

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)