



CONCEPTUALIZING BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Borders and borderlands mutually define one another. The existence of the border constitutes the borderland. Whereas borders are important to demarcate the physical boundaries of state territories, they are in daily practice even more important to the people living along the borders. Most of these borderlands suffer neglects from the states that share these borders. This paper examines borders and borderlands and their importance in international relations. It argues that despite claims by globalization literature that transnational political and economic process are rendering borders obsolete, they remain highly relevant in international relations.

INTRODUCTION

Borders are a fundamental element of human life and are an element of the relations between individual and society. Different parts of humanity have been always separated and at the same time connected by a network of borders at all territorial levels (Kolossov, 2012). The realization that borders represent complex social and territorial phenomena has had a profound impact on the study of borders.

The concept of state border underpins the arrangement of, and indeed the very condition of possibility for, both domestic and international legal and political systems (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Domestically, it is integral to conventional notions of the limits of internal sovereignty and authority, reflected in Max Weber's paradigmatic definition of the state as a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory. In the international sphere, it enables the principle of territorial integrity, enshrined in Article 2, Paragraph 4 of the United Nations (UN) Charter which, since the end of World War II, has acted as the cornerstone for regulative ideals such as: the legal existence and equality of all states before international law; protection against the promotion of secessionism by some states in other states' territory; and territorial independence and preservation (Vaughan-Williams, 2009). Traditionally, borders are international boundaries between nation states. This border can be natural (sea, mountains, rivers, etc.), or otherwise, but it is in any case always artificial, or the result of consensus and agreements, conquests and peace treaties. For O'Dowd (2003: 24), borders are "places of economic and political opportunity for nations and states as well as for a host of other interest groups and agencies, legal and illegal".

Border serves two basic purposes—protection from external and internal threats and territorial determination (Newman and Paasi, 1998). According to Zartman (2010), borders run across land but through people. On maps they appear as fine one-dimensional lines, whereas on the ground they have many dimensions. Borderlands are boundaries in depth, space around a line, the place where state meets society, and where no one ever feels at home (Simon, 1997). In human terms, it is impossible to understand borders, and indeed the peripheral relations between the states and societies they contain—without understanding how it is to live along them (Zartman, 2010).

This paper, therefore, examines borders and borderlands and their importance in international relations. It argues that despite claims that transnational political and economic processes are rendering borders obsolete, borders remain highly relevant. Borders are multi-dimensional, complex, ambiguous and often contradictory. However, they are not just demarcations between two countries; rather they have implications for trade, population mobility, relationships and security. Today, nations are faced with complex and multifaceted border security challenges that transcend both physical borders and traditional sovereignty. Furthermore, borders serve simultaneously as barriers, bridges, resources and symbols of identity even if some dimensions

appear more salient than others depending on the location of the border, or the issue or context involved.

What are Borders?

Borders have increasingly become of central concern because of a variety of developments, most notably the increased cross-border flows of goods, information and people, the removal of exchange controls on the cross-border movement of capital, the big increase in foreign direct investments, the cultural globalization in terms of high profile consumer products and communications networks, and the world-wide diffusion of neoliberalism (Anderson, O'Dowd and Wilson, 2003). Understandably, states establish borders to secure territories which are valuable to them because of their human or natural resources, or because these places have strategic or symbolic importance to the state. These borders are signs of the eminent domain of that state, and are markers of the secure relations it has with its neighbours, or are reminders of the hostility that exists between states. According to O'Dowd (2001: 67), "borders are the ubiquitous product of the need for order, security, and belonging in human life". Caflisch (2006) broadly defines a border as a way to identify areas where state sovereignty exists, while to Lee and North (2016: 2), "the border represents a relatively static model of territorial demarcation that can be expressed physically— whether through human- constructed border stones, walls, or fences— or through natural features such as rivers, mountain ranges, and even trees that become endowed with human- constructed meaning as border markers".

The primary function of geographic borders is to create and differentiate places. In other words, borders separate the social, political, economic, or cultural meanings of one geographic space from another (Diener and Hagen, 2012). While the world is replete with various geographic boundaries, the institutional phenomenon of borders is most commonly associated with the idea of territory. 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.

Borders are integral to human behaviour— they are a product of the need for order, control and protection in human life and they reflect contending desires for sameness and difference, for a marker between 'us' and 'them' (Baud and Van Schendel, 1997). They are ubiquitous human constructions. No matter how clearly borders are drawn on official maps, how many customs officials are appointed, or how many watchtowers are built, people will ignore borders whenever it suits them. In doing so, they challenge the political status quo of which borders are the ultimate symbol. As noted by Baud and Schendel (1997: 211):

People also take advantage of borders in ways that are not intended or anticipated by Their creators. Revolutionaries hide behind them, seeking the protection of another sovereignty; local inhabitants cross them whenever services or products are cheaper or more attractive on the other side; and traders are quick to take advantage of price and tax differentials.

Essentially, a border is an international line or a region encompassing both sides of a political boundary. Borders are artificially constructed, geographic or astronomic lines that form the boundary of a nation. They are integral components of human activity and organization. Daily, controversies concerning the political, cultural, and economic borders that traverse the Earth's surface abound. Borders are central features in current international disputes relating to security, migration, trade, and natural resources. They also factor prominently into local debates over land use and property rights (Diener and Hagen, 2012). They are increasingly complex human responses and social constructions in a world where the globalizing forces of instant communication, expedited travel and enhanced economic flows, confront the basic human concerns for security and certainty.

Furthermore, borders are understood as both formal and informal institutions of spatial and social practice, as well as physical and symbolic markers of difference. They are products of the

groups they bound, varying in impact and meaning according to individual circumstances. Rather than simple demarcations of places, borders are manifestations of power in a world marked by significant spatial differences in wealth, rights, mobility, and standards of living (Diener and Hagen, 2012). For most people, borders have three critical functions: to help create order by delineating spheres of authority; to protect those living inside clearly demarcated territories from outsiders; and to ensure proper control and management of citizens and natural resources (Ramutsindela, 2014). These functions can be traced back to the beginning of human sedentary existence, where they gained concrete expression through the building of walls, to today's iterations, where electric fences and checkpoints proliferate.

Baud and Van Schendel (1997: 214-215) argue that borders became markers in two ways: First, as a demarcation of state territories in order to put an end to territorial disputes. Territorial borders helped the respective states to distinguish their own citizens from those of the neighbouring state, making it easier to exercise control and collect taxes. Second, borders became the ultimate markers of the reach of state power. Each political border generates – to a smaller or larger degree – a barrier, limiting the flow of people, goods, money, and so on. The scale to which it functions as such an obstacle depends predominantly on the international situation, mutual relations between the neighbouring countries, and changes in their political, ideological or economic situation. The function of the border, reflecting the differences and socio-political resemblances among the divided societies, determines the widely comprehended living conditions, including the sense of security.

As noted by Wilson and Donnan (1998), borders and their states are separate but related political structures, each somewhat dependent on the other for their power and strength. They are always domains of contested power, in which local, national and international groups negotiate relations of subordination and control. Although an international border is a structure of the state, this does not mean that states can guarantee their borders' security from foreign influence. In many cases, the central state is unable to control its border regions, as Serbia and Russia have discovered in Bosnia and Chechnya. Other states must devolve power to their border areas or run the risk of destabilizing the state itself. This is the dilemma before the United Kingdom regarding Northern Ireland and Scotland, a situation averted in Spain by the devolution of power to the provinces (Wilson and Donnan, 1998). Essentially, states need to control their borders because they are their first lines of defence, institutions of social coercion, and symbols of a variety of state powers. But the people of a border's frontiers are often members of political institutions and informal networks which compete with the state. Many of the activities in which they engage may not seem, at first glance, to be political, or a threat to the state. However, many of them, such as smuggling, are certainly illegal, and may concern the state very much. In essence, apart from influencing movement, borders also define spaces of differing laws and social norms. In this way, borders create and signify varied legal obligations, social categories, and behavioural expectations for different areas.

Basically, a border is a real or artificial line that separates geographic areas. Borders as political boundaries separate countries, states, provinces, counties, cities, and towns. A border outlines the area that a particular governing body controls. The government of a region can only create and enforce laws within its borders. Borders change over time. Sometimes the people in one region take over another area through violence. Other times, land is traded or sold peacefully. Many times, land is parcelled out after a war through international agreements. Sometimes, borders fall along natural boundaries like rivers or mountain ranges. For example, the boundary between France and Spain follows the crest of the Pyrenees Mountains. For part of its length, the boundary between the United States and Mexico follows a river called the Rio Grande. The borders of four countries divide Africa's Lake Chad: Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Nigeria (*National Geographic*, n.d.). Borders—particularly national borders—affect travel and migration. People can usually move freely within their own country's borders, but may not be allowed to cross into a neighbouring country.

Furthermore, border issues often arise when outside powers draw borders in regions they colonize, with or without the consent of the people who already live there. In Africa, about 42% of the total length of land boundaries is drawn by parallels, meridians and equidistant lines, without any consideration of social realities. About 37% of land boundaries were imposed on African countries by British and French colonial powers, and were quite arbitrary (Foucher, 1991). The division of unified cultural areas by boundaries drawn at the Berlin Conference in 1884– 1885 has often been cited as the most important source of disintegration and instability in Africa. On the one hand, the colonial powers artificially lump together peoples whose histories were not the same and who, while not naturally or primordially hostile, would have chosen different paths to nationhood. On the other, they divide peoples across two or even a multitude of states (Somerville, 2013). There are over 100 continuing border disputes between states in Africa – from the Ethiopian-Eritrean border (constantly in danger of setting off a new conflict between uneasy neighbours) to the current Malawi-Tanzania row over the demarcation of the lake border between them (exacerbated, as are so many global conflicts, by the lure of oil). Borders are also blocks to economic development, bringing with them border controls, tariffs, customs arrangements.

Typology of Borders

Borders are diversified in terms of the components that form the boundaries themselves (Guo, 2015). There are various methods (or techniques) that neighbouring states use to describe their political borders. And, in practice, more than one of them may be employed on different sectors of a single boundary. According to Guo (2015: 5-10), technically, most of the international borders of the world can be classified into three categories: natural, artificial and cultural.

1. Natural borders are those that follow natural geographic features, such as rivers, mountain ranges, estuaries and the like. Examples include much of the border between the United States and Mexico which follows the Rio Grande and the border between France and Spain which follows the Pyrenees mountain range. Because of their importance to military defence, mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, bays and straits have been usually adopted by territorial rulers to serve as political borders. Natural borders create a clear dividing line between two states, offer a buffer of security (or at least the appearance thereof), often do not require active patrolling border guards, and historically have been more difficult to dispute than borders less easily identifiable by a physical landmark. Sometimes natural boundaries, however, can present neighbouring states with problems of precision in demarcation, delimitation, or both.

2. Geometric borders (also known as a straight-line border) are those that are formed either by straight lines drawn on a map or nautical chart or by lines that follow the curves of latitude. International borders in the Middle East and North America are often based on such geometry. The most commonly used geometrical approach is latitude/longitude lines. The cartographic principle specifies the territory of the homeland by reference to cartographical conventions and maps. For instance, the countries of North Korea and South Korea are divided by the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) along the 38th parallel, an area regarded as the most heavily fortified border in the world.

3. Cultural borders are those that follow or approximate the boundaries between the homelands of different ethnicities, language groups and other cultural communities. They often date from before the modern era, and can often be the result of successive military struggles over the centuries. Many international borders in Europe more or less follow such cultural divisions, including the border between Hungary and Romania.

Cross-border disputes often stem from common errors and intricacies in boundary description. Without clear definitions and/or bilateral (and, if necessary, multilateral) agreements concerning political boundaries, disputes might arise.

Border Control

Borders define a country’s sovereignty by determining its territory, and where its administration and jurisdiction ends. Borders also assign national identities. A nation-state’s boundaries puts people under one entity, define their lifestyles, national culture including language, destiny, privileges (e.g., right to vote, enjoy welfare benefits and certain rights denied non-citizens) and so on.

Border controls are measures taken by a country or a bloc of countries to monitor its borders in order to regulate the movement of people, animals and goods. Most countries have some form of border control to restrict or limit the movement of people, animals and goods into or out of the country. In order to cross borders people need passports and visas or other appropriate forms of identification. To stay or work within a country’s borders, foreigners usually need special immigration documents or permits that authorise them to do so. Moving goods across a border often requires the payment of excise tax, often collected by customs officials. Also, animals (and occasionally humans) moving across borders may need to go into quarantine to prevent the spread of exotic or infectious diseases. Most countries prohibit carrying illegal drugs or endangered animals across their borders.

For the purposes of border control, apart from land borders, airports and seaports are also classified as borders. According to Vogeler (2010), international land borders can be classified into soft and hard borders. Soft borders, where people and goods are allowed to pass through with few checks, include open and regulated and controlled frontiers. Hard borders have stricter control and have fortified borders. These include wire fenced borders; wire fenced and walled borders; walled borders; and militarized borders. Examples are provided for each sub-type:

Types of International Borders			
Soft Borders		Hard Borders	
Open	Regulated -----	Fenced =====	Walled —————
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-Mexico • USA-Canada • European Union • historically most borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-Mexico • USA-Canada 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-Mexico • most fortified borders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USA-Mexico • Israeli-Palestine • Maginot Line • Hardin's Wall • China Wall

Source: Vogeler (2010)

Border theories have three positions from the perspective of cross-border mobility: open and closed which seem to be extreme and the other one is porous—a moderate position.

(a) Open border theory contends that freedom of movement across borders enables the less fortunate to pursue their goals of better lives and thus equality is achieved by means of free mobility (Carens, 1995).

(b) Closed border theories generally claim that massive redistribution from wealthy to poor countries is desirable to equalize such economic and social disparity (Miller, 2012).

(c) A porous border theory contends that re-distribution and ‘regulated’ migration are not mutually exclusive strategies to address the problem (Behanbib, 2004).

In essence, control of national borders is a key element in sovereignty. Disputes over the location of borders are probably the single largest contributor to international tension. A lack of respect for official borders by intruders also contributes to bilateral and regional tensions. Intruders may illicitly cross a border for many purposes: criminal, political, terror,

military/intelligence, and immigration. According to Okumu (2009), generally, border control includes the following:

- Geophysical control of a boundary through patrol by the military or special border protection force;
- Immigration by internally enforcing laws;
- Migration by controlling the transnational movement of people;
 - Enhancing enforcement of the immigration and migration laws by asking questions that assist in screening people using the border;
- Enhancing inspections through searches to ensure that harmful products or individuals do not enter into a country;
- Enhancing management of institutions and systems that contribute to border security;
- Detecting and preventing criminals, and illegal persons, goods, drugs, and weapons, as well as other prohibited items, from entering a country

In recent years, terrorism-related concerns have put borders in the spotlight. In this context, irregular migration is perceived as a central phenomenon reflecting the porosity of borders and calling for greater surveillance. Controlling immigration has consequently become an important field of policy in which several evolutions have taken place in recent years. The borders between Western countries and their less-rich neighbours have become fortified, partly through the use of sophisticated methods of control. The most documented case is the U.S.-Mexico border, along which segments of walls have been constructed and where a growing number of patrol agents rely on technologically advanced equipment including high-intensity lighting, high steel fencing, infrared scanning, night-vision goggles and body heat- and motion-detecting sensors, and video surveillance (Nevins, 2002). The same trend can be observed in some European regions, notably around Gibraltar and the border between Spain and Morocco. New actors are involved in controlling migration such as airline carriers that are required to check their passengers' right to travel to their country of destination (Guiraudon and Joppke, 2001).

What are Borderlands?

Also related to borders are borderlands. Hansen (1981) describes borderlands as subnational areas whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary, while Wilson and Donnan (1994) describes them as zones of varying widths, in which people have recognizable configurations of relationships to people inside that zone, on both sides of the borderline but within the cultural landscape of the borderlands, and, as people of the border, special relationships with other people and institutions in their respective nations and states.

To Newman (2011), borderlands are areas in close proximity to an international boundary and are usually disadvantaged areas in terms of their location as the farthest point and are marginal to the core areas of the states. Borderlands are thus a transition zone or a hybrid space in which authority, loyalties and affiliations are not clear-cut. Thus, distinguishing between borders and borderlands, Baud and Van Schendel (1997: 216) state:

By borders, we refer to the institution of inter-state division according to international law. Borderlands, on the other hand, are territorially defined as the physical space along the border. Borders and borderlands mutually define one another – the existence of the border constitutes the borderland. We specifically engage with borders as institutions that can be made use of, and borderlands as fields of opportunities for the people inhabiting them.

Martinez (1994: 2-5) identified four main categories of borderlands:

(1) Alienated borderlands: Such borders are functionally closed and cross-border interaction is absent. They are usually rigidly controlled, and often militarized. Cross-border relations are

marked by tension even though divided groups share a common ancestry. Former communist states and the current North and South Korea border relations fit this category.

(2) Co-existent borderlands: contacts are made possible by international arrangements, but are difficult, as control is clearly prioritised over permeability. Limited exchange takes place, but long-term co-operation is deemed undesirable for political or military reasons. Co-existent borderlands exist when the states involved are capable of reducing the threat of armed conflict along the border and officially allow limited trans-boundary interaction, generally within formal parameters established by the neighbouring states. Example of co-existent borderlands can be found in North America, Latin America, Asia, U.S. and Canada.

(3) Interdependent borderlands: Interdependent borderlands are to be found where borderlands are symbiotically linked in terms of economic climate and probably social and cultural systems but where concerns over 'national interests' in either or both states compel the governments to carefully monitor the boundary and borderland and only allow an opening to the extent that this serves the state's agenda; interdependence does not imply a symmetrical relationship but rather can include economic complementarity. They are places where 'interdependence creates many opportunities for borderlands to establish social relationships across the boundary as well as allowing for significant transculturation to take place'. Borders are semi-open; economies are linked across the boundary, but concerns lead to careful monitoring, particularly on issues such as immigration and crime. Contacts are frequent, mutual trade and exchange across the frontier assume a complementary character, and a common borderland mentality is developed on both sides of the border, but the border is only open insofar as the states' interests are not damaged. Citizens here usually develop closer relationship; independent border-landers also engage in friendly cooperative ventures, both share similarities in economic and social patterns of interactions.

(4) Integrated borderlands: integrated borderlands represent a stage in which neighbouring states have decided to eliminate the boundary in all but name between them, there no longer exist significant barriers to economic transactions or human movement and exchange, and borderlanders for all practical purposes mingle economically and socially with their neighbouring counterparts in an environment of political stability, military security, and economic strength. These exist where the economies of adjacent states are functionally merged, unrestricted movement of people/goods, across the boundary. Border landers perceive themselves as "members of one social system", all barriers and obstacles to cross-border communication, exchange and movement of people, goods, services and capital have been removed and a common cultural and political cross-border identity develops.

On his part, Momoh (1989) divides borderlands into three: minimal, zero, and maximal borderlands.

1. Minimal Borderland – a landscape where the people on both sides of a border have no cultural or ethnic affiliation. The space encompassed on both sides will be very small, between 2 and 5 kilometers in diameter.

2. Zero Borderland – a landscape where people on the both sides of a boundary are completely opposed both ideologically and religiously. This type of borderland is likely to be characterized by cross border conflict where border landers are encouraged by the centres to take action.

3. Maximal Borderland – a landscape where there is an expansive area of contact and can be characterized by an enormous amount of cooperation between the border occupants. Furthermore, state tariff and fiscal policies are extremely amenable to cross-border trade. This area of contact depends largely upon the area occupied by the residents on each side of the border. Traditionally, border regions have been marked by their peripherality and remoteness from the core of the state they belong to, not only in the geographical sense, but also administratively, socially and culturally.

According to Asiwaju (1993), border regions or borderlands are, by reason of their proximity to an international boundary unique due to the following characteristics:

- (i) They are a coherent area split into two or more separate jurisdiction spheres;
- (ii) Their immediate neighbours are in a foreign jurisdiction;
- (iii) Their peripheral location puts them at a structural disadvantage vis-a-vis core areas of the state. This uniqueness poses unusual challenges to routine planning and development as well as to national mobilization efforts. Nigerian borderlands are especially well known for their state of social and economic backwardness. Nigerian borderlands are disadvantaged not only in reference to the core areas of the nation, but also and even more critically in their relation to the adjacent borderlands of proximate foreign jurisdictions.

In addition, according to Martinez (1994), border dwellers or border landers may be divided into two general types: (1) national border landers, and (2) transnational border landers. National border landers are people who, while subject to foreign economic and cultural influences, have low-level or superficial contact with the opposite side of the border owing to their indifference to their next-door neighbours or their unwillingness or inability to function in any substantive way in another society. Transnational border landers, by contrast, are individuals who maintain significant ties with the neighbouring nation; they seek to overcome obstacles that impede such contact and they take advantage of every opportunity to visit, shop, work, study, or live intermittently on the 'other side'. Thus their lifestyles strongly reflect foreign influences. For some transnational border landers, such influences are modest, but for those who are seriously immersed in trans-border interaction, foreign links govern central parts of their lives.

Challenges of Border Dwellers

Conditions in borderlands worldwide vary considerably because of profound differences in the size of nation-states, their political relationships, their levels of development, and their ethnic, cultural, and linguistic configurations (Martinez, 1994). Despite this heterogeneity, however, it is possible to generalize about features common to all and to posit a classification scheme based on cross-border contact.

Border dwellers or border landers face a lot of challenges. They face special challenges innate to the boundary itself, while interior populations, who live at a distance from the border environment, are shielded from such stresses. Border people who are caught up in territorial struggles between their antagonistic nation-states will be subject to attack from foreigners or even from some of their countrymen who might question their loyalty if they express a desire to remain neutral or simply to be left alone. Sometimes, fighting goes on over long periods of time due to disagreement over the location of the border between rival countries, thereby turning borderland areas into battlefields. Such a dangerous situation forces many border landers to choose between remaining in their war torn homeland or abandoning it for safer ground (Martinez, 1994).

A major challenge often faced by border dwellers is that of smuggling. The border, by its very nature of dividing two separate nation-states with their often different administrative and regulatory regimes, generates a kind of opportunity structure that invites illicit actions such as smuggling and illegal immigration. The borderland dweller's priorities and perceptions often function at cross-purposes with those of national governments, especially when the government seeks to manage and control the cross-border processes in borderlands in ways that challenge the interests and accustomed patterns of interaction of local residents.

Smuggling is a typical border activity in which the political and the economic come together (Udeme, 2012). It develops whenever a state tries to impose restrictions on border trade that are not acceptable to (some of) those living in the borderland and that cannot be enforced. These restrictions usually imply the taxation of certain goods for the benefit of the treasury. For instance, the Nigeria-Benin border is a major smuggling zone. At the Idiroko and Seme border, lots of smuggling occurs with several thousand of banned items such as foreign parboiled rice,

vehicles, poultry products, groundnut oil among others are illegally exported into Nigeria on a daily basis. Border dwellers are often caught in the cross fire between custom officials and the smugglers leading to casualties and loss of lives and property.

Borderlands also face the challenge of armed insurgency. As noted by Weber, during the 1990s, borderlands in the Horn of Africa were used by armed insurgent groups to seek shelter in neighbouring countries (Weber, 2012). Most insurgents were supported by the neighbouring governments. For example, Sudan supported the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front fighting against the Mengistu regime in Ethiopia, which, at the same time, supported, trained, and equipped the Sudan People's Liberation Army in southern Sudan and allowed the SPLA-controlled refugee camps to be based on the Ethiopian side.

In addition to this is the element of military force and militancy. Wars and insurgency introduce an inherently unpredictable component into the borderland dynamic. In some cases, militarism provides a vehicle for the state through which to forcibly consolidate its presence in the borderland and suppress rival sources of identity, organisation and polity. In other cases, the militarization of the borderland results in a weakening of the state presence and a strengthening of the position of the borderland in its competition with the state for legitimacy, authority and power.

The effects of the militarization of borderlands can be seen in the Kurdish borderland between Turkey and Iraq, and in the Afghan borderland. In the case of the former, the borderland manifests many of the characteristics that contribute to the development of a unique borderland identity amongst the Kurdish population of south-eastern Turkey. The Kurds are a distinct national grouping with a unique language, culture and spatial domain. The Turkish military has engaged in a series of large scale military campaigns in recent years targeting alleged Kurdish separatists on both sides of the border. The extensive employment of military force, combined with the legal environment in Turkey that until very recently considered the assertion of Kurdish identity a crime, has greatly stifled the emergence of a borderland identity amongst the Kurds and Alawites living in the southeast of Turkey resulting in a situation where the Turkish state effectively dominates the political, economic, social and military spheres in the Kurdish borderland (*BBC News*, 2008).

Borderlands vary significantly in their characteristics. Some are characterized by limited cross-border interaction and the overt and tangible presence of the state, often in a military capacity. Others are characterized by the conspicuous absence of the state and the relatively unrestricted movement of people across borders. Many are characterized by an oscillation between these two conditions, while some others yet are characterized by degrees of state presence in reaction to man-made and physical challenges to the security of the state. Also, borderlands often lack health facilities and health workforce, and many border residents suffer from very poor access to health care (Chung, Ekundayo and Oyewole, 2011).

Why Borders Matter in International Relations

Some analysts claim that globalization has blurred the economic distinctions between countries, thereby creating a "borderless world" in which economic decisions are made without reference to national boundaries. This withering away of the strength and importance of international borders is linked to the predicted demise of the nation-state as the pre-eminent political structure of modernity. For instance, in describing the sphere in which the major industrial economies operate, Ohmae (1990) asserts that "national borders have effectively disappeared and, along with them, the economic logic that made them useful lines of demarcation in the first place". In the same vein, Castells (1991) argues that "spaces of places" are replaced by "spaces

of flows". Later, Castells (1991: 33) asserts: "Bypassed by global networks of wealth, power and information, the modern nation state has lost much of its sovereignty". These arguments suggest that flows of goods, capital, and migrants not only limit the influence of central governments but also modify their local culture and political identity.

Though globalization literature suggests that political boundaries between states matter less and less, especially as states have liberalized their markets for goods and services, yet, political boundaries between states have apparently not faded away. In other words, despite the growing interdependence between different segments of the international community, it can be argued that states will, for a long time to come, remain the essential actors on the international scene. The state is the essential building block of international politics and state borders provide the structure for the state. This is why the borders separating their spheres of jurisdiction remain crucial. As noted by Rostow (2015), most important rules of international law—those governing the international use of force and military operations come to mind—are directed at states. Most international law originates in treaties between or among states: international commercial law, international criminal law, international human rights law, and the like.

Also, without states, there are no borders to cross and it is the crossing of borders that remains at the heart of the politics of migration: who crosses, how, where, and why, are the operative issues at the heart of policymaking, debate, and practice in migration (Johnson, 2017). This also places the state at the heart of much of the analysis; thus, the ability to control borders is at the core of questions of state sovereignty. It is state action, regulation, and law, therefore, that shape and determine much of international migration.

Conclusion

This paper examined the importance of borders in international relations. It distinguishes between borders and borderlands. On the one hand, borders refer to the institution of inter-state division according to international law. Borderlands, on the other hand, are territorially defined as the physical space along the border. Borders exist to define and emphasize differences between states, peoples and different concepts of political, economic and social orders.

The state and its borders remain important actors in international relations. Borders between states require an understanding that greatly exceeds nationalistic histories and ethnocentric considerations. These limits where many things must stop and start, need to be studied not just because they exist, but because they are a paradox that isolates and unites. At the same time they constitute a wall or gate, a barrier to and a means for communication. International boundaries are linear points of contact between countries, cultures, and societies that provide unique opportunities to observe the best and the worst in human nature and the exercise of statecraft. An analysis of both conflict and co-operation on these areas throughout the world could provide insights for the peaceful solutions of problems facing the community of nations.

As noted in the study, dwellers of borderlands face a lot of challenges. Borderland populations, thus, have their own interests that need to be considered. The easy movement of goods and people, the prevention of crime, and profitable cross-border trading instead of smuggling are in the interests of both the state as well as the borderland population. There is, therefore, a need to effectively manage borders. Effectively managed borders ensure the unhampered flow of persons, goods and services, which contributes to economic growth and human security. Robust prevention, detection and investigation by border services deter criminal activity, while international efforts to address cross-border crime strengthen regional collaboration.

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