

**BORDERLINES AND  
BORDERLANDS**

**Political Oddities at the Edge of the Nation-State**

Edited by Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen

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# 1

## Introduction

### *Borders, Identity, and Geopolitics*

*Alexander C. Diener and Joshua Hagen*

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FORMING A NARROW GATEWAY between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean, the Strait of Gibraltar and its adjoining territories have been the scene of international competition and conflict for centuries. Combatants have included Romans and Visigoths, Moors and Christians, English and French, to name but a few. Indeed, territorial disputes along this strategic waterway linger as sources of international contention into the twenty-first century. A quick examination of a contemporary map of the region reveals the odd border arrangements that have resulted from the shifting fortunes of this centuries-long struggle for political and military control of the territories flanking the strait (figure 1.1).

Although Spanish territory dominates the northern shores of the strait today, the striking coastal promontory known as Gibraltar is in fact a British overseas possession. Following its seizure from Spain in 1704, Gibraltar served as an important military hub for the expanding British Empire. While most British colonies achieved independence after World War II (1939–1945), Gibraltar and its small, but largely pro-British, population remained under British control. For more than three centuries, successive Spanish governments have claimed that full legal sovereignty should lie with them, leading to numerous unsuccessful attempts to overturn British rule. The acrimony eventually led the Spanish government to close all the border crossings with Gibraltar in 1969, but this “siege” actually strengthened anti-Spanish sentiment among Gibraltar’s inhabitants. Fortunately, representatives from Gibraltar, Britain, and Spain have recently agreed on a series of measures to relax border restrictions and facilitate connections between Gibraltar and Spain. Despite



**FIGURE 1.1**  
The British and Spanish Exclaves along the Strait of Gibraltar. Cory Johnson of XNR.

these steps, Spain continues to assert its claim to “rightful” ownership of Gibraltar. Indeed, Spain’s willingness to reopen the border could be interpreted as a new strategy to improve Spain’s image and political influence within the territory through greater economic integration and cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, while struggling to push this small British presence from what it regards as Spanish territory, Spain has been embroiled in similar border disputes with Morocco on the other side of the strait. Like Britain, Spain gradually relinquished its remaining possessions in Africa after 1945. Yet Spain was able to maintain control over Ceuta and Melilla, two relatively small Spanish-majority cities along the northern coast of Africa. After being under Muslim control for several centuries, the cities fell captive to Spanish forces

by the sixteenth century. Although Moroccans insist that Spain vacate what they regard as occupied and colonized territories, the Spanish government has remained steadfast. Indeed, recent visits to the cities by Spain's prime minister and king were intended to demonstrate Spanish resolve and triggered strong denouncements from the Moroccan side. While the status of these cities obviously continues to be a source of discord between the two countries, the apparent oddity of Spanish territorial outposts in Africa has not gone unnoticed beyond the region. Leaders of the Al Qaeda terrorist organization, for example, have exhorted followers to destroy the Spanish presence in North Africa. On the other hand, thousands of poverty-stricken migrants, primarily from western Africa, have recently tried to enter Ceuta and Melilla as way stations toward better economic prospects in Europe. While some manage to make the crossing, expanded border barricades and policing by both Spanish and Moroccan forces have resulted in the deaths of several migrants.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to the recent relaxation of border controls between Spain and Gibraltar, it appears that the Spanish-Moroccan borders are likely to experience the opposite trend in the near future.<sup>3</sup>

While the apparent oddity of the international borders along the Strait of Gibraltar may appear without precedent, anyone who peruses a world atlas will soon notice other borders or portions of borders with seemingly odd or discontinuous shapes. Indeed, these borders are often the subject of conflicting territorial claims and international tension. The continued division of the islands of Cyprus and Ireland, the Nagorno-Karabakh region disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Angola's Cabinda exclave are just a few examples. Yet people rarely reflect on the historical development or contemporary significance of international borders, regardless of their shape. For many people, the lines that divide the world's landmasses possess an air of unquestionable sanctity, as though they were based on some higher logic.

This is simply not the case. Indeed, professional geographers have long discounted the notion of "natural" borders. All borders, whether they appear oddly contrived and artificial, as in some of the examples mentioned above, or appear to be based on objective criteria, such as rivers or lines of latitude, are and have always been constructions of human beings. As such, any border's delineation is subjective, contrived, negotiated, and contested. While this is true of virtually any scale of place, from the personal, to the municipal, to the provincial, to the international, the modern political map of the world has been largely shaped by disputes over land and the division of resources between states (i.e., countries). Even today, more than a hundred active border disputes (not counting disputed islands) exist among the 194 independent states worldwide.<sup>4</sup> This means that of the roughly 301 contiguous international land borders, some 33 percent are sites of contestation.

Obviously, examples of contested international boundaries and border-related issues abound, but ironically they exist today amid a growing sense that borders are diminishing in importance. Reflecting on the development of the European Union, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and other supranational institutions, some scholars have posited a general de-territorialization of national economies, state sovereignty, and human identity leading to the emergence of a borderless world. If projected uncritically into the future, such trends would seem to signal the end of the state's role as the primary organizational unit of global political space. This volume demonstrates that even though the role of borders may be changing and scholars may be gaining new insights into the processes of bordering and the institutions related to borders, a borderless world is not an imminent possibility. Rather, processes of transnationalism and transmigration, as well as terms such as transborder and transstate, are significant only to the extent that something remains to "trans" (i.e., cross, breach, or span). In short, borders still matter.

This volume focuses on select international borders and the visually odd territorial shapes they demarcate in an effort to challenge the general perception of borders as immutable, natural, or sacred features of the geopolitical landscape. The individual chapters examine some of the world's most glaring border oddities, the historical context in which these borders came into existence, and the effect these borders have had and continue to have on the people and states they bound. By focusing on some of the most visually striking borders, the volume aims to demonstrate that *all* borders and territories, even those that appear "normal" or "natural," are social constructions. In an era where the continued relevance of the state is being questioned and where transnationalism is altering the degree to which borders effectively demarcate spaces of belonging, such a point is of great importance.

### Frontiers, Borders, and Border Studies

Although modern maps of the ancient world often give the impression that these earliest civilizations were highly integrated political entities bounded by clearly defined borders, the reality was often much more complicated. Although their rulers may have desired sharp international borders, ancient empires, like that of the Romans spanning the Mediterranean basin or the Han Dynasty covering much of modern-day China, tended to have relatively vague political borders in practice. Unlike the clearly demarcated border lines that characterize much of the modern world, these empires were generally bounded by frontier zones. Such zones suggested a more gradual transition

of political control containing a mixture of imperial forces, various allied or tributary states, and possible opponents.

Despite their appearance to modern viewers, the Roman defensive *limes*, which ringed much of the empire, or the Great Wall of China, built over several centuries through the borderlands between ancient China and the Mongolian steppe, did not in practice mark the end of imperial territory, power, or activity. Instead of “precisely demarcated borders,” one scholar noted, “the history of Chinese wall-building gives no clear sense of a bricks-and-mortar frontier maintaining Chinese within and barbarian northerners without.”<sup>25</sup> Despite the Great Wall’s depiction of China as “unified and bounded by clearly demarcated borders since time immemorial, a strong case can be made for a more nuanced and dynamic view of China’s imperial boundaries as being mobile and indeterminate.”<sup>26</sup> For ancient Romans as well as modern visitors, the monumental nature of Hadrian’s Wall, a system of forts, towers, and walls stretching across northern England, gives the impression of marking the exact limits of imperial rule. Yet as one historian noted: “Rather than thinking of Hadrian’s Wall as a fence, it might be more accurately seen as a spine around which Roman control of the north of Britannia toughened and stabilized.”<sup>27</sup> The various Roman successor states, including the early Byzantine Empire in the east and the Germanic kingdoms in the west, as well as the Ottoman Empire, premodern Japan, and Iran, also possessed relatively fluid and ill-defined frontiers.<sup>8</sup>

Much of the modern state system, including contemporary notions of borders, territory, and sovereignty, can be traced to political developments beginning in Europe around the sixteenth century. This does not imply that societies outside of Europe did not possess their own conceptions of political and territorial organization,<sup>9</sup> but rather that the extension of European colonial and imperial control over much of the world entailed wide-ranging political and territorial reorganizations of these lands, societies, and economies according to European norms. It was largely the political and geographical notions championed by Europeans that provided the basis for the state system that dominates the modern world.

Yet the emergence of Europe’s political space as a collection of sovereign, centralized states evolved over several centuries. Politics, law, and governance in medieval Europe were structured around what is popularly known as the feudal system. Feudalism involved a complex and varied system of contractual privileges and responsibilities where subservient vassals were granted the right to control land and its income in exchange for pledging service and loyalty to a lord. This seems to suggest a clear hierarchy of territorial control, with Europe’s kings, emperors, and popes at the top. Yet the hereditary nature of feudal land title eventually produced a complicated web of decentralized



decision making, discontinuous territorial holdings, and overlapping (and at times, divided) loyalties. While the dukes of Burgundy, for example, possessed large land holdings within the Kingdom of France, they also held considerable territories in the Holy Roman Empire. The dukes technically owed simultaneous allegiance to the French kings and the German emperors. As a result, borders between feudal territories generally remained vaguely defined. Instead of clear linear demarcations of sovereign territorial control, Europe's political frontiers were marked by "indeterminacy and permeability."<sup>10</sup>

This began to change gradually as Europe's feudal system gave way to what scholars commonly refer to today as the modern state system. The reasons for this shift are incredibly complex and can be dealt with only briefly here. In the simplest terms, the emergence of the modern state system in Europe was marked by the increasing exercise of political and economic control by a central government, first embodied by a monarch but later usually vested in democratically elected institutions. This was a highly contingent and interactive transformation involving a range of factors including the rise of capitalism and industrialization, the development of a professional civil service, growing demands for popular representation, and especially the emergence of nationalism as a mass phenomenon. Indeed, many of the new states were strongly identified with and controlled by one dominant national group. The idea of the nation-state, where the political borders of the state would coincide with the cultural boundaries of the nation, had become the ideal, although not the norm, by the beginning of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup>

As political power became centralized, the ability of governments to control territory effectively increased dramatically. States could now devote greater attention to the clear demarcation of their borders. Whereas broad, ill-defined frontiers were once satisfactory, the development of modern states helped stimulate the delineation of precise borders marking which territories, populations, and economies were included in the state's jurisdiction and which were excluded. Implicit here was also a new understanding of sovereignty. Unlike the European feudal system, which entailed somewhat flexible and overlapping conceptions of sovereignty, the new state system posited the world as a mosaic of centralized governments, each possessing absolute political sovereignty over some clearly defined territory and the undivided allegiance of its inhabitants. While nearly impossible to achieve in practice, this reorganization did necessitate a new function for international borders.

The desire by European governments to move from vague frontiers to more precise borders, both for their national homelands in Europe as well as their extensive overseas possessions, obviously raised the question of what criteria should be used to determine these borders. Various proposals for border

delineation emerged beginning around 1500, and by the end of the eighteenth century, the idea that borders should coincide with “natural” features had become widely accepted. It was believed that these natural borders, as opposed to artificial borders, would be more stable and less likely to generate conflict. The assumption was that nature had already predetermined “correct” international borders. States simply had to seek them out and adjust their borders accordingly.

Although seemingly offering an objective basis for delineating international boundaries and arbitrating border disputes, individuals tended to interpret the term *natural* in ways that supported their particular geopolitical agendas. Many French writers, for example, argued that borders should follow physiographical features, such as rivers or mountain ranges, a view that provided a convenient justification for annexing new territories.<sup>12</sup> Reflecting rising nationalist sentiment, others contended that it was “natural” for the state’s borders to encompass all the members of one nationality. Numerous German nationalists believed that the borders of their state should expand to include all German speakers, regardless of physiographical features. Often labeled the founder of political geography, the German professor Friedrich Ratzel argued that Darwinian ideas from the biological sciences also governed the spatial characteristics of state formation, growth, and decline. Ratzel likened states to organic entities that required “living space” to survive. As the leading edge of this territorial competition between states, international borders were seen as the fluid and dynamic outcomes of this “natural” struggle for living space.<sup>13</sup> Although the idea of natural borders seemed logical, it did not lead to objective criteria for determining the territorial limits of states. Rather, border theorists, heavily influenced by nationalist perspectives, invariably put forth criteria for natural borders that supported their own particular territorial aspirations.

The dramatic territorial realignment initiated by World War I (1914–1918) triggered a surge of interest in border studies in Europe. A variety of practical approaches to setting borders was put forth in an effort to reduce the likelihood of military conflict, but many of those approaches still maintained the dichotomy between natural and artificial borders. As one author noted: “Where no natural feature exists to mark the place at which the territory of one state ends and another begins it is necessary to establish some artificial boundary mark.”<sup>14</sup> While authors varied in the relative weight they placed on physiographic features, geopolitical strategy, or ethnographical characteristics when positioning international borders, they generally viewed natural borders, however defined, as good and artificial borders as bad. Given the continued importance of natural borders, it is not surprising that these studies tended to be highly subjective, often reflecting their authors’ national origins.

Partially in response to these inherent biases and the difficulties in defining and locating objective natural borders, professional geographers soon concluded that all borders were arbitrary, subjective, and the result of human decisions, not forces of nature. "All political boundaries are man-made, that is, artificial; obviously, they are not phenomena of nature," Richard Hartshorne argued. "Consequently, man, not nature, determines their location; we must eliminate, therefore, any distinction between 'natural' and 'artificial' political boundaries."<sup>15</sup> As a result, most border research during the 1930s and 1940s focused on empirical descriptions of border locations, before-and-after case studies of border realignments, and new systems of border classification.<sup>16</sup> While no standard system of classification or methodology emerged, scholars widely agreed that the natural-artificial distinction was pointless.

While much of the general public continued to think of borders as either natural or artificial, geographers during the 1950s began to reject attempts to develop systems of classification or generalization as useless since each border was regarded as unique. As one scholar noted: "Geographers have spent too much time in devising classifications and generalizations about boundaries and frontiers which have led to little or no progress."<sup>17</sup> Partially as a result, geographers focused on descriptive, nontheoretical case studies aimed at understanding the practical impact of individual borders on international phenomena such as trade and migration.

This new focus was, however, relatively short lived as geographers, for a variety of reasons, nearly abandoned border research altogether during the 1960s and 1970s. At a time when the rest of the social sciences sought to develop overarching theoretical or methodological frameworks, political geographers were concluding that this was not possible regarding international borders. As a result, many geographers shifted their research toward understanding the impact of central governments on internal processes of economic and social modernization. "The phenomenon called the 'state,'" one geographer concluded, "has been accepted by geographers generally as the formal or central subject matter of political geography."<sup>18</sup> The study of borders was viewed as somewhat irrelevant in this line of inquiry since borders were seen as merely separating the modernization process of one state from that of neighboring states without having any real impact on the processes themselves.

The broader geopolitical context of the Cold War also seemed to lessen the importance of international borders. Communist ideologues envisioned a confederation of the world's working classes leading to the collapse of the state system and the dissolution of international borders, while economic integration among capitalist states also suggested a diminishing role for international borders. Reflecting this context of intense geopolitical rivalry, geographers focused on describing each state's "determinants of power" (i.e.,

population, resources, economy) to gauge its relative power in international relations.<sup>19</sup> Borders were assumed to be rather passive territorial markers. “Whether we like it or not, boundary disputes, so dominant in international politics a generation ago, are fading away from diplomatic agenda,” one geographer claimed. “They are replaced in both urgency and importance by problems of a new kind of frontiers—frontiers of ideological worlds.”<sup>20</sup>

Surprisingly, renewed interest among geographers in border research began in the 1980s, partially in reaction to predictions of an emerging “borderless world.” In response to general trends toward greater economic, cultural, and political integration and cooperation, some scholars, especially economists, predicted that the modern state system that had long dominated world politics was collapsing. These complex processes of transnational integration and interdependence, popularly lumped together under the term *globalization*, were seen as undermining states’ sovereignty and leading to their increasing irrelevance. Indeed, economist Kenichi Ohmae asserted in 1995 that “nation states have *already* lost their role as meaningful units of participation in the global economy of today’s borderless world.”<sup>21</sup> Although one can find similar pronouncements following World War II, growing awareness of the emergence of multinational corporations, global financial markets, and supranational organizations, among other things, fueled declarations of the “end of geography” and the “end of the nation-state.”<sup>22</sup>

Despite these bold predictions, numerous geographers, political scientists, and other scholars have demonstrated the continued power of state borders and the centrality of territorial concerns for the political, economic, environmental, and cultural discourses of the early twenty-first century. While the apparent “disappearance” of borders across much of Western Europe is often presented as irrefutable evidence supporting the borderless world thesis, these developments do not appear to be the global norm. It is difficult to argue that a similar “de-bordering” is imminent in, for example, Africa, the Middle East, or Central Asia.

This does not suggest that borders, their functions, or their meanings remain static. Rather, the rich interdisciplinary body of research that has emerged since the 1990s conceives of borders as social constructions possessing both material and symbolic aspects, rather than preordained, rigid lines marking the absolute limits of the state.<sup>23</sup> As such, geographers have endeavored to understand the processes involved in border construction and how the dynamics of contemporary globalization, nationalism, migration, or environmental change, for example, may impact these processes. Given the breadth of this field, as well as the highly unique and variable character of state borders around the globe, it may be impossible to develop a single border theory applicable and explanatory of all borders at all times. Nor is

it possible to review the entire field in the space available here. Yet there are some general questions, concerns, and themes that characterize much of contemporary border research that can be mentioned succinctly.<sup>24</sup>

Reflecting the persistence of the “borderless” world claims, one obvious point of departure has been to ask whether international borders are indeed becoming more permeable, becoming more rigid, or staying the same. Or, put another way, to what extent are borders “opening” versus “closing”? At present, the answers are ambiguous and at times contradictory. While barriers to international trade have generally declined, for example, security concerns following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks have led to increased border enforcement measures in the United States and many other countries. Indeed, in a certain sense, the same border may be in the process of becoming more open to the flow of trade goods, investment, or information via the Internet but simultaneously less open to the flow of people. Indeed, David Newman noted globalization’s influence on international borders “is as geographically and socially differentiated as most other social phenomena—in some places, it results in the opening of borders and the associated creation of transition zone borderlands, while in others, the borderland remains a frontier in which mutual suspicions, mistrust of the other and a desire to maintain group or national exclusivity remain in place.”<sup>25</sup>

Related to this, some scholars have reconceptualized borders as areas of transition and meeting. Whereas state borders have generally been seen as rather sharp dividing lines, recent research has emphasized borders or borderlands as sites of cultural interaction, exchange, and possibly hybridity. This approach emphasizes how borders “became not sites for the division of people into separate spheres and opposing identities and groups, but sites for interaction between individuals from many backgrounds, hybridization, creolization, and negotiation.”<sup>26</sup> While certainly offering opportunities for cultural exchange, it is important to acknowledge that border regions all too often constitute sites of cultural animosity and, unfortunately, military conflict.<sup>27</sup>

Another important avenue in border research examines the growing importance of regional or supranational organizations and their implications for member states. While often cited as evidence of the coming “borderless” world, current research reveals a more complicated and contingent picture. The incremental strengthening of the European Union, undoubtedly the best studied of these organizations, has certainly facilitated cross-border interaction and movement among member states, but it has also entailed greater attention to the borders between EU and non-EU members. As Sami Moisiso noted, it remains unclear “whether European integration is producing land-

scapes of hope and respect or rather re-dividing Europe into two and thus creating distrust and hatred in Eastern Europe.”<sup>28</sup>

Finally, although the role of central governments remains an important topic, scholars are increasingly interested in understanding borders on a more local scale. Although not dismissing the importance of governmental institutions or international agreements on borders, the local focus facilitates deeper understanding of how borders may affect and be affected by the everyday, individual experiences of local residents. This approach has produced detailed studies of local interaction between communities facing each other across state borders, but again, the results have proven highly variable. In some instances, local communities have cooperated effectively with their counterparts across the border to achieve common goals, while in other instances, local groups have resisted cross-border cooperation, even when they likely stand to gain from the effort or it has been encouraged by their central governments.<sup>29</sup>

Given the complexities involved, these results are understandable. But rather than diminishing the importance of future border studies, they highlight the need for continued efforts to understand the forces shaping international borders. Indeed, despite the differences in focus, scale, and location, recent research has clearly demonstrated that the world’s borders and the processes involved in their construction, maintenance, and evolution continue to play an important role in ordering the world’s economies, societies, and geopolitics. “Instead of becoming redundant in a ‘borderless’ world,” James Anderson and Liam O’Dowd argued, “the increasing differentiation, complexity and contradictions of political borders make border research more important and more revealing of wider social change.”<sup>30</sup>

## Chapter Summaries

All borders have histories, and these histories affect current realities of border regions and the states they bound. In the chapters that follow, scholars examine some oddly shaped international borders and territories in an effort to outline the processes by which they came into existence and the impact they continue to have. Obviously, there are more odd borders than could be reasonably included in this modest volume. Instead of an exhaustive catalog, this volume offers a sampling of some of these borders from around the globe. In the end, the chapters serve to highlight that all borders, regardless of how odd or logical they may appear, are the result of human activity. Yet despite their rather arbitrary origins, these borders have very real consequences for the peoples, places, and things they divide.

In chapter 2, Reece Jones analyzes the complex Indian-Bangladeshi border region. In what could be termed a political archipelago, the partition of British India in 1947 resulted in the creation of ninety-two Bangladeshi (formerly East Pakistan) enclaves in India and 106 Indian enclaves in Bangladesh. This chapter explores the evolution of this extraordinary border region and delves into the complex sociopolitical, cultural, and economic ramifications of such an intermingling of sovereignties.

Nick Megoran examines the Ferghana Valley in chapter 3. The convoluted division of the area between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan stemmed from Stalin's desire to designate ethnic republics within the Soviet Union. In practice, these internal divisions had little meaning during the Soviet period. Yet once the Soviet Union dissolved, these formerly internal boundaries became the borders of the newly independent states of Central Asia. The consequences of these Soviet-era policies continue to reverberate throughout the region in complex and troublesome ways.

In chapter 4, William Rowe explores the Wakhan Corridor. To create a buffer territory between their respective empires, the British and Russians agreed to establish a semiautonomous Afghanistan. To ensure a complete separation, this new Afghan state was given an odd eastern appendage known as the Wakhan Corridor. Wedged between Tajikistan, Pakistan, and China, this mountainous corridor region was further isolated as Soviet and Chinese communist regimes closed their respective borders during the Cold War. Its remote location contributes to its continued marginality in the democratization and development of post-Taliban Afghanistan.

Robert Lloyd provides a detailed discussion of the Caprivi Strip that forms the northeastern border of Namibia in chapter 5. Originally carved out to serve Germany's colonial interests, the Caprivi Strip became embroiled in several regional conflicts in the wake of decolonization in southern Africa. The area's extreme poverty and remote location relative to the rest of the country have helped fuel demands among some residents for independence from Namibia.

In chapter 6, David Newman explores the controversial process of fortifying the border between Israel and the West Bank territories. The wall currently under construction along the Green Line dividing the two nations' territories is having and will continue to have profound consequences for people living on both sides. It is, at this point, unclear whether the wall will eventually serve to facilitate the formation of a Palestinian state in the West Bank territories or make such an outcome practically impossible.

Karen Culcasi examines the creation and evolution of the international borders that divide ethnic Kurds in chapter 7. Despite Kurdish demands for



the creation of an independent state after World War I, the postwar settlement eventually led to the division of the Kurdish population among Turkish, Syrian, Iraqi, and Iranian territories. Yet following the Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq, Kurds in northern Iraq have achieved a level of de facto independence, although the future prospects of a unified Kurdistan remain ambiguous at best.

In chapter 8, Alexander Diener and Joshua Hagen examine developments leading to the emergence of Russia's Kaliningrad exclave. Before World War II, the area was actually a German exclave. Following Germany's defeat, the Soviet Union annexed the territory and renamed it Kaliningrad. During the Cold War, Kaliningrad was firmly integrated and territorially contiguous with the rest of the Soviet Union. Yet following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Kaliningrad became a Russian exclave situated between Lithuania and Poland.

Chapter 9 features Robert Ostergren's examination of the Principality of Liechtenstein. Nestled between Austria and Switzerland, Liechtenstein is one of the world's smallest sovereign entities. As a result, the principality's territorial integrity has been closely tied to its larger neighbors. Liechtenstein's affiliation and deepening integration with Switzerland since the end of World War II has helped the principality play a disproportionate role in international finance, especially as a reputed tax shelter for wealthy foreigners.

In chapter 10, Eric Carter focuses on Argentina's province of Misiones, the noticeable northerly protrusion between Brazil and Paraguay. Originally home to the Guaraní Indians, the area was dramatically altered by the initial arrival of Jesuit missionaries and later migrants from Europe as well as by contested territorial claims. Although Argentinean sovereignty was eventually secured, a unique Misiones identity has developed, shaped by the region's remoteness, its tropical landscapes, and the constant circulation of people across the adjacent borders.

Finally, Julian Minghi explores the American exclave of Point Roberts in chapter 11. Resulting from the 1846 Oregon Treaty that established the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary between the United States and Canada in the Pacific Northwest, Point Roberts occupies the southernmost tip of the Tsawassen Peninsula, Washington. This chapter examines the exclave's creation, development, and finally its contemporary sociopolitical and economic evolution following the implementation of the post-9/11 border security measures.

The book's brief conclusion reviews recent writings on the nature and role of borders within an increasingly globalized world. While some have predicted the emergence of a borderless world where traditional states are



irrelevant, this conclusion and the preceding chapters demonstrate that borders are and likely will remain important factors in contemporary economic, political, and cultural affairs. Although borders retain significance, the conclusion does not indicate that their function and meaning remain constant. Rather, it discusses how borders are evolving in the changing global context of the twenty-first century.