PART I

INTRODUCTION

1

Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints

*Struggles to Construct and Maintain State
and Social Boundaries*

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In the period from the end of the Cold War, at the beginning of the 1990s, to the present, academics and laymen alike have moved away from a view of borders as fixed and hard features of international life. Today, borders are much more commonly understood as contingent, porous, and in flux. The Cold War, especially its last two decades, had managed to make the lines dividing countries on world maps seem to be permanent parts of the landscape, like rivers and mountains. Those years had eclipsed the memories of the dissolution of huge empires in World War I, the creation of new states and mandates after that war, and the occurrence of massive territorial changes during World War II. Indeed, once the old European empires finally faded away in Africa and Asia and decolonization drew to an end, mostly by the mid-1960s, remarkably few countries disappeared or even had significant border changes. One could cite a few cases – the transformation of East Pakistan into Bangladesh, the appearance and disappearance of Biafra, the cease-fire lines after the 1967 war in the Middle East – but they were the limited exceptions to a period of extraordinary state-border stability.

Not surprisingly, then, outside an interest in decolonization, few books and articles by political scientists and sociologists dealt with the question of borders in the postwar period and, especially, in the generation from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s.[1] And consequently, I think, few works addressed larger political and cultural meaning attached to borders: questions of the essence of sovereignty and the degree to which borders served as frames for actual human communities. There was little interest in what kind of

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[1] William J. Foltz, "Modernization and Nation-Building: The Social Mobilization Model Reconsidered," in *From National Development to Global Community*, ed. Richard L. Merritt and Bruce Russett (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981); Saadia Touval, *The Boundary Politics of Independent Africa* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). Geographers were much more likely to deal with boundaries. See, e.g., Peter Gould and Rodney White, *Mental Maps*, 2nd ed. (London: Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1986), who coined the term "mental maps" used in my title.

meaning, or sense of belonging, borders created for people, as they tried to place themselves socially in the world.

In the 1990s, though, events brought the issues of territory and borders back into the popular and academic imagination.[2] Old states vanished and new ones appeared. The Soviet Union splintered into fifteen new states; Yugoslavia, into five; Czechoslovakia and Ethiopia, into two each. Namibia (1990) and the Palestine Authority (1993) appeared. The European Union replaced the European Community, grew larger, moved toward a single currency, and appropriated functions from its member states. The flow of capital and communications across borders, which appeared increasingly porous, went off the charts. These changes and more created cottage industries in the social sciences and humanities examining the implications of border changes, including numerous studies of sovereignty,[3] transnationalism,[4] globalization,[5] European integration,[6] and territorialization.[7] Some went so far

[2] Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control*, Princeton Series in International History and Politics, ed. Jack L. Snyder, Marc Trachtenberg, and Fareed Zakaria (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), John G. Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond," *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (1993): 139–67.

[3] Joseph A. Camilleri and Jim Falk, *The End of Sovereignty?: The Politics of a Shrinking and Fragmenting World* (Brookefield, Vt.: Edward Edgar, 1992); Julie A. Erfani, *The Paradox of the Mexican State: Rereading Sovereignty From Independence to NAFTA* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Edmond J. Keller and Donald Rothchild, *Africa in the New International Order: Rethinking State Sovereignty and Regional Security* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1996); Gene M. Lyons and Michael Mastanduno, eds., *Beyond Westphalia? State Sovereignty and International Intervention* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

[4] Stephen Castles, "Studying Social Transformation," *International Political Science Review* 22, no. 1 (2001): 13–32, Ivo D. Duchacek, Daniel Latouche, and Garth Stevenson, *Perforated Sovereignties and International Relations: Transsovereign Contacts of Subnational Governments* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1988).

[5] Stephen Castles and Alastair Davidson, *Citizenship and Migration: Globalization and the Politics of Belonging* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Frederic Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds., *The Cultures of Globalization, Post-Contemporary Interventions* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), Anthony D. King, ed., *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Binghamton: Department of Art and History, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1991); James H. Mittelman, ed., *Globalization: Critical Reflections* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1996); Proshanta K. Nandi and Shahid M. Shahidullah, eds., *Globalization and the Evolving World Society* (Boston: Brill, 1998); Nicanor Perlas, *Shaping Globalization: Civil Society, Cultural Power, and Threefolding* (Quezon City, Philippines: Center for Alternative Development Initiatives, 1999).

[6] Michael Calingaert, *European Integration Revisited* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996); Jytte Klausen and Louise A. Tilly, eds., *European Integration in Social and Historical Perspective* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997); George A. Kourvetaris and Andreas Moschonas, eds., *The Impact of European Integration: Political, Sociological, and Economic Changes* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1996); James B. Steinberg, *"An Ever Closer Union": European Integration and Its Implications for the Future of U.S.-European Relations* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1993).

[7] David J. Elkins, *Beyond Sovereignty: Territory and Political Economy in the Twenty-First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); Thom Kuehls, *Beyond Sovereign*

as to reject "the nationally-constituted society as the appropriate object of discourse."[8]

All these subfields suggest that borders are impermanent features of social life, dependent on particular circumstances rather than being permanent fixtures of human society. The status of borders has been contingent on varying historical circumstances, rather than being immutably rock-like. Borders shift; they leak; and they hold varying sorts of meaning for different people. No one could simply assume that any person's primary identity is necessarily rooted in the people within his or her state's borders, whether that state is the Congo or even France.

Yet even in the new streams of social science, many studies, wittingly or unwittingly, continue to "remain fixed and thematized at the level of the spatial and the geopolitical" associated with the nation-state.[9] This volume maintains the importance of a spatial understanding of society and history, but it suggests a way of conceiving of borders and space that goes beyond a school map of states. Its subject is the struggle among differing spatial logics, or mental maps. It is concerned with the meanings that state borders hold for people but recognizes that such meanings vary and are contested by other social formations. The authors here ask, To what degree do state borders encase the mechanisms that make the decisive rules governing people's lives, and to what extent do they give way to other rule makers? To what extent do states circumscribe the communities to which people feel attached, and to what extent do they intersect with other communities of belonging? The chapters in this book home in on the struggles and conflicting demands on people, given that state borders are not automatically preeminent and that other spatial logics demand attention.

Boundaries

I use the term "boundaries" here to convey more than simple borders, lines dividing spaces as represented on maps; boundaries signify the point at which something becomes something else, at which the way things are done changes, at which "we" end and "they" begin, at which certain rules for behavior no longer obtain and others take hold. That is, boundaries include symbolic and social dimensions associated with the border divisions that appear on maps or, for that matter, other dividing lines that cannot be found

Territory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space: Globalization, Social Movements and the Urban Political Experience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Steven R. Ratner, "Drawing a Better Line: *Uti Possidetis* and the Borders of New States," *American Journal of International Law* 90 (1996): 590–624; Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker, *Changing Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).
[8] King, ed., *Culture, Globalization and the World System.*
[9] Jameson and Miyoshi, eds., *Cultures of Globalization.*

on any map at all. Because boundaries connote the site at which things are done differently or the limits to where things are done in one way, they are social constructions. And as the site where different ways of doing things meet, they are likely to be replete with tension and conflict. People thus create barriers through accepting common manners of acting and rejecting – even fighting off – other ways of acting. One may think of people's acting according to a set of laws on one side of a state boundary, for example, and others acting on the basis of a different code on the other side of the boundary. Boundaries are barriers that people establish, but by no means are they airtight.

Deborah S. Bernstein demonstrates this point nicely for a boundary between not two states but two social groups: Jewish and Arab workers in Palestine in the early stages of their century-long bitter conflict. In the critical interwar years, she writes, the pattern that emerged in the town "of Haifa's labor market was the overall, pervasive separation and boundary construction between Jews and Arabs which was pushed through by organized Jewish labor. The essence of the construction of boundaries in the economic sphere was to close the Jewish economy to Arab labor so as to protect Jewish workers from the competition of much cheaper Arab workers."[10] Nonetheless, she argues, the two communities cannot be understood as "secured within clear-cut, impenetrable and unrefuted boundaries.... Such a focus did not lead to sufficient understanding of the formation of boundaries. It could not shed light on the controversies and conflicts concerning boundary formation, as the boundaries themselves were taken for granted.... They were conveyed as part of the basic order rather than as a negotiated and dynamic social construct."[11]

Boundaries, to my mind, incorporate two elements beyond serving as simple separators: *checkpoints* and *mental maps*. Boundaries are constructed through the practical monitoring devices that groups use at actual and virtual checkpoints to divide one space from another. Checkpoints refer to the sites and practices that groups use to differentiate members from others and to enforce separation. Monitoring at actual checkpoints includes a variety of surveillance techniques, from checking visas and passports to insidious practices such as racial profiling. At virtual checkpoints, practices go from scrutiny of modes of dress to detection of language and accent differences. Dress and language, along with other daily practices, then, not only are accepted ways of doing things among certain people; they also serve as signifiers at virtual checkpoints, as separators, marking who is included in a group and who is not.

[10] Deborah S. Bernstein, *Constructing Boundaries: Jewish and Arab Workers in Mandatory Palestine*, ed. Russell Stone, SUNY Series in Israel Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000).
[11] Ibid.

All sorts of practices, both obvious and subtle, act as boundary mark-ers, which tip people off as to whether someone is a member of their group or not. Monitoring devices at checkpoints are among the numerous ways of scrutinizing and interrogating people so as to determine into which so-cial space they fall or to which group they belong. They are also the ways of enforcing the categorizations of space by using various sanctions and rewards. Enforcement devices can include something as innocent as giving someone the cold shoulder as well as a practice as horrible as ethnic cleansing. As Adriana Kemp's chapter notes, the construction of Israel's new bound-aries after the state was created in 1948 included not only the physical pa-trolling of the armistice lines but devices designating certain citizens, the Palestinian Arabs, as a dangerous population. What the actual monitoring devices should be and who the guardians of the checkpoints should be can be intensely contested questions. In Israel, as Patricia Woods notes in her chapter, even among the privileged Jewish population, secular and religious agencies and courts within the state itself have battled over boundary ques-tions, including the all-important one of who is a Jew.

Besides monitoring practices at actual and virtual checkpoints, boundaries also are constructed and maintained by people's mental maps, which divide home from alien territory, the included from the excluded, the familiar from the other. Mental maps incorporate elements of the meaning people attach to spatial configurations, the loyalties they hold, the emotions and passions that groupings evoke, and their cognitive ideas about how the world is con-structed. All these act to establish and maintain the attachment of people to one another, but in so doing, they also mark the separation between groups.

If one indeed believes that boundaries have been built and maintained by what people do and think, both through the practices at virtual checkpoints and through mental maps, then one can imagine boundaries to be more than simply dividers of spaces occupied by states. Multiple sets of boundaries can exist, beyond those associated with state borders. Social groupings have their own boundaries, virtual checkpoints, and mental maps marking them off from other groupings. The boundaries of social groupings have their own spatial logic. That is, social groups, too, have territorial dimensions (usually physical, sometimes virtual), quite apart from state borders. A smuggling ring, to take an extreme example, may have all sorts of monitoring devices marking it off, such as code words, secret names, signals, established routes for travel, and sanctions for breaking the rules of the ring. And the men-tal map of its boundaries, including its territorial reach as well as who is in the group and who is outside, can be firmly embedded in its members' imagination and in the minds of border guards, customers, competitors, and others.

The boundaries constructed by the smuggling ring's monitoring devices and mental maps certainly do not appear on any school map and are very different from those of the state; indeed, they are meant to diminish – bypass,

erase, neutralize – those of the state. Other social groupings, such as an extended family with members on two or three continents, may have no such overt intentions, but they, too, have their own spatial logic and share a mental map of the limits of their clan and its ways of doing things – language and acts of familiarity, forms of material exchange, and more – that establish spatial boundaries different from those of the state. The space of a group, such as a multicontinental clan, might differ from that of a state in that it may be discontinuous (although, it should be noted, that a few states are discontinuous, too). Jews, as a people, for example, maintained clear social boundaries through history without having a continuous space. Daniel S. Milo put it this way: "The Jewish perception of space is marked by two unique characteristics: it comprises a notion of multiple spaces, rather than one of a single space; and between these spaces – a void. In other words, the Jewish spatial experience is *differential* and *discontinuous*."[12] Space may also be deconcretized, as with a family in which concrete space is far less important than the boundaries created by the social relations themselves.[13]

All people face multiple social groupings, including the state, in their daily lives that offer differing divisions of space, that is, differing mental maps of how their world is constructed and laid out and different monitoring devices marking the boundaries of that world. People thus encounter multiple sets of boundaries, which configure space differently and which have various sets of meaning as well as checkpoints with scrutinizing and enforcing devices attached to them. Individuals, in short, daily confront radically divergent mental maps of how the world is configured. Sometimes, perhaps most times, multiple social groupings and the maps they project coexist harmoniously, causing minimal dissonance. But at other times they clash, using sanctions and rewards to demand contradictory ways of doing things and loyalty from people.

One example of such conflict that received much publicity came out in the tense days immediately after the infamous 2000 presidential election in the United States, when neither George W. Bush nor Al Gore could claim victory. John Ellis had served as election day vote analyst for the Fox network, the first of the national news associations to call the election (prematurely) for Bush that night. All the networks understood the enormous significance of their casting Bush as the presumptive winner at a moment when the outcome was still very much in doubt. Most of them later undertook internal inquiries as to what had spurred them to jump the gun. Fox's call for Bush pushed the others into following suit and was thus extremely important. Fox officials later found out that Ellis, a cousin of Bush, traded information with

[12] Daniel S. Milo, "Introduction I: The Perception of Space," in *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*, ed. Eli Barnavi (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), vi–ix.
[13] Judith Baskin, "Strategic Alliances and the Human Factor: Migration for Marriage in Two Medieval Jewish Societies, lecture, Seattle, 2000.

Bush throughout election night, actions that threatened the independence and integrity of Fox, possibly leading it to call the election before there was any real certainty over the actual outcome. As one Fox executive said after the election, the network hired him "because of his ability, not his blood-line."[14] Fox had one set of rules and demands that it made on its employees; the "bloodline," another. Fox's transnational boundaries suggested one mental map of where boundaries lay and which social grouping's code should take precedence over others. It had checkpoints with monitoring devices, ranging from subtle ways of affecting professional reputation to censure, to enforce that representation. The Bush "bloodline" suggested quite another set of boundaries, with their own map and checkpoints (Bush jokingly suggested excluding members from the Thanksgiving dinner table who did not hold up their ends for the bloodline during the election).

Social groupings, such as news networks and extended families, or even states themselves, may seem to be inviolable social formations, with firm boundaries. They appear to enter the fray of conflicting boundaries as wholly formed institutions, with their checkpoints and monitoring devices to maintain their boundaries, such as professional censure, family ostracism, or imprisonment, in hand. In cases of severe conflict, the state itself, often through its judicial system, presents itself as the final arbiter of which rules of conduct should take precedence, but in so doing, courts rarely challenge the legitimacy of particular social institutions to exist; the "hardness" of social organizations and the permanence of their boundaries remain unquestioned.

The idea of the hardness of social groupings is frequently reinforced by the virtual checkpoints, boundary markers, and monitoring devices that their members employ in order to project the essentiality and primacy of the group's own boundaries. The fact that people use an attribute, such as skin color, unthinkingly as the default indicator separating "us" from "them" makes the categories of black and white and the divider between them seem natural and permanent. Lauren Basson's chapter notes how key social actors and state officials in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century United States used a variety of means, including pseudoscience, to make racial categories and the dividers between them seem hard and fast in the country.

In short, people depend on those checkpoints and markers, such as skin color, to navigate daily life, and in accepting those signposts to guide them, people lend an additional feeling of hardness to the boundaries of existing social groupings. Marking off social groups in this way is tremendously important, especially where those social groups are large and impersonal. People encounter others every day whom they have never met or barely know as acquaintances. This is a terrifying prospect. What kind of confidence can

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[14] "Election Furor Prompts Fox to Review Role of Bush Cousin," *New York Times*, November 14, 2000, p. A22.

they have that strangers and near-strangers will act civilly and not stab them in the back, figuratively or literally? Routine practices – those boundary checkpoints, markers, and monitoring devices – help to separate those with whom one feels safe, for whom one has clear expectations for how they will behave, from others. The monitoring of boundaries, then, alerts them to who falls within one's group and who remains outside.

People's feelings of security rest on a sense that checkpoints and markers separate the familiar – those who share language, dress, skin color, mannerisms, citizenship, or other identifiable attributes – from the unfamiliar. Sometimes the markers are quickly identifiable, as when African Americans greet each other as "brother," even when they are not acquainted. At other times, the markers might be very subtle, as when Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe, fearing that any overt sign of their being Jews could doom them, murmured various words or phrases, including the word "*amhaw*" ("[I am one of] your people"), as codes to identify possible coreligionists. In short, the ability to identify boundaries of social groups is tremendously important for people simply to make out the lay of the land – where they believe that threats lurk and where security resides.

People draw their mental maps by configuring the world as familiar and unfamiliar spaces. They are thus constantly navigating, searching for those "manners of acting"[15] that can delineate configurations of spaces where they feel that they are, or should be, relatively safe, places that somehow feel familiar and different from the chaotic sense of the totally unfamiliar. As much as high crime rates, the unfamiliarity with how things are done and how strangers behave is what makes a particular neighborhood feel "dangerous." In contrast, the reassuring message people take with them on their forays into meetings with strangers in familiar places, such as a city bus, is that by knowing the markers and checkpoints they can minimize risk and know what to expect from others. They feel, within the parameters of mingling with strangers, who by definition represent the unknown, that they still can have a sense of what to expect and how to behave. This cognitive element, the mental map, helps construct and maintain boundaries, even if those boundaries are somewhat arbitrary and fluid.[16]

Regular checkpoints and habitual monitoring devices serve to naturalize a state or social group, creating a reassuring mental image of it as permanent and unchanging and a mental map that sets it off from other social groups. The perception that the groups are rock-hard diminishes the terror of vulnerable people in their dealings with strangers. Any feeling of threat is mitigated by the unquestioned assumption that the person one is encountering is a "brother" or "*amhaw*." And the perception acts, in turn, to validate

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[15] Peter J. Steinberger, "Public and Private," *Political Studies* 47 (1999): 294.
[16] Carol J. Greenhouse, Barbara Yngvesson, and David M. Engel, *Law and Community in Three American Towns* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).

the checkpoints for scrutinizing boundaries, even when the practices associated with those checkpoints are demanding and costly, such as having to purchase a passport and spend endless hours in line going through customs. The mental map and the checkpoints seem to be in a virtuous cycle feeding off one another to make the state's or social grouping's boundaries appear to be inviolable. It is easy to understand how laypeople and academics alike could slip into seeing states in the Cold War era as givens and the particular division of boundaries on maps as a depiction of the permanent configuration of the social and political landscape.

But the virtuous cycle of mental maps and checkpoints does not exist in a vacuum. Other forces intervene to change and challenge boundaries and highlight the impermanence of social groupings, as the 1990s made clear for some states. Perhaps this notion of the mutability of boundaries, their malleability in the face of human events, was portrayed most vividly in a statement attributed to Louis XIV. When his grandson became king of Spain, Louis is purported to have said, "There are no more Pyrenees." For all the efforts to maintain hard racial boundaries in the United States of a century ago, Basson demonstrates how those classifications were confounded by the challenges of racially mixed people who did not fit into any of the categories, for whom the mental map of space made no sense and for whom the normal checkpoints raised more questions than they answered.

No matter how much people like to think of their mental maps as permanent, they must be very sensitive to changing and uncertain boundaries. Those on the lowest social rungs, especially, need to be prepared at a moment's notice to remake their map of the social terrain. They must face the fact that today's boundaries are not static. Different social groups make contradictory demands on them and, in so doing, complicate both the placement of the boundary and the question of which boundary should take precedence in a given social situation. Is security in a difficult situation to be found in citizenship, gender, religion, ethnicity, kinship, or perhaps some other social formation, such as gangs or social clubs? These are not idle questions nor do they have an invariable answer; indeed, being sensitive to necessary changes in the answer may determine a person's very survival. Navigating the boundaries of these social formations, knowing which boundaries will provide maximum security, and patrolling those boundaries so as to ally with those who will be most helpful are important skills, particularly when exogenous factors undermine old mental maps and checkpoints.

For social scientists, it is probably preferable to think of the normal state of boundaries as in flux, rather than as permanent or semi-permanent, when trying to understand the configuration of human space. To be sure, the rate of flux will vary in different circumstances. The dynamics of social life come when competing boundaries, demanding different, even contradictory practices and mental images, bump up against one another. They put varying demands on people in terms of behavior, emotions, and cognition, causing