

Borders

A Very Short Introduction

By Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen

Questions for Thought and Discussion

1. Are borders natural phenomena? (i.e. existing in the world outside of human action)
 - a. Why do humans create borders?
 - b. Is human territoriality an instinct or learned behavior?
 - c. Do animals create borders and boundaries? How do they differ from human borders/boundaries?
2. What are some of the general ways the modern notions of borders, territoriality, and sovereignty differ from those in ancient history?
 - a. What is the difference between Frontiers and Borders?
 - b. What were the key factors in the formation of modern notions of borders? Why were these factors important?
 - c. Are borders defined by natural features (like rivers or mountain ranges) better than borders defined by lines of latitude/longitude?
 - d. What is the 'territorial trap'?
3. What does the concept of sovereignty entail?
 - a. Why is sovereignty relevant to the contemporary notion of borders?
 - b. How is this changing in the modern world?
 - c. How are pre-modern notions of territoriality still evident in the modern world?
 - d. What are other modes of enacting social control and influence beyond territoriality and the process of bordering?
4. What recent news stories illustrate the continuing importance of borders?
 - a. What trends are contributing to the reinforcement or hardening of contemporary borders?
 - i. What are examples of increasing border permeability in the world today?
 - ii. What/who are the most conspicuous border crossers in the world today?
 - iii. What is the most prevalent cross border crime in the world today?
 - iv. What are the most prevalent trans-border movements and institutions today?
 - v. What were the most prevalent trans-border institutions and movement in history?
 - b. Do modern technologies, like the internet, shipping containers, or airplanes, make border more or less important?
5. Are borders ethical? If not, why? If so, which borders are most ethical?
 - a. Does globalization (in terms of economics, communication, migration, etc.) make borders more important or less?
 - b. What are the arguments in favor of an 'open borders' policies concerning immigration? Do you agree or disagree?
 - c. How do borders relate to nationalism?
 - d. Is dual citizenship ethical (by virtue of birth and/or ethnicity some people can be citizens of two states while most people are limited to just one)?

- e. What are examples of innovations in border management (e.g. passports, biometrics)?
- 6. Is state sovereignty absolute? Should it be?
 - a. How does international law approach the topic of borders?
 - b. In the modern world, how can governments, laws, and citizenship be enacted determined without absolute territorial borders?
 - c. Do border help or hinder law enforcement, including everyday issues like drugs and theft to more extraordinary matters like genocide and human trafficking?
- 7. In what academic disciplines are border studies most applicable? why?
 - a. What are key issues to study at the international scale of borders?
 - i. What are the main issues of maritime borders today?
 - ii. What are the main issues of airspace borders today?
 - iii. How has the world dealt with outer-space and borders?
 - iv. What are the main issues of cyber borders today? How do borders affect development?
 - v. How do borders affect the environment?
 - vi. How do borders affect non-human entities?
 - vii. How do borders affect human health?
 - viii. How do borders affect international business?
 - b. What are key issues to study at the sub-state level of bordering?
 - i. What are examples of borders/boundaries in urban geography?
 - ii. How do borders affect indigenous peoples?
 - iii. Under what circumstances would you like to live in a gated community? An ethnic enclave? A gerrymandered electoral district?
- 8. How have borders affected your life?

Other books by the authors

Borderlines and Borderlands: Political Oddities at the Edge of the Nation-State (Rowman & Littlefield, 2010)

Borders and Boundaries – Oxford Bibliographies Online

Further Reading

Agnew, John *Globalization and Sovereignty* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2009).

Brunet-Jailly, Emmanuel (Ed.) *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe* (University of Ottawa Press, 2007).

Harm de Blij *The Power of Place: Geography, Destine, and Globalization's Rough Landscape* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

van Houtum, Henk, Olivier Kramsch, and Wolfgang Zierhofer (Eds.) *B/Ordering Space* (Ashgate, 2005).

H. Nicol and I. Townsend-Gault (Ed.) *Holding the Line: Borders in a Global World* (University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

Gabriel Popescu *Bordering and Ordering the Twenty-first Century: Understanding Borders* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2012).

Elden, Stuart *Terror and Territory: The Spatial Extent of Sovereignty* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

Wastl-Walter, Doris (Ed.) *The Ashgate Research Companion to Border Studies* (Ashgate, 2011)

Wilson, Thomas M., and Hastings Donnan, (Eds.) *A Companion to Border Studies* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012)