nurture. And so it is with this perspective that we asked each contributor to inflect current work-in- progress through the metaphor of `blordering space'.

Boundaries as a Political Walls: Myth or Reality?

Political boundaries are part of the historically contingent processes of territory building. Political geographers remind us that boundaries are key elements in the maintenance of territoriality, the principle through which people and resources are controlled and governed by the establishment of specific territories (Sack, 1986; Paasi, 2003b). Territories and their boundaries are in a perpetual state of transformation, and the attention currently being paid to boundaries is only the latest example of a long interest in the social production of space and territoriality.

The links between boundaries, power and the state are of particular significance in this process. Maps of state boundaries are hence also maps of meanings - and vice versa. To provide a historical context for the current debates, I will discuss briefly the emergence of the space of states and political boundaries. The answer to the question of when meaningful territorial boundaries emerged in the past is a contested one. Anderson (1996), for instance, depicts how the Roman Empire developed important notions of territoriality, and how the Middle Ages produced the `universalist' doctrines that offered an alternative project to the hardened frontiers of the states which developed in Europe from the 15[th] century onwards (note: Anderson systematically uses the word `frontier' rather than boundary). He further argues that the development of the frontiers of France prefigured those of the other European nation-states. These frontiers were finally challenged in the post-World War II international 'system. Anderson (1996, p. 12) argues that these landmarks in the history of frontiers point to an evolution in terms of the stability of boundaries and the complexity of their functions. On the other hand, Isaac (1990) presents a more sceptical view of the `spatial logic' of past societies and argues that the rulers of

the ancient empires (such as Rome) were not interested in defining the frontiers of their territories in terms of fixed boundaries and that those in power were more interested in controlling people and cities than territory as such. In any case, the modern state system that has emerged gradually since the Treaty of Westphalia (1648) helped to establish the dominance of a horizontal, geostrategic view of the space of states. The dominant geopolitical maps have always been imposed on the world by power, and have not emerged as an evolutionary historical inevitability (Shapiro, 1997). The conventional wisdom of political geography suggests that it was only at the turn of the last century that exclusive boundary lines were generally established instead of the former more or less loose frontiers (Taylor and Flint 2000). This is a crude generalization, of course, since boundaries still vary from relatively open zones to strictly defined lines. Also, the space comprising our territorial states is in a perpetual condition of flux, so that where the number of states was about 55 at the beginning of the 20th century and some 80 around 1960, their current number is about 200. This is much less than the existing 400-600 `nations', many of which are seeking states of their own. Particularly significant has been the post-World War II period, during which almost 120 new states have emerged on the world map as a result of processes of decolonization (95 states), federal disintegration (20) and secessionism (2) (Christopher, 1999). Only a few conflicts between states have taken place each year since the mid-1990s, whereas the number of internal conflicts has been 26-28 per year (Paasi, 2003a). Although forecasting is a complicated matter, Christopher (1999) suggests that the current potential for placing new states on the world political map is perhaps of the order of 10-20 units. The present 194 states are divided by more than 300 land boundaries, each of which has a unique history. These histories are used in the construction of - usually contested - national identity narratives on both sides of the boundary.

The construction of the social and political meanings of borders occurs particularly through spatial socialization and the territorialization of meaning, which take place in numerous ways within education, politics, administration and governance (Paasi, 1996). It is through these practices and discourses that people become identified with bounded spaces and their (historical) symbolism. 'Boundaries and their locations are often crucial elements in representations and narratives regarding the past successes and defeats of states and nations, on account of the fact that during the 19th and 20th centuries boundaries and territories became political symbols over which `nations went to war and for which citizens fought and died' (Sahlins, 1989). Narratives of the past are typically highly selective and are constructed from the perspective of the existing states and projected to the past in a presentist manner. Dominant ideologies also tend to transform the narratives regarding the past as part of their own representations of the present and the future. Hence boundaries are an important part of the spatial

practice and discourse by which social groupings and distinctions between them are created and maintained, in which the exercise of territoriality becomes possible. Boundaries are therefore also part of the practice and narratives by which social groups and their identities are constituted and the members of these groups are governed. Since identity formation and social boundaries seem to belong together, boundaries are often understood as exclusive constituents of identity that are taken for granted. States are in a crucial position in the production and reproduction of expressions of territoriality and various forms of inclusion/exclusion, and social and cultural boundaries are usually important in this. Yuval-Davis (1997) provides one explanation by remarking how `borders and boundaries, identities and difference construct and determine to a large extent the space of agency, the mode of participation in which we act as citizens in the multilayered polities to which we belong'.

Academic scholars have been in a key position in the production of the border-centred outlook on the world and in shaping the practices and discourses through which the current system of territories is perpetually represented, reproduced and transformed. Authors writing on the nation and state typically construct narratives that depict how the ideas of sovereignty and the system of states have emerged gradually in relation to the changing physical-material, economic and technological circumstances, how the ideologies of nationalism and the ideas of the nation as a manifestation of this ideology gradually emerged and spread to replace absolutist rule, and how the rise of the modern world system of (`nation'-)states finally transformed the network of more or less diffuse, permeable frontiers into a grid of exclusive territorial boundaries (Paasi, 2003a). These elements are effectively represented and circulated in school atlases and other media, which concomitantly become instruments of popular geopolitics

Present settings on Political Boundaries: A Spatial/Dimensional Perspective

Geographers and other scholars interested in political boundaries have found themselves in a paradoxical situation in the 1990s. On the one hand it is increasingly common to see comments suggesting how borders and nation-states are losing their traditional meanings or even vanishing, while on the other hand, the perpetually increasing academic interest in boundaries suggests that they exist very firmly on the research agenda. The former perspective starts out from arguments that the current world of de-territorialization is increasingly being characterized by all kinds of flows that cross borders, in a way making them less important than before. Although there are differences between the various types of boundaries that are, or are not crossed, there are also huge differences between the

`flows' that cross them. Some represent what may be labeled as `fast geography' (such as telecommunications), while others are matters of `slow geography' (such as the transport of goods or flows of migrants and refugees). Most elements in the `borderless world' discourse seem to belong to the following, partly overlapping contexts (Paasi, 2002a): 1) current socio-economic conditions, particularly the `flow' rhetoric emerging in the spheres of economics and finance, 2) discussions of globalization (economics, culture) and the emergence of meso-scale regional economies, 3) debates on the `postmodern condition' and the socially constructed and contested nature of identities, societal knowledge and `truths', 4) the rise of new information and communication technologies and cyberspace, and 5) `ecopolitics' and environmental problems such as acid rain and pollution.

While many of these topics have proved attractive for social scientists and cultural researchers, their arguments have not always been clearly articulated. Belief in the power of `information highways', cyberspace and the internet for crossing boundaries often omits the fact that only a couple of percent of the world's population uses internet links and that this sphere is overwhelmingly dominated by the wealthy western states. These facts do not prevent the gurus of the information society from arguing that `Today... people everywhere are more and more able to get information they want directly from all corners of the world. They can see for themselves what the tastes and preferences are in other countries, the styles of clothing now in fashion, the sports, the life-styles' (Ohmae, 1990). On the other hand, increasingly critical tones towards the relativism represented by the advocates of postmodernism are emerging (Philo and Miller, 2001). The most challenging arguments for current boundary studies come from some analysts of the globalization thesis who discuss the changing meanings and, in the extreme case, the disappearance (or withering away), of the nation-state, sovereignty and boundaries. Perhaps the most extreme view has been put forward by Ohmae (1995), who argues that `...in terms of real flows of economic activity, nation states have already lost their role as meaningful units of participation in the global economy of today's borderless world'. There are many possible contexts for these debates, and most authors typically locate the emergence of the dynamics of globalization in one institutional context, whether it is economics, technology, international politics, ecology or culture/the cultural industry (Beck, 1997). The idea of economic and cultural `globalization' has achieved particular importance, whatever this means for different authors. In this context, boundaries are increasingly understood as symbols of a `past', `fixed' world or the `space of places ' , which will be increasingly replaced by a `dynamic' world and a `space of flows ' . These pairs of words, popularized by Castells (1989), have become extremely important metaphors of spatial transformation during the last decade. One contextual problem in recent debates has been the fact that the `disappearance of boundaries and

the state' thesis has been a view posited mainly by scholars in the developed Western world. In these circles the end of Cold War bipolarity has been replaced by keywords such as speed, simultaneity, interconnectedness and decentralization, typically understood as key elements for explaining the nature of the structural change, the location of domination, the conditions of control and the realms of strife. Not all authors have interpreted the world in this way, however, as those from the South, for instance, saw the collapse of bipolarity as a moment of regression and a step towards marginalization, recolonization and global apartheid (Nabudere, 1994; Dalby, 1999). Border scholars in continental Europe have also faced a very different world, but one where boundaries are still a part of the territorial order, for even though the European Union is increasingly striving towards more open internal markets, it effectively maintains control over its external boundaries (Paasi, 2001).

Much of the globalization discourse has to be understood as rhetorical and metaphoric (Hirst and Thompson, 1996, 2002), and closer scrutiny reveals that the `boundaries' mentioned in the more extreme globalization discourses do not refer to any particular boundaries (which are always contextual) but serve as general metaphors for economic liberalism (Paasi, 2003a). This is clear in Ohmae's ideology, for instance, where `the borderless world' is the global marketplace, `a competitive map' of real flows of financial and industrial activities (Ohmae, 1995).

Geographical Boundaries vs Political Walls : A Concluding Remarks

Previous analysis shows that boundaries are very ambivalent objects of research but due to this fact also provide a very interesting field for researchers. It also displays that very different views exist regarding the contemporary and future roles of nation-states and the boundaries between them. These views imply that (state) boundaries have versatile functions and meanings in social action. They are instruments of state policy, territorial control, markers of identity, as well as discourses manifesting themselves in legislation, diplomacy and academic scholarly languages (Anderson, 1996). Boundaries should not therefore be taken for granted, as if they were elements with one essence, function and trajectory. Neither should boundaries be understood as having some universal, independent causal power. Instead they are social and political constructs that are established by human beings for human and clearly at times for very non-human - purposes and whose establishment is a manifestation of power relations and social division of labour. As far as academic research is concerned, the contested interpretations are fitting illustrations of the fact that social science is constructed rhetorically and can be understood as a set of meanings created in response to problems that emerge in different historical

and political contexts (cf. Brown, 1987). Following from complicated societal relations of power and governance, space is typically divided into binary oppositions such as inside and outside at all spatial scales. Sibley (1995) has aptly pointed out that the defence of social space usually has its counterpart in the `defence of regions of knowledge'. He argues that what constitutes knowledge - i.e. the ideas which gain currency through books and periodicals - is conditioned by certain power relations which determine the boundaries of knowledge. One part of the production of knowledge is the exclusion of dangerous or threatening ideas and authors. The discourses on the disappearance of boundaries and state are illustrative of a certain contextual unbalance in the emerging new rhetoric. It is contextual in a sense, since these ideas have been created typically by Anglo-Saxon scholars, obviously following from the one-sided optimism based on the fall of East/West geopolitical order, but these ideas have been presented as if these processes would be universal, occurring everywhere in the world (Newman and Paasi, 1998; Wilson and Donnan, 1998). The ideas of the disappearance of states and boundaries, put forward by authors like Ohmae (1995) are indeed fitting examples of cultural imperialism discussed by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1999), a phenomenon that universalizes particularisms and imposes them in apparently de-historicized form upon the whole planet. Current planetary doxa, resulting from the false and uncontrolled universalization of the folk concepts and preoccupations of American society and academy, includes, according to Bourdieu and Wacquant, such key terms as multiculturalism, globalization, identity, etc. It is important to realize that the ideas of boundaries, such as their supposed `disappearance', are themselves products of diverging, contested discourses. These ideas may be impregnated by rhetoric and reflect diverging strategies of academic power in their promise to depict real world processes. The major challenge is to develop critical approaches to understand the changing contextual - meanings of boundaries in the current globalizing world (Paasi, 2003a).

Boundaries are means and media for organizing social space where the questions of power, knowledge, agency and social structures become crucial. Much of the boundary language in geography, for instance, reflects traditional modernist views on boundaries and provides fixed essentialist categories for research (Paasi, 2003a). One major task is, therefore, to reflect perpetually the links between boundaries and other `geographical' categories, such as region, place and territory, since boundary-making is one part of the institutionalization of these units in social practice and discourse. Boundaries are studied today by scholars coming from several fields, often so that they do not recognize each other's work (Lamont and Molnar, 2002). It is obvious that increasing cross-disciplinary (or even post-disciplinary) cooperation in research will open new theoretical and concrete horizons. This also means that boundaries need to be reflected in relation to categories developed outside of geography.

Border scholars often study their own research objects and even published collections tend to include separate case studies. In the world of the re-scaling state, economy and governance, comparative research is increasingly important. Since boundaries are historically and spatially contingent, contextual approaches are inevitable in research. Important research topics are the implications of the existing boundary narratives on the ideas of citizenship, identities, political/territorial loyalty, the territorialization of memory and the power relations that these narratives imply. Accordingly, new sensitive methods have to be developed by boundary scholars that could reveal the social meanings of boundaries as well as their functions and meanings in local daily life. An increasingly important question is how socio-spatial inclusions and exclusions are constructed and reproduced. This will require a combination of traditional disciplinary approaches, such as quantitative, qualitative, textual and ethnographic methods and the use of various kinds of research materials provided by (in-depth) interviews, participant observation, media texts, literature, school books, etc. This will help to study the meanings of boundaries in identity formation at various spatial scales and to reflect the relations between state boundaries and other social/symbolic boundaries. This will also render possible the evaluation of the meanings of boundaries in the structuration of the various spheres of social life (e.g. cultural representations on `nation' and ethnicity, foreign and immigration policy), and, as part of this, the power relations that are involved in this structuration.

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