

This book offers insights into the complex and various ways in which international frontiers influence cultural identities. The ten anthropological case studies collected here describe specific international borders in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East and North America, and bring out the importance of border politics and the diverse forms that it may take. The border itself may be of great symbolic significance, like the Berlin Wall; in other cases the symbolism lies rather in the disappearance of the traditional border, as in the European Union today. A border may be a barrier against immigration or the front line between hostile armies. It may reinforce distinctive identities on each side of it, or it may be disputed because it cuts across national identities. Drawing on anthropological perspectives, the book explores how cultural landscapes intersect with political boundaries, and discusses ways in which state power informs cultural identity.

Border identities

## Border identities

*Nation and state at international frontiers*

*Edited by*

Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan

*The Queen's University of Belfast*

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## Contents

List of maps *page* ix

List of contributors x

Acknowledgements xii

1 Nation, state and identity at international borders 1

**THOMAS M. WILSON AND HASTINGS DONNAN**

2 State formation and national identity in the Catalan  
borderlands during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 31

**PETER SAHLINS**

3 A western perspective on an eastern interpretation of where  
north meets south: Pyrenean borderland cultures 62

**WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS**

4 The 'new immigration' and the transformation of the  
European-African frontier 96

**HENK DRIESSEN**

5 Transnationalism in California and Mexico at the end of  
Empire 117

**MICHAEL KEARNEY**

6 National identity on the frontier: Palestinians in the Israeli  
education system 142

**DAN RABINOWITZ**

7 *Grenzregime* (border regime): the Wall and its aftermath 162

**JOHN BORNEMAN**

8 Transcending the state?: gender and borderline constructions  
of citizenship in Zimbabwe 191

**A. P. CHEATER**

9 Borders, boundaries, tradition and state on the Malaysian  
periphery 215

**JANET CARSTEN**

viii *Contents*

10 Markets, morality and modernity in north-east Turkey 237

**CHRIS HANN AND ILDIKO BELLER-HANN**

11 Imagining 'the south': hybridity, heterotopias and Arabesk  
on the Turkish-Syrian border 263

## MARTIN STOKES

Author index 289

Subject index 293

## Maps

2.1 France, Spain, Catalonia *page* 34

2.2 The Cerdanya 35

3.1 The Basque lands and the western Pyrenees 64

3.2 Catalunya and the eastern Pyrenees 65

4.1 The western Spanish-Moroccan frontier 98

5.1 Oaxaca and the US-Mexico border 120

6.1 Road map of the Nazareth area 145

7.1 Heidi's journey 166-7

8.1 Zimbabwe's international border posts 201

9.1 Langkawi and Peninsular Malaysia 220

10.1 The Laz region of north-east Turkey 239

11.1 Sketch map of the Hatay 266

## Contributors

ILDIKO BELLER-HANN currently teaches social anthropology at the University of Kent, Canterbury. She has written several articles on marketing, smuggling and prostitution in north-eastern Turkey.

JOHN BORNEMAN is the author of *After the Wall: East meets West in the new Berlin* and of *Belonging in the two Berlins: kin, state, nation*. He is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Cornell University.

JANET CARSTEN is Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh. She co-edited *About the house: Levi-Strauss and beyond* with Stephen Hugh-Jones and is the author of a monograph on Langkawi which is currently in press.

ANGELA CHEATER is the author of *Idioms of accumulation, The politics of factory organisation: a case study from independent Zimbabwe*, and *Social anthropology: an alternative introduction*. She is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Waikato in New Zealand.

HASTINGS DONNAN is Professor of Social Anthropology at The Queen's University of Belfast. He is the author of *Marriage among Muslims* and co-editor of a number of books including, most recently, *Irish urban cultures* and *Islam, globalization and postmodernity*. He was the editor of *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* from 1993 to 1995.

WILLIAM A. DOUGLASS has written several books based on his

research in Spain and Italy including *Death in Murelaga: funerary rites in a Spanish Basque village*, *Echalar and Murelaga: opportunity and rural depopulation in two Spanish Basque villages*, and *Emigration in a south Italian town: an anthropological history*. His most recent book (with Joseba Zulaika) is *Terror and taboo: the follies, faces, and fables of terrorism*. He is Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada, Reno.

List of contributors xi

HENK DRIESSEN is Associate Professor in the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. He is the author of *On the Spanish-Moroccan frontier: a study in ritual, power, and ethnicity* and editor of *The politics of ethnographic reading and writing*.

CHRIS HANN is Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kent, Canterbury. He has carried out research in Hungary, Turkey, Poland and China and is the author of *Tdzldr: a village in Hungary* and editor of *Socialism: ideals, ideologies and local practice* and of *When history accelerates: essays on rapid social change, complexity and creativity*.

MICHAEL KEARNEY is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Riverside. His most recent book is entitled *Reconceptualizing the peasantry*.

DAN RABINOWITZ teaches anthropology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of many articles and chapters, and of *Overlooking Nazareth: the ethnography of exclusion in Galilee*.

PETER SAHLINS is Associate Professor in the Department of History, University of California at Berkeley. He has written extensively on the Spanish-French border and is the author of *Boundaries: the making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*.

MARTIN STOKES is the author of *The Arabesk debate: music and musicians in modern Turkey* and editor of *Ethnicity, identity and music: the musical construction of place*. He was until recently Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Ethnomusicology at The Queen's University of Belfast and is now Associate Professor in the Department of Music at the University of Chicago.

THOMAS M. WILSON is Lecturer in European Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast and is co-editor of *Cultural change and the new Europe* and of *Ireland from below* as well as of several other books on Ireland and Europe. He is the editor of the series on national identities for State University of New York Press.

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xii

## 1 Nation, state and identity at international borders

*Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

According to some scholars, we are living in a world where state borders are increasingly obsolete. This view holds that international borders are becoming so porous that they no longer fulfil their historical role as barriers to the movement of goods, ideas and people, and as markers of the extent and power of the state. 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. The threatened passing of the state, in turn, heralds the weakening of most of the world's existing political, social and cultural structures and associations. As a result, the role of individuals in these structures is called into question, especially in terms of their loyalties and identities. In line with this fall-off in the determinative power of traditional political statuses is the rise of the new politics of identity, in which the definitions of citizenship, nation and state vie with identities which have acquired a new political significance, such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race, among others, for control of the popular and scholarly political imaginations of the contemporary world. Moreover,

these processes are supposedly accelerating, continually shifting the ground upon which nation-states once stood, changing the framework of national and international politics, creating new and important categories of transnationalism, and increasing the significance and proliferation of images and a host of other messages about the relevance of 'other' world cultures in the everyday lives of us all.

It is the goal of this book to return to the seemingly self-evident proposition that the deterritorialised nature of post-modernity is only one interpretative slant on politics and power in the contemporary world. On its own, the study of the new politics of space and place, identity and transnationalism is incomplete. The balance must be supplied by a reconfiguring of the perspectives of modernists and traditionalists, many of whom are historians and political scientists, whose work continues to point out the necessity of complementing the seductive discourse of the new politics of person and identity with a

1

*2 Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

renewed commitment to the recognisable and concrete manifestations of government and politics, at local levels and at the level of the state. We hold that definitions of 'political' which privilege notions of self, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, profession, occupation, class and nation within discussions of sign, symbol, contestation and representation risk underestimating the role the state continues to play in the everyday lives of its own and other citizens. Post-modern political analyses often fail to query the degree to which the state sustains its historically dominant role as an arbiter of control, violence, order and organisation for those whose identities are being transformed by world forces.

While the organs and personnel of the nation and the state have been excluded from, or minimised in, much recent political anthropology, the nation-state has been rather more successful in weathering the storms of post-socialism, post-colonialism and globalisation than some anthropologists have credited. Paradoxically, the world of expanding deterritorialised identity politics is a world of many more and, in some cases, stronger states. Lost in the crush of much contemporary social science is one simple fact - the new politics of identity is in large part determined by the old structure of the state. In fact, the new politics of representation, redefinition and resistance would be nowhere without

the state as its principal contextual opponent. It is then, in our view, not a question in anthropology of positioning symbolic politics, or the politics of culture, against 'real' politics, but one of returning to the proposition that all politics is by definition about the use of authority and power to direct the behaviour of others, thereby achieving an individual or group's public goals. Both perspectives are necessary for political anthropology precisely because the physical structures of territory, government and state have not withered away in the face of the perception that people are now more free or more forced to slip the constraints of territorially based politics.

This book constitutes a tentative step in furthering the development of an anthropology of international borders, one which specifically concerns itself with the confluence of symbolic and politico-jural boundaries between nations and states. It is an explicit attempt to integrate seemingly divergent trends in the study of power and culture, trends which cursory examination might place at loggerheads. We suggest that their integration in an anthropology of borders resides in the focus on the place and space of visible and literal borders between states, and the symbolic boundaries of identity and culture which make nations and states two very different entities.

The study of the politics of identity which uses the metaphors of borders and borderlands to clarify the deterritorialised aspects of postNation, state and identity at international borders 3

modern life is not our concern here, until and unless these identities are linked in concrete ways to the experiences of living at or crossing state borderlines, and of managing the myriad structures of the state which establish microborders throughout the state's domain, such as in airports, floating customs and immigration checks, post and passport offices, armed service installations, and internal revenue institutions.<sup>1</sup>

While the use of 'borderland' as an image for the study of connections between cultures wherever these connections are found has opened up new ground in social and cultural theory (see, for example, Rosaldo 1988, Gupta and Ferguson 1992, and Alvarez and Collier 1994), it has often done so at the expense of underplaying changes in political economy. To address questions of how dual but unequal state power operates at borders, and of how cultural relations develop historically in frontier zones, we must return to a localised, particularistic and

territorially focused notion of borders (cf. Heyman 1994: 46). As one of our contributors has written elsewhere:

local experience of the state and resistance to it cannot be limited to the imaginative experience of representations: attention must also be paid to the very concrete material consequences of the actions of states for local populations. (Hann 1995: 136)

This volume offers a number of perspectives on borders, nations and states as a way of demonstrating the possibilities inherent in an integration of a variety of anthropological approaches to power and culture.

### **The anthropology of borders**

The growing interest of social scientists in the structure and function of international borders, and in the lives of border peoples and communities, has increasingly demonstrated the dialectical relationships between borders and their states - relationships in which border regions often have a critical impact on the formation of nations and states. These relationships are like many between the state and its regions, and they remain one of the most important and least understood in the general scholarship of nations and states, which too often takes a topdown view in which all power flows from the 'centre'. Perhaps more so than colleagues in other disciplines, anthropologists are well placed to view borders from both local and national perspectives, from the distance of capital cities to the villages of border areas (or, indeed, in those metropolitan centres - such as Jerusalem and Nicosia - which are themselves divided by international borders).

An anthropology of borders is distinctive in a number of ways

*4 Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

(Donnan and Wilson 1994). Anthropological theories and methods enable ethnographers to focus on local communities at international borders in order to examine the material and symbolic processes of culture. This focus on everyday life, and on the cultural constructions which give meaning to the boundaries between communities and between nations, is often absent in the wider perspectives of the other social sciences. The anthropology of borders is one perspective in political anthropology which reminds social scientists outside the discipline, and some within it, that nations and states, and their institutions, are composed of people who cannot or should not be reduced to the images which are constructed by the state, the media or of any other

groups who wish to represent them. The anthropological study of the everyday lives of border communities is simultaneously the study of the daily life of the state, whose agents there must take an active role in the implementation of policy and the intrusion of the state's structures into its people's lives. When ethnographers study border peoples, they do so with the intention of narrating the experiences of people who often are comfortable with the notion that they are tied culturally to many other people in neighbouring states. An anthropology of borders simultaneously explores the cultural permeability of borders, the adaptability of border peoples in their attempts ideologically to construct political divides, and the rigidity of some states in their efforts to control the cultural fields which transcend their borders. Anthropologists thus study the social and economic forces which demand that a variety of political and cultural boundaries be constructed and crossed in the everyday lives of border people.

The anthropology of borders has a long but not very deep history, which began in many ways with Barth's (1969) paradigmatic ideas on ethnic boundaries, but which owes just as much to work that, although not specifically focused on culture, nation and state at international borders, nevertheless showed the value of localised studies for the understanding of how cultural landscapes are superimposed across social and political divides (see, for example, Cohen 1965 and Frankenberg 1989 [1957]). Historical and ethnological studies (as collected, for example, in Bohannan and Plog 1967) also helped to develop this interest, though it was only in the 1970s as anthropologists began to address issues of nationalism, political economy, class, migration and the political disintegration of nations and states that a distinctive body of anthropological work on international borders emerged.

Following the ground-breaking research in the Italian Tyrol by Cole and Wolf (1974) on the durability of cultural frontiers long after the Nation, state and identity at international borders 5

political borders of state and empire had shifted, anthropologists began to use their field research at international or interstate borders as a means of widening perspectives in political anthropology to encompass the formal and informal ties between local communities and the larger polities of which they are a part (in ways so clearly solicited by many of the most influential anthropologists of their time, such as Wolf (1966)

and Boissevain (1975)). They have accomplished this in a variety of ways: some have looked at how international borders have influenced local culture (Douglass 1977, Heyman 1991, Kavanagh 1994) or have created the conditions which have shaped new rural and urban communities (Alvarez 1991, Price 1973 and 1974); others have examined nation- and state-building (Aronoff 1974, Kopytoff 1987, Pettigrew 1994); and yet others have focused on people who choose or are forced to move across borders (Alvarez 1994, Alvarez and Collier 1994, Hann and Hann 1992, Hansen 1994, Malkki 1992). Recent studies have concentrated on the symbols and meanings which encode border life (see, for example, Lask 1994, Lavie 1990, Shanks 1994, Stokes 1994). Regardless of theoretical orientation or locale, however, most of these studies have focused on how social relations, defined in part by the state, transcend the physical limits of the state and, in so doing, transform the structure of the state at home and its relations with its neighbours.

Anthropological attention to the ways in which local developments have an impact on national centres of power and hegemony has been influenced in part by historical analyses of localities and the construction of national identities (see, for example, Sahlins 1989). These analyses are indicative of the need to view the anthropology of borders as historical anthropology. Borders are spatial and temporal records of relationships between local communities and between states. Ethnographic explorations of the relationship between symbolic and political or juridical boundaries are salient beyond anthropology because of what they may tell us of the history of cultural practices as well as the role of border cultures and communities in policy-making and diplomacy. For example, Driessen's study (1992) of the Spanish enclave in Morocco, at the interface of two states and two continents, provides a history of the creation and maintenance of a variety of identities in an urban border zone, but also suggests how local forces have influenced the Spanish state. Borneman's analysis (1991, 1992a) of kin and state in Berlin before and after the dramatic changes of a few years ago problematises the divergent 'national' traditions of law and social policy in East and West Germany in terms of generational adaptations to the new, 'unified'

6 *Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

state. These books are perhaps the best recent examples of the growing

importance of a border perspective in political anthropology, in which the dialectical relations between border areas and their nations and states take precedence over local culture viewed with the state as a backdrop.

All these studies are valuable components of an anthropology of international borders, even though some seem to minimise the roles of the state and the nation, and even the border, in their efforts to delimit their 'community' study. Early ethnographic research at the United States-Mexico border - the one border to have generated a systematic and sustained body of work - was subject to the same limitations, and while many of the studies carried out there in the 1950s and 1960s used the border to frame their focus, the border itself was rarely a variable in the analysis. Only more recently have the wider political and economic contexts of international borders featured in analyses of the United States-Mexico border, where the issues of underdevelopment, transnationalism and the globalisation of power and capital, among other aspects of culture, increasingly occupy the growing number of historically informed and wide-ranging ethnographic accounts (see Alvarez 1995). Much of this research focuses on the implications of the economic asymmetry between the United States and Mexico in which wage differentials both draw labour migrants northwards and ensure the profitability of locating unskilled occupations on the Mexican side. Migration across and increasing urbanisation along this border have both been major topics of study, particularly within applied anthropology, and have generated research on a broad range of related issues such as local labour markets, health, pollution and the environment (Alvarez 1995: 454-6, Herzog 1990: 9-12). Nevertheless, discussion of the region frequently lapses into straightforward description of the area and how it might develop, with researchers being 'constantly pulled toward the specific, the unique (sometimes the folkloric), and the problematic' (Fagen 1984: 271), thereby eschewing comparison for a focus on more local and immediate concerns (Alvarez 1995: 463). Recent efforts to move beyond this to something more general, by elaborating classificatory schema for different types of border (Martinez 1994: 5-10) or by suggesting that border areas be seen as a particular kind of local, politically organised ecology (Heyman 1994: 51-9), have largely not been taken up. Only the idea of the border as an image for

cultural juxtaposition has entered wider anthropological discourse, and this, as we noted above, underplays the material consequences of state action on local populations.

Nation, state and identity at international borders 7

### **Nations, states and their borders**

Despite the large and growing literature on the anthropology of borders, there has been little comparative research and little in the way of anthropological theories of border regions. This parallels the situation in other social sciences, as summarised by Prescott (1987: 8):

Attempts to produce a set of reliable theories about international boundaries have failed. Attempts to devise a set of procedures by which boundaries can be studied have been successful.

This is due in part to a misconception about what it is that might be theorised. The theoretical importance of an anthropology of borders lies primarily in what it might reveal about the interplay between nation and state, and about the role of the border in the past, present and future of nation and state. As such, an anthropology of borders sits squarely within the wider anthropology of nationalism (for a review of the relationship between the concepts of nation and state, in anthropology and in other disciplines, see Grillo 1980). It is our view that the more anthropologists objectify border cultures and communities in ethnographic study, the less able they will be to trace the relationships among culture, power and the state, thereby missing a valuable opportunity to contribute to the wider social science of nationalism.

Given the long tradition of anthropological analysis of the evolution of the state, in archaeology as well as in social and cultural anthropology, it is surprising how few anthropological studies of borders focus principally on the modern nation-state and nationalism. Here anthropologists' reticence to problematise 'nation' and 'state' as the terms of reference for local studies of society and culture plays a part (cf. Alonso 1994). 'Nation' and 'state' are concepts which do not readily fit classic anthropological notions about cultures, because all three concepts are seen by many people to share the same properties of integrity, unity, linearity of time and space, and discreteness. Nevertheless, anthropologists have made many important and lasting contributions to the comparative study of culture and power among nations and states. Among the most influential have been studies of the origins of nationalism

(Gellner 1983); nationalist ideologies (Verdery 1991; Fox 1990); nation- and state-building (Wolf 1959; Lofgren 1995); states and empires (Mintz 1972; Wolf 1982); and post-colonial states (Geertz 1973). Over the last generation political anthropology has increasingly turned to the analysis of the roles of state institutions at local levels, the impact of policies on localities, and the symbolic constructions of ethnicity and nation which are often treated as aspects of 'identity'. But 8 *Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan* difficulties in problematising nation and state remain for many anthropologists.

As Handler points out with reference to Quebecois identity, the nation may be perceived as bounded, continuous and homogeneous, but the current content of national identity is continuously contested and negotiated (1988: 32; see also Handler 1994). In this view, a 'culture' is simultaneously objectified, an entity associated with a place and owned by a people, and subjectified, a context for relations which seek the realisation of the idealised goals intrinsic to the objectified culture.

We recognise that the state is also simultaneously a form of objectified and subjectified culture. While the subjective and constructed notions of culture have become for many anthropologists the principal means of understanding national identities, we must not forget that the institutions and the agents of the state, as well as the representatives of national and international capital, see themselves as objective entities with concrete, bounded and unilinear goals. Simply put, the state is an object whose reality will be denied if we focus exclusively on deconstructed representations of it, and nowhere is this more apparent than at borders, where the powers of the state are monumentally inscribed. Nations and their individuated members may be in a perpetual condition of becoming, but this is only partially true of the state. The state exists. Its institutions and representatives make and enforce the laws which regiment most daily activities of its citizens and residents, in direct relations of cause and effect. Border peoples, because of their histories, and objectified and subjectified cultures, not only have to deal with the institutions of their own state, but with those institutions of the state or states across the border, entities of equal and sovereign power which overshadow all border relations. An anthropology of borders is simultaneously one of a nation's history and of a state's frontiers.

In our assessment of the theoretical and disciplinary implications of an anthropology of international borders in the contemporary world, it may be worth recalling how such borders differ from those in stateless societies. Considering Turner's frontier thesis in relation to Africa, Kopytoff (1987) suggests that the term 'border' must include the notion of shifting margins if it is to accommodate the particularities of a situation where it is people and not land that are seen as relatively scarce. Much like the traditional Southeast Asian state (see Carsten, this volume), social formations and their frontiers in West Africa arguably developed in response to a need to bring ever greater numbers of people within their domain. Governance of people rather than place thus characterised large parts of pre-colonial Africa. But as the government of people gave way to the government of territory, so the need for

**Nation, state and identity at international borders 9**

clearly bounded divisions of ownership and control correspondingly increased, and land came to be seen as something potentially valuable and of limited availability. These new borders still operated as part of 'a relation between people and space, but where the space is finite, and the centre can control a more or less continuous boundary, such relationships change, and the border becomes a state weapon' (Tonkin 1994: 27). Territoriality thus became one of the first conditions of the state's existence, and the *sine qua non* of its borders.

It may also be worth recalling, then, just what these state borders are supposed to be and what they are supposed to do. 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. Borders are the political membranes through which people, goods, wealth and information must pass in order to be deemed acceptable or unacceptable by the state. Thus borders are agents of a state's security and sovereignty, and a physical record of a state's past and present relations with its neighbours. In our view, borders have three elements: the legal borderline which simultaneously separates and joins states; the physical structures of the state which exist to demarcate and protect the borderline, composed of people and institutions which

often penetrate deeply into the territory of the state; and frontiers, territorial zones of varying width which stretch across and away from borders, within which people negotiate a variety of behaviours and meanings associated with their membership in nations and states (cf. Martinez 1994: 5; Prescott 1987; Herzog 1990: 16). Historically frontier areas have been associated with a variety of political forms, such as city-states, kingdoms and empires. These frontiers, which are territorial in nature, are political and social features of the borders of all modern nation-states, and should be distinguished from the metaphorical frontiers of identity which have become so useful in describing aspects of post-modern society.

Territory is only one of the necessary conditions of the nation-state.

Since the birth of the modern age states have either attempted to forge a homogeneous nation from the disparate cultural and regional groupings within its domain, or ethnic groups have sought political autonomy in order to establish themselves as independent actors on the world stage.

These processes of nation-building and state-building are twin tracks in the creation of the nation-state, on the model of the original French, American and British versions. But all nation-states sit uneasily on the

10 *Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

bases of nationalist activity, principally because there is no precise fit between nation and state. As one consequence, a state's borders never function precisely according to the model outlined above: if the 'principal fiction of the nation-state is ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural homogeneity, then borders always give the lie to this construct' (Horsman and Marshall 1995: 45).

We suggest that the relationships of power and identity at borders and between the borders and their respective states are problematic precisely because the state cannot always control the political structures which it establishes at its extremities (and which one day may topple the state or empire which has given rise to them, as Ibn Khaldun, Wittfogel and Lattimore, among others, have shown). Local forces of politics and culture, possibly influenced by international forces from other states, give borders specific political configurations which may make their relations with their governments extremely problematic. States, on the other hand, may seek to leave only a nominal presence at borders, and may wish their borderlines to be relatively porous, as with the internal

borders of the members of the European Union. Both processes are evident in the contributions which follow.

Borders and their states are separate but related political structures, each somewhat dependent on the other for their power and strength. In this regard we follow the Weberian definition of the state as an institution which holds the legitimate use of force in a territory. Borders 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 recently discovered in Bosnia and Chechnya. Other states must devolve power to their border areas or run the risk of destabilising 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.

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. Our point here is that many states with strong structures of control at their borders are also faced with cultural frontiers which are Nation, state and identity at international borders 11

just as strong, and which may one day pose a threat to the state's power at its borders or at its core. For example, the British state is one of the most centralised in Europe, and it has attempted to create strong structures of social and political control at its land border with Ireland, but a long history of shared culture and power in Ireland has created fluid frontier relations of smuggling and ethnonationalist struggle which compete with the state. Events in Ireland are far removed from the everyday experiences of London, except when Irish republicans use the bomb to remind the English of their existence, and they may never destroy the United Kingdom, but it seems likely that they will result in a reconfiguration of the British state and its relationship with its borders in Ireland.

Frontiers of culture are regimes which may compete with the state's borders. They may subvert or bolster those borders, depending on the relative strength of the state and the cultural ties which bind and divide peoples at international borders. We are reminded of Braudel's insistence that civilisations are inescapably linked to their territories because of their civilisation's cultural imprint; men may betray their civilisations by physically leaving them, but their cultures would live on, resistant to the influences of incomers. 'That is why there are cultural frontiers and cultural zones of amazing permanence: all the cross-fertilisation in the world will not alter them' (Braudel 1976: 770). We recognise that this is true of both nation-states and the frontiers which we have defined as zones of cultural relations. But we also recognise that cross-fertilisation in the borders of the world has resulted in strong relationships of culture and territory which often fly in the face of the received wisdom of hegemonic national cultures. Anthropology reminds scholars of the state that these cultural frontiers are as old, as important, and as strong as any state, and that to walk away from international borders with the notion that they are just extensions of the state is to betray the many cultures and nations rooted in those borders. Mindful of Prescott's comment cited above, we suggest that anthropological practices should be directed towards international borders in order to generalise and theorise the issues of culture and the state. Among the principal focuses of such an anthropology are national, ethnic and gender identities.

### **Border identities**

When organising this book, we invited contributors to consider how and why and whether the border is or was significant in the lives of those with whom they had carried out their research, and to document this as far as possible with specific ethnographic examples drawn from Turkey, Spain, France, Germany, Israel, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, the United States and Mexico.<sup>2</sup> Our aim was not to be geographically comprehensive, nor was it to provide a compendium of the globe's border hot-spots of which, of course, there are currently many. Rather, we sought out anthropologists with a long and close experience of particular borders, whose work addressed the kinds of issues outlined above. This often meant omitting consideration of borders only now coming into being, and for which, unfortunately, detailed ethnographic research does not

*12 Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

yet exist as far as we are aware. But we hope that what this may sacrifice in breadth of coverage is outweighed by the depth and intimacy of the chapters that follow, a level of understanding we have sought to further by including more than one chapter on both the Spanish-French and Turkish borders.

Nevertheless, we have been able to include consideration of a range of borders: those of long historical standing as well as those newly created or dissolved; those which seem to be stable as well as those which are not; those characterised by conflict and those which are not; and those associated with strong and weak states. We have also included discussion of borders both within and beyond Europe, from traditions in which borders are very differently conceptualised. In this respect, Carsten's discussion of the Malaysian *negeri* and its borders (chapter 9) serves as an important reminder that we should not be too quick to export European experiences of the border to other regions of the globe, such as Southeast Asia, where indigenous understandings and meanings may be quite different.

Taken together, the book's contributors not surprisingly reveal borders as complex and multi-dimensional cultural phenomena, variously articulated and interpreted across space and time. This suggests that *a priori* assumptions about the nature of 'the border' are likely to founder when confronted with empirical data; far from being a self-evident, analytical given which can be applied regardless of context, the 'border' must be interrogated for its subtle and sometimes not so subtle shifts in meaning and form according to setting. Our contributors use a range of analytical strategies to explore such variation. At the same time, they share a focus on a number of common themes and identify certain similarities in the processes through which borders can emerge and to which they give rise. We consider these in relation to three key concerns which occupy the chapters that follow.

#### *Borders and ethnicity*

Almost all our contributors focus on identity, particularly on how social identities are shaped by the state and may emerge as a result of, or in response to, the state's attempts to define or redefine its outer limits. Because of their liminal and frequently contested nature, borders tend to be characterised by identities which are shifting and multiple, in ways

which are framed by the specific state configurations which encompass them and within which people must attribute meaning to their experience of border life. As many of the chapters show, this is true not only of national identity, but also of other identities such as ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality, identities often constructed at borders in ways which are different from, and shed light on, how these identities are constructed elsewhere in the state.

The anthropological concern with ethnic groups and their boundaries which has motivated much of the political anthropology of ethnicity in the modern world has sometimes obscured the interplay of national and ethnic identity. At the very least, a focus on borders does not allow us to forget that national identity is a politicised ethnicity. In our view many national identities come about when ethnicity is politicised in the course of pursuing self-determination. Sometimes this process of national selfdetermination excludes those who do not share the dominant nation's view of state-building. These minority populations are often labelled as ethnic or religious groups, whereas they might see themselves as nations, or as part of nations who have their homeland there or elsewhere.

One of the most obvious, and perhaps most problematic, situations in which people's national identity must be negotiated is where a border is drawn with little reference to the ties of blood and/or culture which in some cases bind those across its reaches. Several of the borders described in this book are of this type: those between East and West Germany, those between Turkey and Syria and Turkey and Georgia, between Israel and its Arab neighbours, and between Spain and France in the Pyrenees. As Borneman, Stokes, Hann and Beller-Hann, Rabinowitz and Douglass respectively describe, those living in these border areas must evolve a *modus vivendi* which incorporates contradictory identities. Citizenship, state nationalism, and various other social ties draw border people away from the border, inward, to the centres of power and culture within the state. Borderlanders are often simultaneously pulled across the border by similar ties of ethnic and national unity. This may give rise to nationalist struggles of the kind described by Douglass (chapter 3), as well as to the kind of heterotopic reality outlined by Stokes for the Hatay region of Turkey, where local life is a complex mix of different cultural traces drawn from both sides of the

border (chapter 11). These contributions suggest that choice of national identity must thus be understood in terms as much of local as of supra-local interests (cf. Vermeulen 1978, cited in Grillo 1980; Herzfeld 1985: xiv).

But not all border communities have the same characteristics, since not all are dissected by the border in the same way. In terms of their ethnic identities, at least three main types of border population can be identified: (i) those who share ethnic ties across the border *as well as* with those residing at their own state's geographical core; (ii) those who are *differentiated* by cross-border ethnic bonds from other residents of their state; and (iii) those who are members of the national majority in their state, and have no ethnic ties across the state's borders. All three types of community may be found at one border, but they need not be. Examples of the first type are the borderlanders of the Republic of Ireland who share ethnic ties both across and within the state boundary with Northern Ireland, and Hungarian borderlanders who share ethnic ties with those across the state's borders in Slovenia, Romania and Slovakia. The Basque borderlanders described by Douglass provide an example of an ethnic minority within two states - Spain and France - but who define themselves as a nation tied to a homeland dissected by those two states. One might anticipate these different configurations to have varying consequences for the expression of identity within the state concerned such that, for instance, borderlander identity is more anomalous in the latter than the former. Moreover, it is more likely to be subversive, coming into conflict as it does with the state's projected image of itself, as indeed the Basque case in Spain bears out. In contrast, the expression of an Irish identity at the border of the Irish Republic is broadly consistent with that state's wider national project, although the situation clearly differs across the border in Northern Ireland, where one section of the population, the Nationalists, share ethnic ties with the majority in the Republic of Ireland, while Unionist borderlanders' ethnic connections in Northern Ireland extend inward to Belfast, and perhaps as far as Edinburgh and London. It is in this sense, then, that frontiers intrude more deeply into Spanish territory than is the case in the Republic of Ireland, since, as Douglass points out, those sympathetic to Basque

nationalism will be borderlanders in a political sense, irrespective of where they live in Spain, and though they may be geographically distant from the border's other realities.

There are fewer examples of the third type of ethnic identity at borders, principally because there are very few homogeneous nationstates whose members do not share ethnicity with neighbouring peoples across international state boundaries. The French and the Spanish cases provide good textbook examples of the idealised model of the correlation, state and identity at international borders 15

tion between nation and state, but, as Sahlins and Douglass consider in this collection, even they are complicated by the presence of Catalans and Basques where their two states meet. The Turkish-Syrian border described by Stokes offers yet another variant on this theme. Like Spain, with its minority Basque population, the Turks of the Hatay live alongside a minority population of Arabs who share cultural ties across the border with Syria. But unlike the Spanish Basqueland, this border is characterised less by regularly activated cross-border ethnic ties than by an anxiety among the Arabs on the Turkish side that Syrian expansionism will ultimately incorporate them, an anxiety generated by a fear of what they believe to be a 'backward' and totalitarian regime. Turkish identity in this region is also characterised by ambivalence, shaped as it is by the contradictory pull of a Turkish nationalism which requires antipathy to Arabs and the realities of an everyday existence necessarily dependant on some degree of compromise and accommodation with them. The result is a weakening or dilution of Turkish national identity which is in striking contrast to the situation in north-east Turkey outlined by Hann and Beller-Hann (chapter 10).

Like so many international borders, that between north-eastern Turkey and the former Soviet Union was created with little regard to local cultural and linguistic continuities across it, which parallel processes of closure under Stalin and Atatürk, and strict control of crossborder movement, did their best to play down or undermine. In the Kemalist state there was no category of 'national minority', and even the mere mention of the existence of such groups was likely to result in accusations of seeking to fragment the state. For over fifty years complete closure of this border thus effectively precluded any possibility of cross-border ethnic ties subverting the project of the state, and

allowed the process of nation-building to continue unhindered on the Turkish side. Surprisingly, however, given what we know of the aspirations of so many cross-border ethnic minorities elsewhere in the globe, the border's reopening in 1988 has done little to disturb the effects of this process. Cross-border ethnic ties have been reactivated to facilitate trade, but they have not stimulated an ethnic or regional consciousness, nor posed a threat to Turkish national identity. On the contrary, national identity has been strengthened as a result and offers a marked contrast to the fragmentary and hybrid identities of the Hatay where, as we saw, an identity as 'Turk' is at best ambivalent.

One possible explanation for this striking difference in orientation towards national identity at different borders of the same state would seem to be religion. Inhabitants of north-eastern Turkey are distinguished from their co-ethnics across the border by their faith in Islam,

*16 Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

**which simultaneously binds them to their fellow Turks. In contrast, Turks in the Hatay share their Muslim faith with Syrians, albeit belonging to a different sect, thereby rendering a crucial element in Turkish national identity largely ineffective as a distinguishing feature. Thus where in one case religious difference underpins the border and ethnicity transcends it, in the other case the force of these variables is inverted, with marked consequences for the strength with which national identity is experienced and expressed.**

**Two points might be drawn out from this comparison. The first concerns the way in which attempts to construct a unitary national culture are inevitably mediated by the specific configuration of circumstances at state borders (see also Sahlins, this volume). The varying strengths with which people subscribe to a particular national identity, and its uneven spread across a state's domain, may thus be illuminated by a knowledge of border dynamics. And secondly, border studies can help to reveal the relative strength of national and ethnic identities, the gap between which may become particularly visible where closed borders reopen and vice versa. Among the many things potentially influenced by the changing economic and political configuration of international borders is the expression of local ethnicity and even the national project itself, which may be strengthened not just in spite of, but because of cross-border ties. In a world where state attempts to construct a unitary national culture seem ubiquitously compromised by rising ethnicities, this may be a salutary reminder.**

This theme is taken up and developed by Rabinowitz (chapter 6), whose analysis demonstrates that the cultural problems and political contradictions of life on the border can be as much a reality for the majority population as for the minority one. In his discussion of Natzerat Illit, a new town in Galilee, Rabinowitz provides a useful counterpoint to the prevailing emphasis in the literature on border minorities (see, for example, Lavie 1992; Ghosh 1989) by drawing attention to the practices of exclusion adopted by the dominant majority towards the potentially dissenting and subversive others in their midst. Founded initially as a Jewish 'settler town' to exclude Palestinians from their ancestral agricultural land, Natzerat Illit has ironically attracted a substantial number of middle-class Palestinian inhabitants who, viewed with suspicion by their Jewish neighbours, find themselves 'trapped' between the state in which they live - Israel - and the dispersed nation of Palestinians of which they feel a part. As Rabinowitz shows, the town is much more than a physical structure accommodating a Jewish presence on one of Israel's contested frontiers; it has become a discursive object created by Israelis as a way of turning Galilee into a Nation, state and identity at international borders 17

particular socio-political space in which Palestinians, though not actually physically kept out, are largely excluded. This is particularly evident in state provision for nursery education. Though not segregated like the rest of the educational system in Israel, the pedagogic environment of nursery schooling in Natzerat Illit is permeated by the power of the Israeli state. Not only must Palestinian pupils learn Hebrew, they must also participate alongside their Jewish class-mates in centrally organised public ceremonies celebrating Jewish feasts and national events. These events, which are predicated on a putative common descent and ties of belonging based on Jewish blood, embody the exclusionary nature of Israeliness. Rather than accepting that Palestinians have an identity legitimately incongruent with that of the state, and allowing them the discursive space in which to express it, Rabinowitz thus demonstrates how 'the system attempted to reform them by subjecting them to loaded occasions with strong nationalistic overtones'.

Rabinowitz's case clearly shows how living near a frontier can push liberalism to its limits, exposing the contradictions of a majority population who, while proclaiming equal treatment for all citizens regardless of ethnicity, tries to hold on to power. The result is a deepening rift between Israelis and Palestinians and a clash of ethnicities which is a far cry from the hybridisation of border identities so widely reported in the

**literature (see, for instance, Anzaldua 1987). Identities may indeed be ambivalent at borders but, as Rabinowitz reminds us and as Heyman (1994: 47) has cautioned, we should not allow 'a facile idea - at the border, two sides equal one hybrid' - to replace analysis and so minimise the very real power which the dominant majority can exert in its efforts to further the project of the state.**

*Borders, sexuality and gender*

**Borders may mark the extremities of state power, but this need not entail its weakening there, as Rabinowitz's example so compellingly illustrates. While not everywhere the case, it is often precisely at borders that state power is most keenly marked and felt, in ways that ethnographic research can be particularly effective at uncovering. For instance, underlying the evident success with which the dominant majority inculcates its political vision on the Israeli frontier is the fact that nursery education is delivered by women, who in Israel are still very much associated with the private sphere and stereotyped as keepers of tradition and stability. According to Rabinowitz, this both masks and marginalises the political dimension of nursery schooling, effectively defusing the threat of what is the only officially recognised context**

*18 Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

within which Palestinians and Israelis meet. This sensitivity to gender in the construction and maintenance of national identity at borders, and the part which gender plays in the politics of the state, is taken up and developed elsewhere in the volume. Like Rabinowitz, Borneman and Cheater both show that the discursive space in which borderlanders articulate their identities inevitably depends on the outcome of a tension between state control and the possibility of its evasion, a tension which, in the cases they describe, is played out in the language of sexual and gendered identities.

The extended narrative in chapter 7, which describes the experiences of Heidi, a middle-aged woman, and her family in pre- and post-unified Germany, is used by Borneman to explore how Cold War oppositions transformed and exacerbated the dynamic interplay between what he presents as a tripartite system of difference - sex, gender and nation. Contrary to popular Western misperceptions, which commonly represented socialist countries as deliberately inhibiting cultural change, neither men nor women in East Germany were left the same as a result of their experience of a divided Germany. Once the Berlin Wall was erected, new gendered identities at the East German border began to

be forged in the dialectic between 'security' and 'liberty'; a security which offered a lifetime of employment and welfare guaranteed by the East German state, and the equally desirable liberty to experience what lay beyond the borders of the state. Prewar notions of German masculinity and sexuality underwritten by a pervasive association between 'the father' and the state ceased to apply when the Wall was built, compelling East German men to search for positive alternatives. They were rarely successful, with the men in Borneman's account stumbling forward ineffectually, only reluctantly revising their notions of gender and remaining sexually inhibited. Heidi, in contrast, had always sought openness and a lack of boundaries in her life. Even before the demolition of the Wall she had planned to cross to the West, and in her personal life was prepared to experiment sexually and to form relationships which violated the usual gender norms. Unlike her two husbands, whose fecklessness in the face of change suggests that not all masculinities are powerful and dominant - a point also developed by Stokes for Turkey's southern border - Heidi's 'openness' enabled her to construct a resilient femininity which both anticipated and survived the great changes to come. This tension between security and liberty, between control and escape, was thus an element of the oppositional nation-building processes during the Cold War which provided what Borneman refers to as a 'meta-framework in which social identities unfolded'.

Nation, state and identity at international borders 19

The local identities of the female entrepreneurs described by Cheater (chapter 8) at the Zimbabwean border have similarly unfolded against a background of state efforts to define citizenship and national identity in the wake of the creation of a new border, in this case at independence. Like the GDR, the Zimbabwean state is dominated by a male elite, but unlike the GDR it has not encouraged a reconsideration of the rights of women within the state. In fact, officially recognised membership of the Zimbabwean state has become more exclusive since independence, with membership defined by descent through the patriline, an interpretation clearly at odds with the trend in other nation-states and which, in Zimbabwe, precludes exogamously married women from transmitting membership. The women described by Cheater must work within the interstices of a state definition of nationality which seeks to limit and

control the flow of goods and personnel across its borders. In the process of plying their cross-border trade in consumer goods, these women must 'transcend' the state, constructing 'borderline' identities without reference to ethnicity or nationality in ways which challenge the received male definitions of citizenship. By traversing the borders unaccompanied, they flout Zimbabwean conventions of female dependency on men - much like the female 'traders' who cross the border into north-east Turkey as we consider later - creating an anomalous gendered identity which the state has sought to bring under symbolic control by branding them as 'dangerous citizens'. Symbolic control of gendered identities thus here becomes synonymous with control of political order at the edges of the state, in a manner analogous to that which Borneman describes for the GDR.

Where state power is not so keenly felt, the expression and negotiation of border identities may be permitted more discursive space than is the case in Israel, GDR or Zimbabwe, though it is still possible to discern comparable processes at work. According to Stokes, local relations between Arab and Turk are worked out through a form of cultural performance known as Arabesk, a popular musical genre which both articulates and helps to explain some of the feelings of ambiguity and submissiveness which minority and majority borderlanders experience in the Hatay. Turkish gendered nationalist historiography constructs the country's borders as an act of paternity on the part of Atatiirk, the 'father Turk', whose decisive and effective action built the modern Turkish nation-state on the remains of the Ottoman empire. The exception is the Hatay, at which border, Stokes argues, Turkey's virile national masculinity is compromised in the popular imagination, because it was left out of Atatiirk's scheme and because of the state's continued ineffectual involvement there. This imagery of depleted

20 *Thomas M. Wilson and Hastings Donnan*

masculinity is in turn reflected in the sexual ambiguity of many of the best known Arabesk performers and in a corresponding hypermachismo on the part of their following in the Hatay. Many of the former are openly gay or transsexual, ambivalent and 'unproductive' sexual identities which mirror the anomalous gendered representation of the border as an impotent product of the state.

Similarly, where borders and the....