BORDERS AND BORDER-CROSSINGS

Anssi Paasi

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Borders: neglected elements in cultural geography?

‘Border’ has been a keyword for geographers since the end of the 19th century when Friedrich Ratzel published his book on political geography. Ratzel regarded borders as measures and expressions of the power of the organic state, as dynamic rather than static peripheral ‘organs’. Such ideas were callously exploited in geopolitics before and during World War II, when the ‘wrong’ location of borders was often used to justify violent expansion of territories (Paasi 1996). After the war, scholars typically regarded borders as physical lines separating states, or “artifacts on the ground” (Agnew 2008), and studied border landscapes, their functional roles in social and economic interaction and their perceptions, thus echoing the wider philosophical and methodological developments in geography (Prescott 1987, Newman and Paasi 1998). These abstract lines became crucial in understanding such notions as state, territory and sovereignty. At the local and regional level, borders were lines between jurisdictions or voting districts.

Political-geographic views largely defined how borders have been understood in geographic research. While borders have been deeply embedded in both traditional and contemporary cultural-geographic thinking and research, their versatile roles have been curiously neglected in cultural geography. Nevertheless, many cultural-geographic themes and concepts are crucially related to borders, the practices of bordering, and border-crossings. Think, for example, of the role of borders in understanding mobility, transnational flows, citizenship, national/regional identity, diaspora, political and ethno-
national conflicts or in examining the representations of ‘cultural regions’ and ideologies of cultures as hermetically sealed and spatially fixed. Recognition of the complex and contested cultural-geographic meanings of borders requires recognition that traditional line-based views must be expanded radically in both a scalar sense (i.e. from the human body and local to the national and global) and in a locational sense (i.e. where borders are located and crossed).

This chapter will scrutinize the meaning of borders in human geography and try to illustrate that ‘border’ is an important category not only for political but also for cultural geographers who have mapped and represented ‘bounded spaces’ for various purposes at various spatial scales. It asks how critical cultural geography could contribute to border studies and raises new questions about bounded spaces. Current relational thinking, represented by scholars such as Doreen Massey (1995), provides some answers to this question, since it challenges all kinds of borders that are taken for granted. This critical perspective is crucial in the contemporary world where the flows of capital and information cross borders easily but where human border crossings are highly selective. Immigrants, refugees, and displaced people often face borders and the processes of bordering in different ways than do transnational capitalists, highly educated elites or even tourists. This situation forces the researchers to consider not only how they should conceptualize borders but also where contemporary borders and boundary-producing practices are actually ‘located.’ It also forces scholars to reflect on how cultural practices and discourses are mobilized in bordering and what is the impact
of borders themselves. This chapter addresses such questions and hereby opens border studies to recognize wider cultural perspectives.

To develop these ideas, this chapter first lays out the backgrounds for the rapid rise of interdisciplinary border studies. From there, it examines the rise of relational thinking and its challenge to both political-geographic and cultural-geographic understanding of borders. As has been well documented, borders and identities are often closely associated. The third section of this chapter, however, problematizes this idea in cultural-geographic terms. The penultimate section provides a theoretically informed, empirically illustrated discussion of where borders and boundary-producing practices are located. Finally, the chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

**The expansion of border studies since the 1990s**

Borders rapidly became highly important during the 1990s, in the wake of the end of the Cold War’s dividing line between the capitalist and socialist blocks, the rise of many new states from the ruins of the former socialist states, the awakening of ‘old’ nations and ethnic groups, and the acceleration of globalization. The enlargement of the European Union has also raised the importance of borders, as the EU has endeavored to foster cross-border activities inside the Union to decrease the importance of borders between member states. At the same time, however, it has striven to control more effectively its external limits and border-crossings. European borders have, thus, become a major ‘laboratory’ in border studies. On the other side of the Atlantic, the traditional laboratory
has been the U.S.-Mexican border which has gained new importance through accelerating migration of Mexican immigrants into the U.S. and the post-9/11 political climate across North America. In both Europe and the US, external borders have become sites where contradictions related to exclusionist nationalism and neoliberal globalizing capitalism come together in bordering practices (Nevins 2002).

A number of political geographers, international-relations scholars, sociologists, literary theorists and anthropologists have entered border studies in Europe and elsewhere (Anderson 1996, Paasi 1996, Shapiro and Alker 1996, Michaelson and Johnson 1997, Donnan and Wilson 1999, Nevins 2002). This interdisciplinarity soon led to new theoretical developments. Cultural, feminist, postcolonial, post-modern, and post-structuralist approaches provided theoretical backgrounds for these studies that often challenged the ‘given’ borderlines between social and cultural entities. Instead of looking at concrete border contexts, scholars increasingly critically reflected on such dichotomies as us/them, good/bad, inside/outside, or friends/enemies, which have been significant in both European thinking and other cultural traditions (Dalby 1990). Also, the power relations embedded in the making of borders and in their use as ideological tools in governance and security schemes emerged on the agenda. Some researchers mapped the historical, social, and cultural dimensions of ‘concrete borders’ that have been exploited in the production and reproduction of territories.

Much of this initial work was done by anthropologists who studied the symbolic and cultural meanings of borders at various scales (Cohen 1986, Donnan and Wilson 1999).
Over time, however, geographers started to study borders by bringing ‘political’ and ‘cultural’ together. Their work showed that local, national, and international processes and events fuse in ostensibly local borders. Following the anthropological tradition, geographers also showed the need for ethnographic methods to help reveal the meanings of cultural and symbolic borders in everyday life (Paasi 1996, Megoran 2004).

The representatives of critical geopolitics, often drawing their inspiration from post-structuralist thinking proposed that attention had to be paid to boundary-producing practices rather than to borders per se (Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1998). Dalby (1990) paved the way for such efforts by analyzing US foreign policy discourses and revealing how the borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ were created in Cold-War narratives. Many geographers and international-relations scholars similarly analyzed how borders are constructed in foreign policy and security discourses (Campbell 1992, Walker 1993) or as part of the institutionalization of territories (Paasi 1996). Cultural-geographic approaches were expanded by other scholars who studied various forms of popular geopolitics and used novels, comics, and movies as their research materials (Dittmer 2010). Feminist geographers took new steps and defined security beyond the established binaries of inside/outside, or same/different, thus contesting the often-militarized bounded interpretations of security (Sharp 2007). Feminists also noted how borders, identity and difference largely constructed and shaped the space of agency, the mode of participation in which people acted as citizens in the multilayered polities to which they belonged (Yuval-Davis 1997).
Deepening globalization has given rise to contested narratives on borders. For some authors, borders are increasingly porous, de-territorializing, or even residual phenomena in the emerging 'borderless world' (Ohmae 1995). For others, borders are highly important and require continuous theoretical and empirical reflection (Paasi 2003). The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA turned the attention of scholars to the relationship between borders and security issues. The simultaneous flows of immigrants and refugees has increased the complexity of these border relationships. Borders, border-crossings, and security became deeply intertwined and led scholars to consider such issues as transnationalism or cosmopolitanism, which force us to look beyond ostensibly 'separate' spatial scales to connections across them. New approaches and theoretical debates have encouraged geographers interested in borders to go beyond subdisciplinary boundaries and to see that borders are not mere lines but processes, social institutions, and symbols. Borders stretch all over societies and even beyond formal state borders. Therefore, they reflect complex scalar issues related to territoriality, iconographies, identities, and resistance.

The previous discussion condenses and briefly contextualizes the changing role of borders as research objects in geography. Yet the development of border studies has not been linear. New themes have not simply replaced old ones. Rather, old and new approaches have bolstered each other. Similarly, empirical and theoretical themes have varied, since border studies reflect wider social processes and relations, contextual features, and existing theoretical and methodological trends in academic research (Paasi 2011).
Cultural borders and the challenge of relational thinking

Previous discussion raises the question of how borders ‘work’ when they have once been established. Agnew (2008) suggests that borders work in two ways. First, borders have real effects when they are used to limit or allow movements of things, money, and people, a function that seems to have hardened borders since 9/11 in spite of globalization and all manner of flows. Second, borders entrap us into thinking about and acting in the world in territorial terms, that is, they “limit the exercise of intellect, imagination, and political will” (Agnew 2008:176). In similar fashion, Balibar (1998) reminds us “that what can be demarcated, defined, and determined maintains a constitutive relation with what can be thought”. The challenge for border scholars, then, is not only to map the increasingly complex functions of borders or their impacts on mobility but also, following Agnew’s lead, “to think and then act beyond their present limitations” (2008:176).

Previous sections showed that for political geographers, borders were for a long time largely given constituents of territories that separated ‘power containers’ (i.e. states) from each other (Agnew 2008), although political geographers have gradually expanded their views on borders. Borders have also been important practical instruments for cultural geographers, who have used them to map and delimit the complexities of the Earth’s surface. Such instrumental use to distinguish regional spaces from each other and to classify them on cultural and physical grounds has been significant since the
institutionalization of academic geography. ‘Bounded spaces’ were constructed at all scales, from sub-national and national to international, to classify information or to help governance and education. Such bordering practices have characterized geography around the world but particularly in the North-American tradition of cultural geography, where tracing and representing ‘cultural regions’ or ‘cultural realms’ has motivated cultural geographers until recent times (see Shortridge 1984, de Blij and Muller 2007). In spite of their ostensible neutrality, such cultural classifications of space are deeply political, or at least can be politically exploited.

The apparent objectivity of regional borders and their location has been continually called into question in the history of geography. Already in 1939, Hartshorne argued in The Nature of Geography that the problem of establishing the boundaries of a region presented a dilemma for which geographers had no reason to hope for an ‘objective’ solution. Kimble (1951), for his part, later noted that regional geographers might be trying to put ‘boundaries that do not exist around areas that do not matter’.

Current relational thinkers continue this critique, extending it from geographical regions to all ‘bounded spaces’ that they want to challenge. Massey (1995: 67), for example, proposed that borders do not embody any ‘eternal truth of places’ but, rather, are drawn by society to serve particular purposes. They are ‘socially constructed.’ Borders are as much the products of society as are other social relations which constitute social space. Massey also argues that borders inevitably cut across other social relations that constitute social space: the places that borders enclose are never culturally ‘pure’ (c.f.
Sibley 1995). Borders at all scales are also ‘an exercise of power’ and can be constructed as protection by the relatively weak, as a form of resistance identity (Castells 2007), or by the strong, as a way to protect the privileged position they have (Massey 1995).

Massey (2005) has also traced also more generally how a specific hegemonic understanding of the nature of space and the relation between space and society developed within the history of modernity. One part of this understanding was an assumption of the isomorphism between space/place on the one hand and society/culture on the other. Respectively, local communities were thought to have their ‘localities’, cultures their ‘regions,’ and nations their ‘nation-states’. Space and society were, thus, assumed to map onto each other and were ‘divided up’. Hence, Massey argues, cultures, societies and nations were imagined to have an integral relation to ‘bounded’ spaces that were internally coherent and differentiated from each other by separation. She suggests that this imagination that regards space as divided/regionalized came to be seen as progressive and natural and, indeed, continues to reverberate today.

Relational approaches have also called into question the state-centric views of the world that have dominated border thinking in political geography. Agnew (1994) labels the modernist understanding of state territory as the ‘territorial trap’ and suggests that this trap rests on three assumptions that are typically taken for granted. First, the territorial trap assumes that the sovereignty, security and political life of the modern state require
a bounded territorial space. Second, it assumes that there is a fundamental opposition between the internal and external affairs of a state. Third, it assumes that the territorial state functions as a geographical container for modern society in which state borders are regarded as coincident with political or social borders. This assumption, in turn, has led to the idea, often supported by nationalists, that the world is composed of firmly delimited, mutually exclusive territories, each of which has its own collective identity.

Relational thinking, thus, accentuates the notion that borders are social constructs that always reflect power relations. Because all borderings of space are based on human choice and motivations and, thus, emphasize power relations, their cartographic representations (maps), so typical in cultural geography, similarly display power relations (Wood 1992). This point is particularly evident in the case of supra-state ‘meta-geographies’. Lewis and Wigen (1997) define meta-geography as a set of spatial structures through which people order their knowledge of the world. It is well known that such meta-geographies, bounded spaces, and dividing lines, have been crucial in the tradition of geopolitics where scholars, beginning with Halford Mackinder, have constructed nationally tuned representations of the world’s major borderlines, regions, and their power relations (cf. ÓTuathail 1996).

Meta-geographic representations are powerful tools in geographic education. Textbooks in regional and cultural geography courses in schools and universities, for example, have long included maps, regional divisions, and border lines drawn on the basis of chosen ‘cultural traits’ (e.g. the “cultural realms” in de Blij 1981 or the “realms of the
world" in de Blij and Müller 2007). Such maps create an image of separate, bounded cultures or regions, thus omitting or at least simplifying the observations made by anthropologists almost a century ago that much of what we label as ‘culture’ has always been based on cultural diffusion and loans. However, global cultural dividing lines were rarely seriously questioned in geography before relational thinkers brought the issue of borders to the agenda. Ó Tuathail (1996), for example, wrote a profound commentary on Samuel Huntington’s (1996) well-known but much-criticized ideas on the “clash of civilizations” and the idea of separate cultures with ‘fault lines’ between them. Yet Ó Tuathail did not pay attention to the fact that geographers have produced such maps and dividing lines for decades and used them to educate generations of geographers and other citizens.

Similarly to relational thinkers in geography, critical anthropologists have questioned the bounded cultural spaces and territorializing concepts of identity used in everyday language, in nationalist discourses, and even in scholarly studies of nationalism, nations, and refugees (Malkki 1992, Gupta and Ferguson 1992). In spite of this fact, cultural backgrounds are still important, even within a globalizing and hybridizing world, and often show the power of spatial imaginaries and cultural socialization. This fact became evident in the Danish Cartoon incidence of 2006, in which cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed raised fury among groups of Muslims around the world, showing not only the sensitiveness of cultural and religious values but also their political role in mobilizing and creating ‘cultural’ lines or negative stereotypes (Ridanpää 2009).
Borders and identities

New interest in borders and the rise of border studies was also related to another important social category: identity. This link harkens back to the fact that the 'border phenomenon' is significant not only in the context of state borders but also in the case of many socially and culturally meaningful spaces, from the human body to local and regional administrative units, from the turfs of gangs to no-go areas and red-line zones. Borders are often related to the notion of ‘belonging’ (Cohen 1985). While belonging is typically associated with identity, cohesiveness, and fixity, it is increasingly important in the context of mobilities and border-crossings (Kirby 2010, Adey 2010). The global transformations since 1989 have refocused attention not only onto economic and informational flows but also onto the displaced person, the migrant and the ‘stranger’, people who are often separated and dispossessed from their history (Bromley 2000). While nationalist ideologies and histories generated by the state often narrate national identities as coherent, homogeneous, and territorialized phenomena, such identities (or belonging) are not ‘natural.’ Instead, imagined identity communities are constructed and bounded for particular purposes. Consider, for example, that while there exist less than 200 states in the world, there are probably 500-600 nations, groups of people understanding themselves as a unity based on culture, language, or ethnicity. Nationalist ideologies underlining ‘bounded identities’ may be mobilized by states to create ‘cohesiveness’; but they are always contested by other borders that resonate with ethnicity, gender, generation, or class.
As relational thinkers have shown, borders between spaces (and cultures) need not be exclusive. Instead of fixed identities, what matter are dynamic and hybrid identifications (Massey 2005). Yet, some scholars have proposed that while collective identity is not generated naturally but is ‘socially constructed’, it is still produced by the social construction of borders themselves (Mach 1993, Jenkins 2004). As Sarap (1994: 95) puts it, “identities are not free-floating, they are limited by borders and boundaries”. Eisenstadt and Giesen (1995) have suggested that constructing borders and demarcating certain realms presupposes symbolic codes of distinction. They argue that the core of all codes of collective identity is formed by a distinction between ‘us’ and ‘others’ but also stress that these simple codes are connected by various discourses with other social and cultural distinctions such as sacred-profane, center-periphery, past-present-future, or inside-outside.

Bordering, ordering, and collective identity-building, then, are now understood as processes (Albert et al. 2001, Paasi 2003). To this argument, we must add recognition of the fact that diverging forms of power are significant in bordering practices. This point is illustrated by Pratt (1999), who has suggested that democratic imaginary is not tied to producing a ‘good’ identity for citizens but to maintaining an arena of conflict by keeping the process of boundary construction alive and open to contestation. Also, theorists of radical democracy suggest that (contingent and precarious) identities are defined through difference, that is, through the construction of a constitutive outside (Mouffe 1993).
Much current cultural-geographic thinking, thus, accentuates the openness and porousness of borders, the hybridity of cultures, and non-essentialist identities. These ideas are often related to mobility and the rise of transnational flows. Yet it is important not to essentialize such views or to isolate them from wider contexts and social practices. Pratt (1999) has discussed what she calls an overvaluing of mobility and hybridity and argues that even non-essential identities are also boundary projects: identities are constructed “through identifying who one is not”. Such identities emerge from “historical geographies of conflict and difference,” and these geographies themselves work to stabilize identities. Pratt reminds us that some identities are more mobile than others but that all involve exclusion and the construction of multiple and complex borders. Rethinking borders and contexts is, therefore, a perpetual challenge for cultural geographers.

**Parallel modalities of borders**

In the last ten to fifteen years, it has become more common to think of territorial borders as not located merely at the outer limits of territorial spaces. Thus, if state borders are understood as marking the spread of societal and political control into, and even outside, of the state, there must also be other ways to understand how borders exist ‘outside’ of such lines. I suggest that an analysis of such modalities renders it possible to understand why an idea of the ‘fixity’ of borders seems so persistent even in today’s globalizing world and how such exclusive dividing lines can be so rapidly mobilized in wars, other conflicts, racism or xenophobia.
How should we understand the location of borders? Despite speculation about a borderless world, state borders are – some visibly, some less visibly – still firmly located at the border areas as expressions of territoriality (O'Dowd 2010); and some of them, like the U.S.-Mexico border, are increasingly effectively controlled (Nevins 2002). Yet borders are more than policed lines. As social processes, borders are stratified in the wider institutionalization of territories and may, therefore, be ‘located’ in a number of institutionalized practices, discourses, and symbols throughout stat territory, and even outside of it (Paasi 1996). Balibar (1998) suggests that borders are so dispersed that they are ‘everywhere’. This claim should not be understood literally, and this section will show that state borders come into being in and through a number of institutional and symbolic practices and discourses in specific sites that are mobilized by states but also by activists in civil society. Further, how current state borders exist is dramatically changing; and this change is related to supra-state geo-economic integration, forced and voluntary mobilities, rescaling of security threats, and the ‘technologization’ of surveillance.

In what follows, I will discuss two modalities for such an understanding of contemporary borders. They can be labeled as discursive landscapes of social power and technical landscapes of social control (c.f. Paasi 2009, 2011). Both modalities are historically and spatially contingent and are in operation simultaneously. However, the former resonates more clearly with such notions as nation, national identity, nationalism and memory and the latter with state, sovereignty, citizenship, governance, security, and control.
Technical landscapes of social control often ‘stretch’ outside of state territories, but both modalities destabilize and relocate borders as mere lines on the ground.

Discursive landscapes of social power

Gottmann (1973) stressed the dynamism of territories and noted how political and economic interests combine in versatile ways in the trilogy of territory, population and governmental organization. He also underscored the power of symbolism, values, beliefs, and ethics. Even in a globalizing world, states continue to play a crucial role in the politics of place-making and in the creation of the ostensibly ‘naturalized’ links between places and people (cf. Gupta & Ferguson 1992). The legislation generated by the state, practices of territorial governance, and the instruments used in national socialization, for instance, aim at constructing the limits of nationality, citizenship, and identity by defining the borders of inclusion and exclusion (Isin and Wood 1999). Territory is a historically contingent process dependent on a “disorganized heterogeneity of situational projects” that make territory itself calculable (Hannah 2009). Such projects reflect not only authority, supremacy, and sovereignty but also the development of technologies such as cartography, land-surveying, statistics, accounting, and the military which ensured control over the land (Elden 2011). Elden suggests that a territory is a part of a specific rationality, a ‘political technology’ that is dependent on calculation as much as on control and conflict (p. 266). Borders, too, are simultaneously instruments and expressions of territoriality. Territoriality – the attempts of individuals and groups to control territories and population politically, culturally, and
economically – persists in such social practices as classification by area, communication of borders, and control over access to territories and things within them (Sack 1986). In this context, borders are both symbols and institutions that are mobilized ideologically to produce inclusion and exclusion and the imagined ‘purification’ of space (Sibley 1995). Borders can, therefore, be effectively used to produce and reproduce the limits of an imagined community of ‘us’ and ‘them’, friends and enemies.

Discursive landscapes of social power are crucial in such efforts. They become gradually institutionalized with the rise of the state territory and, due to this ‘processual’ character, often lean on and mobilize memories. These landscapes are perhaps not ‘everywhere’ but include key sites and elements such the border landscapes, border-guarding structures (e.g. watch-towers, customs buildings, technical equipments, even border guards themselves), and practices (e.g. passport checking, biometric testing). An fitting example of the fact that ‘borders’ may exist faraway from border areas is London’s Heathrow airport, where you can find, in the middle of the state, the sign “the UK border”. Discursive landscapes of social power also include material, nationalized landscapes, memorials (place specific or general such as the Tombs of the ‘Unknown Soldier’), and national commemorations, as well as nationalized events such as flag and independence days, which literally transform borders into part of the territory’s heritage and iconography and contribute to the production and reproduction of collective identities (Paasi 2011). Particularly significant elements of such performances are military landscapes that perpetually reproduce memories and images of us and the
Other (or enemy). All of these examples imply an emotional bordering that can take place at various sites throughout the national territory and become part of the political technologies used in the reproduction of territory itself.

Discursive landscapes of social power are also embedded in the media and in the national socialization through sites like schools. These landscapes contribute to maintaining the existing social order and tend to provide a specific hegemonic ‘reading’ of societal norms and values. A more omnipresent institution is the national legislation on borders, which is ubiquitous in the state but is particularly visible when implemented in certain sites like border areas or airports. All these examples show not only the complex locations of contemporary borders but also the simultaneity of ‘borders’ at various spatial scales, which are sometimes fused in various social and political processes.

The meanings attached to borders may also vary across localities. Borders often mean different things for those living in the immediate, concrete border area than for those living elsewhere in a state. Yet nationalized landscapes effectively ‘spread’ borders elsewhere and interpellate people as part of the imagined national community (Paasi 1996). The fact that these landscapes project their meanings through various everyday forms of ‘banal nationalism’ (Billig 1995) makes them persistent in daily life. Whether people cross them or not, borders are present in daily life via the news and weather maps, for example. Similarly, borders are reproduced in novels, poems, and various forms of popular culture, such as movies, cartoons, and television (cf. Dittmer 2010).
Concrete border landscapes have been, and still are in most cases, effectively symbolized. However, borders can also be performed and, thus, reproduced in various ways in bordering practices. This bordering can occur on a daily basis through performances that make the existing state power effectively visible. A powerful example is the India-Pakistan border, where large audiences on both sides of the border witness theatrical flag lowering ceremonies which are loaded with masculine-military emanation and national symbolism (Figure. 1). Memories of borders and bounded spaces can also be enacted in other kinds of performances. The “War Opera” performed at the Swedish-Finnish border city of Haparanda in summer 2009 is an example of a temporary artistic performance that mobilizes the memories of a past border conflict (the 1809 war between Sweden-Finland and Russia in 1809) and transforms the war and memories into the present in the context of the current border area (Figure 2). Prokkola (2008) has shown, using the “Smuggling Opera” presented at this border, how cultural and artistic work can be exploited in mediating the collective memory of a state border. She also showed how such performances can be mobilized to contest the hegemonic narrative of a national border by bringing back to life the memories of a local smuggling culture that earlier challenged this border.

Borders can also be performed in the form of exhibitions. A primary example of this point is the relic border of the Berlin Wall that, since the beginning of the 1990s, has reminded locals and visitors of this key dividing line of the Cold War. This border is memorialized not only by the remains of the wall itself and the small concrete pieces of it that are sold to tourists, who spread this memory around the world, but also by The
Berlin Wall Museum, which has a permanent exhibit and temporary displays of art related to the history of the Wall (Figure 3). This ostensibly local border, thus, effectively brings together national and international scales and memories.

One more example that radically widens the view of borders as lines is the fate of the communist iconography that was effectively used to “bound” and ideologically integrate the meta-geography of the communist bloc and its member states. In contemporary Moscow, the layers of Soviet-era communist symbolism are so deeply embedded in the local cultural heritage, ‘topography,’ and landscape (architecture of buildings, monuments, and memorials) as well as in the ‘networked topology’ of daily life (for instance, in the decor of underground stations), that this symbolism will doubtless remain alive within the current capitalist regime (Figure 4). Yet it will perpetually gain cultural meanings that bring former symbols, commercial aims, and even irony together. On the other hand, in several former socialist states like Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania, efforts have been made to forbid the use of communist symbols. Similarly, the Parliament of Georgia approved the so-called “Freedom Charter” in Spring 2011, which envisages the removal of monuments bearing Soviet symbols and renaming of streets and towns whose names evoke memories of the country’s socialist past. These acts have been made partly in the name of “national security”. Thus, in these states, the symbolism of the former ‘meta-geography’ of the socialist bloc is exploited to create a constitutive “outside” and a border that is used to constitute a new national “inside”. Even so, counter-hegemonic or resistance identities have their competing
iconographies in these sites (Paasi 2009), as is clear in the graffiti and murals that bring together local and distant events and struggles (Figure 5).

**Technical landscapes of social control**

It is thus evident that borders widely exist in a society as an expression of discursive landscapes of social power. This point also holds true in the case of the mechanisms used in surveillance and social control. Through such mechanisms, borders spread deep into societies and also outside of them. Borders have become increasingly complex elements of control in a contemporary world characterized by various flows of people, ideas, ideologies, and goods and by a fluctuating fear of terrorism. Researchers speak of a ‘gated globalism’, which suggests that globalization and re-bordering are advancing hand-in-hand. This advancement raises a need to study what Andrijasevic and Walters (2010) call the international government of borders. In contemporary border studies, some of the most rapidly developing themes are the relations between mobility, identities, and borders – issues that are crucially related to citizenship, the selectiveness of state-based control and all manner of classification practices that ‘borders’ enact. This focus has motivated research on control mechanisms and bio-political practices employed in monitoring borders, border-crossings, and profiling (the bodies of) border-crossers, whether they are tourists, business people, immigrants and displaced persons. It has also accentuated the links between border and security studies.
Complicated monitoring systems have been developed to inspect, screen, and classify mobile subjects (Sparke 2006, Winders 2007, Adey 2010, Johnson et al. 2011). Amoore (2006) has developed the concept of the biometric border to indicate the dual-faced phenomenon related to new technologies in border management and the exercise of biopower. In these ways, some suggest, people themselves ‘become borders’ (cf. Balibar 1998: 217). Biometric identity technologies, databanking, digital surveillance, and risk analysis “reveal not a blockaded boundary but a border that follows transboundary migrants as they move within and between national territories”, suggests Martin (2011). Detention centers are material examples of bordering that occurs inside the technical landscapes of control. Similarly, airports have become significant locations in current border studies, since they are places where state power, mobility, geopolitics and geo-economics coalesce as a problem of security which accentuates various combinations of surveillance and disciplinary practices (Martin 2010).

Emerging control mechanisms also stretch borders beyond state territories and transform borders into networks with state-centric nodes. Cowen and Smith (2009), for instance, have shown how the post-9/11 ‘layered-security’ thinking has led the US to develop new forms of border control that support the emerging contradictory spatialities of geopolitics and geo-economics. One aspect of these efforts has been the reconfiguration of the geographic location of the national border and the legal and social technologies for governing workers, migrants, citizens, and commodities. One of Cowen and Smith’s examples is the Container Security Initiative (CSI), which installs US border patrols at ports around the world to identity potential terrorism risks. The mission
statement of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection states that “We safeguard the American homeland at and beyond our borders”. Similarly, the UK border agency tells in its homepage how it is “a global organization with 25,000 staff - including more than 9,000 warranted officers - operating in local communities, at our borders and across 135 countries worldwide” (http://ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/).

Another example of these emerging control mechanisms, this time related to crossing of ‘real’ state borders, is the utilization of citizens as voluntary observers of illegal mobilities. This kind of ‘vigilantism’ has a long tradition in the US. The Texas Virtual Border Watch Program is a fitting example of such observing. This “innovative real-time surveillance program designed to empower the public to proactively participate in fighting border crime” has been established by the Texas Border Sheriff’s Coalition (TBSC) in a public-private partnership to deploy a virtual community watch (http://www.texasborderwatch.com/about.php). This site has attracted a number of voluntary participants to monitor illegal border-crossings via 30 cameras available on the internet. Koskela (2011) has studied the complex politics of watching/being watched within this “patriotic voyeuristic” scheme, as well as the ethics of such action. The program’s homepage suggests that “it is a well-established fact that citizen involvement in community watch programs such as this one reduces crime”. Koskela points out how such activity contributes to the social production of ‘the criminal’ and ‘suspicious activity’ that overlooks the various background reasons for border-crossing mobility (poverty, lack of opportunity, political oppression).
**Future challenges**

This chapter has suggested in that instead of looking at borders as given ‘political’ lines on the ground or viewing borders as neutral objects of political geography, a wider perspective is needed. The key aim has been, first, to problematize how ‘bounded spaces’ and power relations embedded in boundary-producing practices have manifested themselves in geographical thinking and research and, second, to show how a more versatile, culturally sensitive view on borders and border-crossings is possible. The chapter argues that bounded spaces have long been almost given instruments in political- and cultural-geographic thinking, indicating the close connections between geography and the national(ist) project in many countries.

Building on this critique, the chapter, then, laid out some alternative ways of looking at borders that could help to understand their contradictory political and cultural roles. As it showed, the key location of a national(ist) symbolic border does not lie merely at the concrete border landscape but rather occurs in different sites and reflects the perpetual nation-building process and diverging nationalist practices. Border scholars must trace the roots and geographies of such complex manifestations of borders. The analysis of discursive landscapes of social power brings in a strong cultural-geographic view. At the same time, the rise and spread of the ‘technical borders of social control’ show that a remarkable rescaling and reorganization is occurring in border-producing practices and in the ‘stretching’ of state borders around the globe. This stretching occurs at the same time that the discursive landscapes of social power are being maintained, or even
strengthened around the world, often in the name of national security. Both modalities of borders are, thus, in operation simultaneously, weaving cultural-symbolic and material practices together and strengthening a national community as a bounded, calculable unit in a way that harks back to the basic functions of 'state territoriality' (Paasi 2011). It is clear, then, that both modalities of borders argue for considerably expanding the idea of the border as a 'dividing line.' To do so, however, border scholars must not only theorize borders but also study them contextually in relation to such cultural and political categories as state, nation, citizenship, memory and everyday life, thus contributing to a wider conceptual and empirical understanding of these categories.


Figures and figure captions

Figure 1. Performing the border: flag lowering ceremony at India-Pakistan border.
(Photo: Anssi Paasi)

Figure 2. Memorializing the past conflict: War Opera at the Swedish-Finnish border.
(Photo: Anssi Paasi)
Figure 3. The relics of Berlin Wall on sale (Photo: Anssi Paasi)

Fig. 4. Art from the Communist period in the Moscow metro (Photo: Anssi Paasi)
Fig. 5. A mural in Beechmount Avenue, Belfast calling for solidarity against oppression in Ireland and Catalonia (Photo Anssi Paasi)