

## New borders for new world orders: territorialities at the *fin-de-siecle*

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**Abstract:** After decades of relative silence, the study of frontiers and boundaries is resuming a prominent place in political geography. The impetus for the revival of limology (border studies) comes from the global context of a post-Cold War order, which has led to challenges to existing political arrangements, and from the identity turn in human geography and related disciplines. The study of frontiers and borders needs to be integrated into the main theories of the discipline. World-system theory, long criticized for its lack of a territorial footing, offers an opportunity for extension of its three geographic scales (world-economy, nation-state and locality) to incorporate two newly-emerging spatial dimensions at the macro-regional (bloc) and sub-national levels. Global and geopolitical trends, as well as shifting identities at national and sub-national scales, are reviewed and their effects on the changing scales of territoriality are reviewed. A geographic model illustrating the shifting and overlapping nature of borders is developed based on the contemporary developments in Eastern Europe. The case of contemporary Ukraine, as an example of state-and nation-building, shows these geopolitical changes as complex and dynamic.

**Keywords:** Limology, world-system theory, territorial conflicts, Ukraine, Russia

*'Une geopolitique des frontières s'attache à élucider les raisons, les acteurs et les effets des traces et analyser les interactions externes et internes que les dirigeants des États et les peuples des frontières nouent autour d'elles ainsi que les discours et des représentations qui les accompagnent et les étayent'. (Foucher 1991: 22)*

If asked about the nature of political geography, the average citizen on the Moscow metro or the London underground would most likely equate the subject with the study of borders and frontiers. Yet, if one examines the professional literature or specialist journals like *Political Geography*, one will find relatively few border studies.<sup>1</sup> Because of its legacy of differentiation between places and local experiences, a revival of the place-tradition in geography has sparked a re-

vival of interest in national and identity questions, submerged for a generation of geographers in an era of generalization and comparison. The 'identity' turn in political geography closely matches wider trends in social and human geography and the language of 'differences', 'experiences', 'places', and 'conflicts', as used in modern social science, echo strongly in the revived political geography.

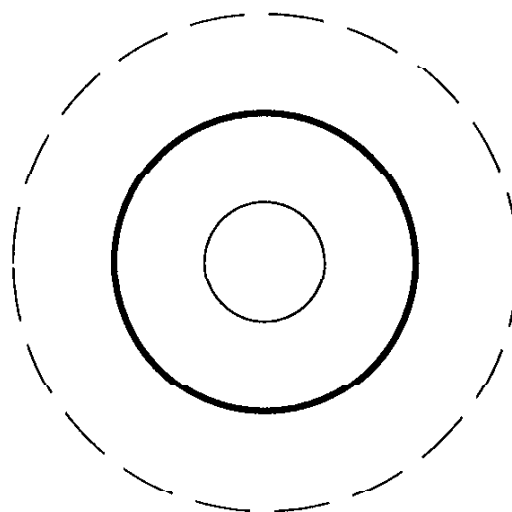
In this paper, we restate the claim of political geography to our tradition of field-oriented border studies in an era of great political uncertainty at global and local levels, with new identities clamoring for recognition, and challenges to the 'new world order' posed by overlapping territorial claims. We want firmly to insert and make central the theoretical underpinnings of the field of border studies by linking the topic to the contemporary thrusts of political geography. We

make this linkage through the use of the world-system framework to consider the links between territories, states and their apparatuses, boundaries and identities. We offer a framework for the examination of borders and the analysis of their effects in the 'new world order' that is characterized by economic globalization and the absence of a clear geopolitical division. We provide a brief exposition of our approach in an example of new post-Soviet borders, those of Ukraine. Because of the availability of many review works and edited collections, we refer the reader to these studies and to the recent paper by Newman and Paasi (1998) for the main elements of border studies in political geography<sup>2</sup>. The historiography of 'limology' (the study of borders and frontiers from the Latin, *limes*) has been characterized by fits and starts that are related to the relative (in)stability of the state system and its territorial expressions.

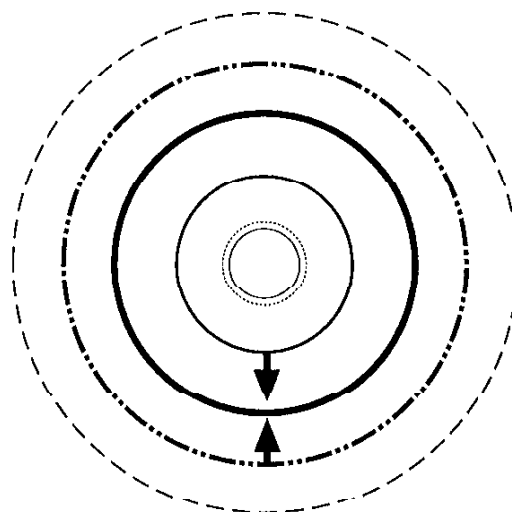
**Borders and political orders**

Attention solely to borders between countries is unsustainable in a world in which new regional identities inside states and new supernational ('bloc') identities that group state units are rapidly developing. We want to examine these new kinds of borders, among and between regions, states and blocs whilst at the same time, remembering the advice of Jacques Ancel (1938) on linking borders to the units that they enclose. We argue that political developments cannot be explained by the features of a political boundary between two neighboring countries but rather by the place that the boundary in question occupies as an intrinsic element of the world system. Barrier functions are stronger if the border separates not only two countries, but also two opposing military and/or economic blocs.

We hold, like Knight (1982), Murphy (1990), and Newman and Paasi (1998), that border study cannot be separated from identity and territorial questions. Unlike early morphological border studies, there is now much more engagement between students of nationalism and territoriality and those who study borders. As Smith (1981: 187) noted, 'whatever else it may be, nationalism always involves a struggle for land, or an assertion about rights to land'. In the primordialist tradition of nationalism, the concept of homeland has a central focus (Chinn and Kaiser 1996). The geographic outcome of national conflicts is frequently new borders, new borderlands and new relations between bordering neighbors. A starting point for border studies, therefore, should be the analysis of identity formation and change, with territorial dimensions as a central theme. Rather than following the primor-



1a  
Levels of:  
— (a) the world-economy  
—— (b) the nation-state  
—— (c) the locality



1b  
Levels of:  
..... (a) the locality  
—— (b) the region within the state  
—— (c) the nation-state  
- - - - (d) the macroregion (bloc)  
- - - - (e) the world-economy  
↑ ↓ the contested political identity

**Figure 1.** Territories and scales in the world-system.

dialist tradition of equating national identity to a specific piece of land based on an historical claim, we see borders as social constructions of recent origin and therefore, place the study of borders into the world-systems tradition of political geography. Though the

world-system tradition currently gives little explicit attention to the territorial dimension of political geography (Taylor 1993), we believe that the world-systems approach offers the opportunity to integrate disparate research traditions in political geography.

#### *World-systems theory and border study*

If the nature of a border depends on state characteristics, which of these are important? What are the state's purposes and functions? How is the nature of the border related to global and international issues? The future of border studies is intimately bound to the attempts of political geography to deal with such major subjects as the world-system, the nature and functions of the state, state-building, nationalism and nation-building, identity and its rapid changes, self-determination and its limitations, as well as democracy and democratization. Borders should therefore be considered simultaneously at different scales from the individual to global; the major concern is, however, likely to remain at the state level.

The simple world-system diagram in Figure 1a summarizes how the relations between the three scales are usually viewed. The diagram privileges the state scale and considers only one other scale above (world-economy) and below (locality) the state. In our reformulation of world-systems theory to develop a framework for border study, we consider territorial delimitation from the local to the global and add two scales (macro-regional and sub-state) to the three elements of the world-system (Figure 1b).

#### *Borders and the world-economy*

In the modern world-system, economic globalizing forces have impinged to an accelerated extent on localities and states and thus exaggerated claims of the withering away of states can be readily found (Ohmae 1995). About the time of the French Revolution, demarcated boundaries became limits of legal, fiscal, administrative, economic, and political spaces, thus regulating transboundary flows of goods, capital, and people. The increasing openness of political borders in recent decades, led especially by trade, anticipates a move from these 'totalitarian' closed borders towards more 'differentiated' boundaries. States established different boundaries (sometimes even spatially-different) for different purposes. The regulating function of a border, as a part of its contact function, sorts various transboundary flows and serves as a thin filter. As a result, each social group and each activity has its own 'borders' and 'frontier zones'. For large enterprises, border taxes and formalities play little role, though for local firms they might be very important. As a senior executive of IBM (International Business

Machines) stated: 'For business purposes, the boundaries that separate one nation from another are no more real than the equator. They are convenient demarcations of ethnic, linguistic and cultural entities' (quoted in Anderson 1996: 190).

To an increasing extent, the national border is no longer only a limit to the territory of a state and its waters. The development of communications and international trade has generated national boundaries inside of state territory, as in international airports, around special custom areas, and free economic zones. More lines on the map demarcate economic zones in the oceans. A border space is no longer necessarily stretched along the national boundary. But globalization will never lead to a 'spaceless' world or to a world without national boundaries. On the contrary, globalization depends on the partition of space between states, and to the increasing extent, between regions and cities, because capital can circulate only between different legal spaces created within the states and/or regions and with the support of their guaranties. Therefore, the world system needs inequalities and the political borders that perpetuate them, and these borders, in turn, are inconceivable without specific identities legitimizing them. Political boundaries are thus a bio-ethno-social constant of the human society's life, because without membranes, it is impossible to regulate the exchange between the ethnic and/or the state territory and the outer world, protecting this territory from external chaos (Raffestin 1993).

The patterns of global economic relationships are becoming more dynamic and volatile than in the past, while social and cultural structures, including people's identities, change much more slowly and remain one of the most important factors of inertia in world development. The dialectical relationship between 'movement' and 'iconography' is thereby hindered. In many countries, this is perceived as a threat to cultural and national identities and has the paradoxical effect of reinforcing the barrier functions of borders. However, there are obvious trends towards the creation of a homogeneous global culture (Barber 1995) that does not recognize borders and identities and which is opposed in certain civilizations (Huntington 1996).

#### *Borders and the state*

Macmillan and Linklater (1995) identify three 'narratives' of the state: a) the *progressivist* (or primordialist narrative – Kaiser 1994), which considers the state as a means and a site for realization of one of the basic human rights, self-determination of ethnic political communities; b) the *geopolitical* narrative, or the state as a power-container (Giddens 1981; Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Taylor 1994), viewing the state's activity

as managing all affairs within its territorial boundaries so that if the scale of emerging problems extends beyond the borders, the state tries to extend and demonstrate its power beyond them; and c) *the neo-liberal narrative*, emphasizing the problem of scale, that argues that the contemporary state cannot cope with new economic problems, to ensure a satisfactory level of welfare to its citizens, and is increasingly unable to meet the requirements of democratic rule by successfully mediating the effects of economic globalization (O'Loughlin 1997).

The primordialist view privileges the national basis of statehood, believing that the morphology and functions of national borders depend on the ethnic or political identities of populations on both sides, because there are both stateless ethnic groups and numerous multi-ethnic states. The geopolitical narrative also stresses the problem of identity, though more indirectly, but at the same time focuses on the integral, absolute role of territoriality and accompanying state boundaries (Sack 1986). The neo-liberal approach, by contrast, questions the permanency of state borders and political identities and argues that they are eroded by globalization trends. In the twentieth-century, the ideal of a nation-state based on a homogenous ethnic-nation with a common language and culture, certified by the mid-nineteenth century, became legitimized by democratic procedures. The hypothetical nation-state of our time is a specific region with relatively well-defined, internationally recognized boundaries and the political identity of its people is constituted through a unique nationalism.

Nationalism is a specific type of human territoriality and a territorial form of ideology (Harvey 1989). The aim of nationalism is to create a national identity that is based on state boundaries. The classic triad of political geography ('nation – territory – state') emerged in the early nineteenth-century at the same time as the appearance in Europe of the nation-state concept (Taylor 1993). The history of modern France is often used as the best example of the creation of a nation-state 'from above', promoting a specific national identity. After centuries of nation-building, France became a great European power only when the majority of its population, independently of ethnic origin, felt their 'Frenchness' (Claval 1994; Foucher 1991). It happened surprisingly late, only about the 1870s. 'France' was constructed because of the economic integration of the national territory by the development of modern roads and railways ('railway imperialism') and the coincidental appearance of national newspapers that helped to build the 'imagined community' of France (Anderson 1983). Political identity emerged only after the system of secondary national socialization had been formed, consisting of

the policies of compulsory and universal primary education in all parts of the country, military conscription, and the activity of state functionaries and clergy.

As the example of France demonstrates, the use of a common language is one of the major conditions for the origin of the political and cultural identity. To build on this nascent identity, the state creates its iconography – the system of symbols, images, national holidays, regular parades, festivals, public ceremonies, traditions, and manifestations – that help to cement national solidarity (Gottmann 1952) and clarify the perceptions of cultural distinction between the populations on different sides of a state boundary (Paasi 1996). Iconography also includes a system of national stereotypes, about national history, territory and the place of state in the world, about 'natural' allies and enemies, all promoting in turn a geopolitics of national identity. Nationalism looks inwards in order to unify the nation and its constituent territory and outwards to divide one nation and territory from another (Anderson 1983). National stereotypes necessarily include images of space: regions incorporated into the state territory by the national consciousness get their codes, and many of them became national symbols (like Kosovo for Serbia and Sevastopol for Russia). Sometimes stereotypical territorial representations develop into 'territorial ideologies' justifying claims on the ground of theories of 'living space'. Negative stereotypes are especially purposefully cultivated when national elites feel a threat to their national integrity and culture; these representations frequently become the key elements of the human territoriality. National and the political identities often play a more important role in the creation of a stable state than the community of race, language, and religion. The famous maxim – 'We created Italy, now we have to create Italians' – retains its value for political elites in new states. Without an agreed political identity, the state remains a contingent amalgamation of different cultural or ethnic regions.

National identity, though still occupying the central place in the hierarchy of human territorialities and border-demarkations, may be losing its hegemony at the end of the millennium. Though the 'single national identity – single nation-state' equation remains hegemonic in the literature, there is much evidence that individuals carry around a good deal of identity baggage. The concept of 'matrioshka' nationalism (named from the Russian dolls that are hidden inside each other) holds much appeal for understanding the post-1989 political developments in former Eastern Europe (Iaras 1993). In Eastern Ukraine, for example, up to six identities (Soviet, Russian, Ukrainian, and regional mixtures) are layered, like the dolls, on top of each other (Holdar 1994; Piric 1996). As nation-

al, ethnic, regional and local identities overlap but remain 'hidden', various political actors compete with each other for adherents, attempting to wake up and activate 'sleeping' identities. Internationalization and, in particular, international migrations has led to the growing number of people with double identities, especially children from mixed marriages. Sometimes these identities coexist peacefully even within a territorial community and also in the consciousness of an individual, but sometimes, as in former Yugoslavia, they erupt into intense ethnic conflict (Mrdjén 1993). This balanced relationship between two or more identities is subject to rapid change and challenges the existing system of world boundaries.

Continuing Giddens' state as geopolitical container model, Taylor (1994) extends the container analogy to four domains and characterizes them in a historical-evolutionary manner. Early modern states were predominantly 'power containers', followed later by the state as 'economic container' and even later at the end of the eighteenth-century by the state as 'national container'. In the past century, the state as 'cultural container' has taken on a more significant role. The important point is that the role of the state has greatly expanded over the past 500 years and now incorporates a variety of issue areas. The traditional state role as provider of defense to its citizens has now been expanded to incorporate a mediating role between locality and the world-economy, to buffer the capitalists and workers from the harsh winds of global economic shifts. The state as container suffers some leakage as a result of pressures from 'above' (the global economy and its attendant changes in regional economic fortunes, as well as super-national political organizations like the European Union) and 'below' (from ethno-national and regional developments, spurred in turn by changing identities) (Taylor 1994). Long the most logical 'spatial fix' to the top-down economic and bottom-up national pressures, the nation-state is now only one of five scales, though still the most significant, in the world-economy. We illustrate these added dimensions in a revised world-system figure (Figure 1b).

#### *Border and localities*

National (political) identity is central in contemporary discussions but before nationalization of the state territory, local identity predominated and still persists. Peasants, who constituted most of humanity and rarely moved beyond the direct surroundings of their village, felt primarily or even exclusively members of their 'community' and, to a much lesser extent, identified themselves as inhabitants of a historical province or a principality.

The creation of national identity cannot be repre-

sented solely as a process imposed 'from above' by the central state and its elites who, in the process, ignore and annihilate local differences, whilst promoting the state's political project and rationalizing that it acts in the interests of the whole population. Sahlins (1989) argues instead for a two-way process in which local society and social groups play a considerable role in the formation of the nationhood and the consolidation of the nation-state. In his detailed study of the region of Cerdanya, constituting an integrated natural, economic, ethnic and cultural area in the Pyrenees, Sahlins showed how local dwellers chose their national identity between France and Spain without abandoning local interests, a local sense of place, and a local identity. Rural communities competing with their neighbors for scarce natural resources were always and everywhere hostile to aliens and newcomers, to 'others'. In border areas, local peasants successfully played on the difference between two notions of sovereignty – the jurisdictional and the territorial ones – and conscientiously manipulated identities in the service of their interests, such as avoiding military conscription during wars. In these areas, national identities were built on the 'oppositional model'. Imagining oneself as a member of a community or a nation meant perceiving a significant difference between oneself and the 'other' across the boundary.

In addition to the world-system – nation-state – locality triad commonly found in political geography, there are two other 'intermediate' levels whose structures affect the nature of borders and border areas, though to a different extent in different parts of the world. These additional scales are the regions inside state boundaries and macroregions forming blocs of states. (See Figure 1b). The analogy of 'leaking container' is useful to indicate the hollowing out of the nation-state from above and from below (Taylor 1994).

#### *Borders and sub-state regions*

National identity is eroded by multiple factors inside and outside national borders. The chimera of the nation-state, elaborated in the specific conditions of nineteenth-century Western Europe, implied the creation of a single, homogeneous nation united by common language and common culture, a distinct economy and a specific legal system functioning within clearly-demarcated secure boundaries. This cannot be applied to most contemporary states of the world because of their multi-ethnic and multi-cultural structures and the lack of economic and cultural premises for merging their diverse parts within a stable unitary state. (Contrast the discussions of Western and Third World nationalisms in Hutchinson and Smith, 1994). In many cases, national identity does not mean *ethnic*

identity; it would be more correct to use the term 'political identity'. Many attempts to build a political identity in multi-ethnic countries obviously failed or were stopped at a certain stage by new trends in economic and cultural development. In the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Belgium, national identities turned out to be stronger than political ones. Ethnic and linguistic identities stand in contrast to the adopted national identities imposed from above by colonial authorities in many African and Asian countries.

Lots of territorial claims (and contested boundaries) are grounded on the right of nations to self-determination, considered both a liberal ideal and a basic human right. A 'nation' can be viewed as a quasi-voluntary association existing on the basis of a changing identity or as a 'natural entity' created by nature on the basis of common language and other natural characteristics. It can also be seen as a metaphysical construct emerging naturally or deliberately created out of a set of social representations (images, aspirations and highly selective historical references) (Anderson 1996). Current claims for self-determination and revision of boundaries represent complicated combinations of social representations based on pre-existing ethno-linguistic cleavages and social representations, and the economic and political interests of elites trying to manipulate with identities. Recent electoral successes of the Lega del Nord in Italy indicate that there are few absolutely stable or 'eternal' identities and the national (or the political) identity is no more than an element in the hierarchy of territorial identities. In questioning the nation-state model, inhabitants of Northern Italy can ask why they have to fund the poor South from their pockets. Is it only because they and their southern compatriots are Italian? And why is it necessary for all Italians to live in the same state? (Anderson 1996).

New regional identities are not necessarily constructed as sub-divisions of states. Trans-border regional groupings are evolving in Western Europe and many hark back to anachronistic political forms (DeLamaide 1994). The strengthening of supranational bodies in Brussels is going on at the same time as the creation of the so-called 'Europe of the regions', where old ethnic and regional identities can be implemented in the policy of decentralization and regionalization. These processes give much larger competence to the regions, whose boundaries frequently do not match existing administrative borders of provinces, départements, counties, etc., but rather match old historical units of the 'pre-capitalist' past. Trans-border regions like the famous *Regio Basiliensis* get special attention from European planners, and are recognized and endowed with special supranational bodies which

can act more or less autonomously from central governments (Gallusser 1994). This trend weakens national borders in relation to the 'supranational' or regional, or, more accurately, changes the nature of the borders' system. Europe is crisscrossed by a thick web of former political boundaries, most of which delimit ethnic or regional identities; it was the continent with the newest political boundaries even before the dramatic geopolitical shifts in 1991–1994 (Foucher 1993).

The imprint of earlier borders on the contemporary political landscape is often dramatic long after their disappearance. It is not only minority ethnic areas, such as the German-speakers in Alto-Adige (Italy), that show differences from the national pattern. In a homogenous ethnic population, the legacies of borders are also visible. On such example is Poland, where every post-1989 election has revealed considerable differences in the political patterns in the three historical regions (Western Poland – the so-called 'recovered territories' brought under control of Poland after World War II and populated by settlers from Galicia and the former Polish/Soviet borderland; Eastern Poland – formerly part of the Russian Empire; and the South-East – part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to 1918). In Ukraine, the strongest national/ethnic identity lies in Western Ukraine, also a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and only in the Soviet Union between 1939–1991; it was never part of Russia. If a territorial change occurs, new borders most likely follow the lines of geopolitical ghosts of the past, especially those where linguistic, ethnic and confessional boundaries match old political boundaries (Brunet, Ekert and Kolossov 1995).

#### *Borders and macro-regions (blocs)*

The global economy in the future will not depend exclusively on state boundaries. Globalization processes are creating new identities, especially in Europe where the economic integration process is farthest advanced and a new macroregional identity is forming. The content and development of this new European identity preoccupies ideologists of European integration and the academic community (Prevelakis 1997). European identity is still relatively weak and highly variable across the populations of the member states of the European Union, as evidenced by the frequent Eurobarometer surveys on support to the European institutions. European iconography, however, is now being created. The prefix 'Euro-' has already become quite familiar for the average European (e.g. 'Eurovillage' in Brussels; 'EuroDisneyland' near Paris; 'Eurostar' for the Paris-London high-speed train; the 'European' newspaper, etc.).

Where are the eastern and southern edges of Europe? (*Daedalus*, 1990).<sup>3</sup> Which countries have

enough European characteristics to qualify and which fail the test? (Jordan, 1995). It is expected that the barrier function of national borders will now be exacerbated by the emerging geopolitical boundaries. It is not by chance that new nation-states of East-Central Europe vie with one another in their claims to 'Europeaness'. Due to strict measures against illegal immigration and coordinated customs policy, new barriers are being erected on the borders of the EU and promoted by the Schengen agreement<sup>4</sup>, while political internal borders become more transparent. The long queues of buses and trucks to cross the borders from Lithuania and Ukraine into Poland are a taste of the barrier manifestations that will become more common at the edges of Europe.

A specific kind of border between macroregions is the *critical frontier* distinguished by Boulding (1962). He argued that states protect their interests abroad, but each of them has a unique potential 'radius of action', the limit of which is a 'critical boundary'. The concept is connected to notions of spheres of influence or of vital interests. Obviously, regions of particular sensitivity, 'buffer-zones', surround great powers, within which they do not tolerate some actions of other states. The blockade by the U.S. of Cuba during the 1962 missile crisis can be compared with the 1979 invasion of the USSR into Afghanistan. A contemporary manifestation is Moscow's position on the enlargement of NATO into former Eastern Europe. The spatial coincidence of state, bloc and ethno-regional boundaries will enhance the barrier role of specific borders.

In the Western euphoria after the end of the Cold War, it is easy to overlook the relocation of the 'Iron Curtain' eastwards to the borders of the former Soviet Union. We argue that coincident borders (overlapping limits of territories at the different scales shown in Figure 1b) will show more likelihood to exhibit separating functions. Thus, the post-1989 international borders on the eastern edge of Poland (with the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine) will mark the 'edge of Europe' if the NATO strategists have their way (Albright 1997). This Baltic Sea to Black Sea border is not just a line separating blocs nor an international border but because of the ethnic relocations at the end of World War II, it also marks a cultural-national divide. Traditional Polish-areas to the east are now emptied of ethnic Poles and formerly mixed-ethnic regions are now uni-national (Applebaum 1994). By contrast, territories whose bloc, nation-state, and cultural territories are not coincident, will remain the loci of tension, as in former Yugoslavia. Attempts to make these borders coincident have resulted in large-scale conflict.

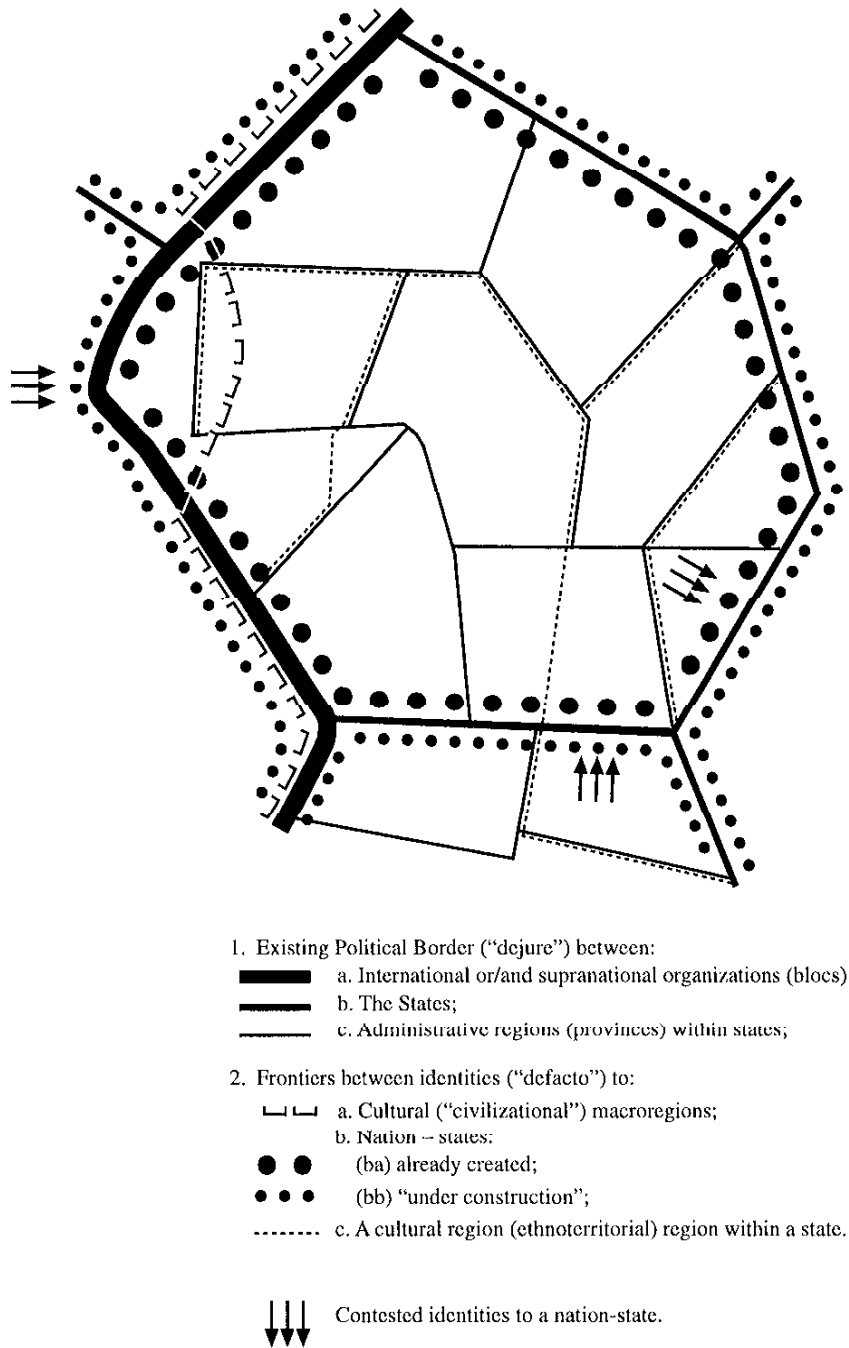
Huntington's (1996) concept of the 'clash of civiliza-

tions' is now widely discussed and severely criticized, though Barber (1994) and Bennigsen (1971) support its empirical premises. Galtung (1994) identifies seven major world groupings based on religion and he anticipates that goods and services, labor and capital will flow across borders but *within* the same macro-culture. The so-called 'borderless world' is therefore quite limited to states of similar characteristics. The Eastern Christian-Orthodox and Muslim cultural areas in Cyprus, in the Greek-Turkish borderland, in Bosnia and in the Caucasus remain very tense and served as a cleavage along which Cyprus, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Bosnia split. Attention is returning to the line of the 'Great Schism' of 1054 in Eastern between Western and Eastern Christianity in Europe which threatens to become a new watershed equally as imposing as the 'Iron Curtain'. The issue of where 'Eastern Europe' begins and 'Central Europe' ends has already split the states of former Communist East-Central Europe into candidates for membership in the European Union and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) – Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary – and those countries which in the short-term perspective cannot be admitted in these organizations – Belarus, Russia, Serbia and Bulgaria. It is creating a new environment of 'us' and 'not us'.

### A model of boundaries and an illustration

The features of a political boundary between two neighboring countries should be placed in a wider geo-political context. Shifts in identities provoke the redistribution of functions between borders existing *de jure* (political or administrative) and *de facto* (ethnic, linguistic, cultural or 'civilizations'). '*De facto*' borders become transformed into institutionalized borders, and vice versa. It is preferable to call *de facto* boundaries 'frontiers' because it is often difficult to identify their precise location; they are rather outwardly-oriented transitive zones of contact between cultures. *De jure* boundaries are, by contrast, lines of 'separation, inwardly oriented manifestations of social and national integration, necessary components of sovereignty' (Paasi 1996: 25). To illustrate our argument, we use the case of borders in independent Ukraine providing examples of almost all their types and situations.

Europe, both West and East, is a tapestry of borders. Relict borders sit cheek-by-jowl with well-demarcated lines. The term 'fragments' applies aptly both to territories and the lines that enclose them (Foucher 1993). The history of border changes in the past century should give pause to those whose believe that the era of territorial shifts is over, though the invi-



**Figure 2.** A model of existing political borders and emerging frontier identities in Eastern Europe.

olability of international borders is attested by the signatories to the Helsinki Accords of 1975. Figure 2 illustrates our conception of the mosaic of territorial fragments that is found in Europe, most prominently in East and Central Europe. The main features of the schema, extended from the more local and landscape-oriented models of Haggett (1972) and Foucher (1991), are the presence of different types of boundaries (*de facto* and *de jure*) and the mismatches between social and economic distributions and the lines that enclose the territories. The schema can be used to

illustrate the difficulties inherent in the creation of new nation-states and the historical legacies that further impede regional solutions. Non-overlapping territories and sub-divisions of territorial units hinder any agreements on geographic delimitations and foster inter- and intra-territorial rivalries. We illustrate the dimensions of contemporary border issues with a contemporary example of Ukraine, independent since 1991.



### Nation-building and the system of new borders in Ukraine

The western border of Ukraine, created in 1939 as a result of the annexation of Galicia and North Bukovina by the Soviet Union, was a frontier dividing two antagonistic superpowers – the German Reich and the Soviet Union, – before World War II. Because of the ideological, autarchic, and closed character of the Soviet regime, this border maintained strong barrier functions and continued in that ‘frontal’ role even after the Soviet Union had moved the ‘Iron Curtain’ westward to the inner-German border. This Western international border of Ukraine not only marks the Ukrainian political territory but indications are that it will remain a strong barrier in a future as a result of the inclusion of Central European countries in the western political and economic system through NATO and the EU, as indicated by the bloc line in Figure 2.

The ‘civilizational’ border between Western Christianity and Orthodox areas (indicated as cultural macro-regional symbols in Figure 2) does not match the former Soviet (now Ukrainian) western border. It coincides with the border between major Ukrainian sub-state economic and cultural regions and serves as the administrative boundary between a number of Oblasts (provinces), following the old ‘formal’ boundary which for centuries divided the Russian and the Austro-Hungarian empires. This relict boundary can still be seen in the spatial impress of different housing and town styles in Western Ukraine. The regions of Galicia and North Bukovina were never united with Russia in the same state except a short period before World War II and from 1945 to 1991. This imperial relict border also divides adherents of the Uniate church (created in 1596 by the Brest Union from the unification between part of the Orthodox clergy and the Roman Catholic church) to the west and the rest of Ukraine, which is mainly Orthodox. This ancient ‘institutionalized’ political frontier, now marked by contemporary regional and administrative boundaries, is extremely important for the creation of the Ukrainian national identity and the Ukrainian political nation. Due to the political and cultural separation of Galicians from other Ukrainians and especially from East Ukraine with its large Russian population, ethnic mixture, and blurred identities, there are far greater differences between a West Ukrainian from Lviv and a Russian-speaking Ukrainian from Donbass than between (for example) a Russian from Arkhangelsk and a Russian Cossack from the Don.

Under these ‘two nation’ circumstances, the obvious way to form the all-Ukrainian identity as the basis of the new state was to use the ‘oppositional’ model of identity. Ukrainian politics is torn by a cleavage that concerns the geopolitical orientation of the country to

the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent State) or to the West. President Leonid Kuchma was elected in 1994 on a platform of closer ties to the CIS but he received very little voter support in the west of Ukraine. Though there are many forms and traditions of Ukrainian identity, some ideologists of Ukrainian nation-building clearly opted for the oppositional path in developing the so-called ‘western’ geopolitical doctrine. (Zastavnyi 1994; Shablji 1995; *The Ukrainian Statehood* 1996; Osadcuk 1997). Its basic tenets are that it is possible to create an independent Ukraine as a new large European state in opposition to Russia, and to develop a system of iconography, myths and social representations aimed at depicting Ukrainians as the sole, direct, cultural and geopolitical heirs of the Kievan ‘Rus-Ukraine’. This heritage marks Ukrainians as more ancient, more civilized and a more ‘European’ nation than Russians. These ‘myths’ or ‘imagination’ portray Ukraine as a fertile and rich country possessing huge natural resources and controlling key strategic locations, making it both an object and a victim of the claims of neighboring states (i.e. Russia), and a supplier of the ‘human material’ for colonization of new lands by these ‘foreign powers’ in their imperialist adventures in other regions. Ideologists of the new national Ukrainian identity picture entrepreneurship, thriftiness, honesty, the willingness to care for the environment of everyday life, and peasant individualism as basic features of the Ukrainian national character; they contrast these characteristics to Russian collectivism and laziness (Miller 1995; *The Ukrainian Statehood* 1996). The ideas of the German scholar, Gessen-Tihlmann in the 1934 book ‘*Peasant Europe*’ are used to ground the unity of Central Europe and, of course, the attachment of Ukraine to it by the specific ‘peasant’ character of Central European peoples living in the regions from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

New Ukrainian ideologists challenge the common historical and cultural roots as well as the long-term mutual interests of Russia and Ukraine. They speculate about a late ethnogenesis of Russians, arguing that only Ukrainians are ‘a true Slavic people’, since the Russian nation results from the mixture of Slavic tribes with other ethnic groups. They discuss the unavoidable ‘Asiatic’ backwardness that Russians imposed on Ukraine, as well as the specific historical path of development of the Ukrainian people that was interrupted by the Russian colonization. For Ukrainian nationalists, there is little doubt that their country is the geographical core of Europe, and therefore, an organic part of Central Europe (Osadcuk 1997). Moreover, for some of them, their country even belongs to the Western European world. Grushevsky, the first president of Ukraine in 1918 and still a respected historian in independent Ukraine wrote:

... the Ukrainian people belongs to the West European (cultural) circle not only due to historical relationships, which during centuries united the Ukrainian life with the West European one, but also because of the very composition of the national character' (quoted in *The Ukrainian Statehood* 1996; 156).

The Ukrainian claims for 'Europeaness' would seem over-stretched and unworthy of serious attention if they did not play a pivotal role in post-1991 Ukrainian geopolitics. The relevant geopolitical doctrine can be summarized in Naumann's (1915) formula: 'Who does not like or cannot be Russian, must become Central European'. In other words, formation of the 'Central European' (Balto-Pontic) union of states lying between the Baltic and the Black seas, separating 'true Europe' from Russia (part of Eurasia or simply Asia), is the only way to avoid incorporation by Russia. For Ukrainian nationalists, the eastern frontiers of Central Europe or Europe pass along the Russian-Ukrainian border. Ukrainian nationalists would like to transform this new border into a frontier between cultural civilizational macroregions, indicated by the black dots on Figure 2. Success in this endeavor would exclude Russia from Europe, firmly place Ukraine in the West, institute new geopolitical blocs and certify the edge of Europe as the Ukrainian-Russian border.

The neighborhood with Russia is described as pregnant with dramatic consequences for independent Ukraine. A Ukrainian nationalist, Yury Lypa, wrote in 1944 that this region was dangerous because of the future disintegration of Russia, losing all the lands (Caucasus, Siberia and the Far East) beyond its historical European core. Because of the imperial character of the Russian national consciousness, this process would not take a peaceful form but would instead provoke a new geopolitical confrontation. Therefore, geopolitical interests dictate to Ukraine the need to strengthen and carefully protect its eastern border, avoiding any alliances or security agreements with Russia and looking for a union with the West.

Nationalism, the 'childhood disease' of a new state, can have very clear and palpable implications for the regime and functions of the Ukrainian boundaries and border zones. Geographers from Lviv, in fact, contest the whole system of Ukrainian borders, including the Ukrainian-Polish one, arguing that are 'unjustified' and that they were unilaterally imposed on the Ukrainian people by Russian (Soviet) authorities (Zastavny 1994; Shablii 1995)<sup>5</sup>. These writers stress that vast areas of the neighboring Russian oblasts, including such large cities as Taganrog and Novy Oskol, as well as a large part of the Russian North Caucasus, of Krasnodar and Stavropol regions should be ceded to Ukraine, justifying this position by

quoting the results of the 1926 Soviet census on mother-tongue use.

Ukrainian nationalist mythologists wish to transform the eastern border to a 'true political' boundary by strengthening the army, the national police, border guards, and the security service, instead of maintaining 'mythical transparent boundaries'. Ideologists of an accelerated nation-building believe that 'civilized' relations between Russia and Ukraine are possible only when Russia gives up its imperial ambitions. It is believed that the state of Russian-Ukrainian relations is *a priori* the responsibility of Russia (Kolossoff 1997).

As a new state, it was natural that Ukraine initiated the first border restrictions and introduced custom and border controls with Russia shortly after independence in 1991-1992. Ukraine wants to demarcate the Russian-Ukrainian border as soon as possible (*OMRI Daily Digest* II 1997) and invests large amounts from its state budget in border infrastructure. The system of border posts of Ukraine will be as dense as one per every 20 kilometers of the boundary (the ratio on the former Soviet boundary), rather than just control of selected major roads and railways crossings. As we observed in the Donetsk (Ukraine)-Rostov (Russia) border zone in September 1996, the staff of Ukrainian customs and border guards posts is two to three times more numerous as the corresponding Russian side. For Ukrainian leaders, the eastern border is important not only as a protective barrier around the national economic space but also as a major political and ideological symbol of independence.

#### *Borders and regional identities in Ukraine*

Ukraine is a country with significant regional economic and cultural disparities, indicated by the dashed lines in Figure 2. The possibility of federalism as a new state structure was widely debated in Ukraine up to the time of the adoption of the new national constitution in June 1996 but was eventually defeated by a coalition of parliamentary deputies from the center and the west of the country. Ukraine is commonly divided into four major cultural regions - East, South, Center and West. The East and South regions have been colonized and settled by Ukrainians and Russians since the late eighteenth-century. Ethnic Ukrainians make up two-thirds of the total population of the South, where the cities are mostly Russian-speaking; in the East, Ukrainians are about 50% of the population in the Donbass, the main industrial region in the country. The Crimean peninsula with its predominantly-Russian population (67%) represents a particularly difficult case. The most serious problems for nation- and state-building in Ukraine are created by these sharp cultural and historical contrasts between East and West.

Though about half of the population in both the Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts of the Ukrainian Donbass are Russian, the majority, including a large share of ethnic Ukrainians, reported Russian as their first native language in the 1989 Soviet census (68% and 63%, respectively). Russian still remains the dominant language of education and of the media in the region, even after Ukrainian independence. Before 1991, there were no schools in the city of Donetsk (more than 1 million inhabitants) where Ukrainian was taught as the first language. By 1996, the ratio of Ukrainian newspapers in the total number of regional and local newspapers' titles was only 9.8%. Most people in Donbass easily understand both languages. The version of Ukrainian spoken in Central and East Ukraine considerably differs from the Ukrainian of the Western part of the country, where more than 80% of the population consider Ukrainian as their mother tongue (Holdar 1994).

The spatial division of labor strengthens the sharp cultural divide between Ukrainian regions. Eastern Ukraine is heavily urbanized and industrialized, while West Ukraine is still rural and agricultural. Donetsk Oblast is one of the few regions that has traditionally made a net contribution to the state coffers: the oblast still maintains this status in 1997. The Donbass however maintains a very traditional industrial structure with a very high proportion of workers and output concentrated in the coal mining, steel industry and heavy machine-building.

Donbass and Eastern Ukraine have always had particularly strong economic relations with Russia and with neighboring regions across the border. Due to the ethnic mixture and local job and family migrations, transboundary contacts are very intense. According to a poll in Rostov (Russia) in 1994, 45% of respondents declared that they had relatives or close friends in neighboring Ukrainian Donbass districts; the same is true for border Ukrainian Oblasts. 80 to 90% of the voters of Donetsk Oblast in 1994 supported the principle of Russian as a second state language to Russian as well as the federalization of Ukraine. In April 1996, 85.8% of respondents in Donetsk were against privileges for any language (Shkid 1996). In January 1997, however, Ukrainian was declared the only language of official communication in the Donbass.

This peculiar local socio-economic situation exaggerates regional interests and regionalism and explains why any attempt of the Donbass regional authorities to establish stronger cooperation with neighboring Russian regions is perceived with suspicion by Kiev. Regional and local authorities at all levels try to mitigate the consequences of the transformation of the former administrative border between Russia and Ukraine inside the former Soviet Union into an in-

ternational political boundary. The governors of 14 regions of Russia and Ukraine and the city of Sevastopol (Crimea) created the 'Council of Leaders of Border Oblasts of Russia and Ukraine'. They have adopted many resolutions asking national leaders to undertake urgent measures for rapprochement of the two countries. Their major success was the signing in January 1995 of the intergovernmental agreement about cooperation between border regions but they are strictly limited by the larger geo-political context, especially the state of relations between Kiev and Moscow.

Grass-roots Ukrainian nationalism is strong only in Western Ukraine, especially in Galicia. For the rest of the country, the 'oriental', or the 'pro-Muscovite', doctrine predicated on close and friendly relations with transparent borders with Russia remains a real alternative to the 'Western Ukrainian' doctrine but often overlooked by national ideologists anxious to make a 'Yugoslavia in reverse' (Motyl 1994; Kornilov 1996)

The Ukrainian experience of recent years supports the notion that there are *no* 'eternal' national identities, as the primordialists claim. Identities sometimes change in the course of a few months. About three-quarters of Ukrainian voters in a March 1991 referendum asserted their loyalty to the Soviet Union but in December of the same year, almost the same majority voted for Ukrainian independence. Most voters in Eastern, and partly in Southern and Central, Ukraine hoped to avoid the threat of famine, which was real at the time in neighboring Russia. The ruling Ukrainian communist political elite feared both the return of conservatives to power in Moscow (restoring a highly centralized state) and unpredictable Russian democrats who could deprive the Kievans of power. Thus, the opposition to the 'others' living in 'hungry Russia' and, of course, to the 'others' from the culturally-alien and poor republics of Soviet Central Asia quickly coalesced. Paradoxically in Crimea, the identity changed very soon again back towards Russia as most Crimeans supported separatist forces and candidates during local elections after 1991.

#### *Borders and localities in Ukraine*

At the level of locality – the every-day experience in Taylor's (1993) terms – the transformation of 'de facto' frontiers into 'formal' boundaries, or shifts in the status of a boundary, instead of maintaining 'mythical transparent boundaries can cause dramatic problems. A simple example will suffice to illustrate the Ukrainian-Russian case. The two district (*rayon*) capitals, Chertkovo (Rostov oblast in Russia) and Melovoye on the Ukrainian side, with populations of 11,000 and 6,000 respectively, was one township with a common

railway station, communications and public services, including secondary schools, hospitals, ambulance, sewage and water, and even a common cemetery. Parts of both Russian and Ukrainian local industrial plants were separated after 1991 by customs and border guards as was the system of health and veterinary control. Local people, working for a long time on the other side of a transparent border, are now officially treated as 'foreigners', receiving salaries in a foreign currency and have become subject to two different legislations at home and at work (Kolossoff and Krindatch 1994; Kolossoff, Galkina and Turovsky 1997). Locals on both sides of the border blame central authorities in Moscow and Kiev for the border difficulties, claiming that political elites in the national cores worry only about 'national interests' and ignore local needs. Local districts (*oblasts*) are shown by the light dashed lines in Figure 2.

As is illustrated in Figure 2 and described in this review of Ukrainian territorial and identity developments, the study of borders needs to be broadened from the local level to incorporate geopolitical relations with neighboring states and with large blocs. As a world-systems perspective holds, conditions at the local level are determined by the wider economic and geopolitical contexts, with the national government as mediator in some places and as active protagonist in other regions. National identities are frequently ill-formed and complemented by a variety of identities at other scales, based on mixed ethnic loyalties. Identities can also shift under rapidly-changing political and economic circumstances, especially as a reaction to perceived improvements in quality of life. Shifting identities may provide geopolitical breaks, usually along former political, administrative and cultural boundaries. Therefore, current political boundaries are only one element in the contemporary world system of borders and cannot be considered *in vacuo*. The Ukrainian case is important because of the lessons that it holds for the future of East-West relations and the building of future blocs in Europe. As Western Europe moves towards more transparency in territorial divisions, the situation in East and Central Europe is increasingly marked by more barriers.

### Conclusions: the future of borders

Transformations of identities as a result of changes in the world system deeply affect the functions of national borders. Lord Curzon (1907) was the first to distinguish between frontiers of separation and contact. In fact, every geographical boundary (not only political or administrative) combines these functions in different proportions (Eckel 1982). Physical and material

flows, transfers and interactions ensuring social reproduction now shape the nature of national boundaries (Harvey 1989). At the *fin-de-siecle*, territorial expansion is no longer considered the primary means of increase state influence as adherence to international norms and avoidance of force become requirements for full membership of the international community. The quality of human resources, the 'innovativeness' of economy, and capital investment are more important elements than the possession of deposits of mineral resources or fertile lands (Goertz and Dichl 1992; Forsberg 1995).

While the dominant discussions concerning problems of 'integrating', open, peaceful, well-delimited and demarcated, and internationally-recognized borders concern borders in Western Europe and North America, these make up only 8% of the total length of world land frontiers. Historically, during the allocation and the delimitation of borders, local populations' needs and feelings were ignored. Even in Europe, only 2% of political boundaries established in the twentieth-century up to 1989 resulted from plebiscites. About 42% of the total length of land boundaries in Africa represent geometrical lines (parts of parallels and meridians, equidistant lines, arcs), imposed by colonial powers. About 20% of current world boundaries were drawn by British and about 17% the French (Foucher 1991).

Territorial disputes are still a part of geopolitical reality and cannot be excluded in the foreseeable future. Though the efficiency of internationally-recognized procedures of peace-making and peace-keeping has increased, international legislation alone can now hardly put an end to bloody territorial conflicts, as, for example, in Nagorno-Karabakh or in Bosnia, and the use of coercion by the international community is highly questionable. Borders *per se* rarely cause war, but rather structure the opportunities in which conflicting behavior is more likely to occur (Siverson and Starr 1991). Weak small states usually have longer boundaries with respect to their territory and population and are less able to influence their neighbors. War spreads when there are more interactions between neighboring states: a state with a warring neighbor was three times as likely to be at war as one that did not have a bordering state at war (Siverson and Starr 1991). Guerillas, for instance, in the southern part of Africa in the 1970s and the 1980s often had their bases on the territory of a neighbor state, increasing the risk of the diffusion of warfare.

Nationalism and the unlimited right to self-determination obviously contradict the principle of the state territorial integrity and are the main factors undermining the value of both realist and liberal/neoliberal approaches to territorial disputes. A pessimistic

scenario expects the disintegration of states with high degrees of ethno-political tensions (a scenario for Europe is presented in Kolossov and Treivish, 1998), producing a total revision of the existing system of countries and the redistribution of functions between current national boundaries and old *de facto* frontiers. The most pessimistic version of this scenario can be gauged from the assumption that all 800 ethnic groups of India and all 250 ethnies of Nigeria, as well as numerous other ethnic groups in Third World countries will demand territorial self-determination.

Social modernization (industrialization, urbanization, and the augmentation of the level of education) can stimulate outbursts of nationalism, as they accelerate nationalism of intellectual and political elites and, later, of large masses of population (Hroch 1989). The result is increased competition between various indigenous and non-indigenous groups for control over the resources of the homeland and of high-status jobs, as shown by the experience of the former Soviet Union (Drobizheva 1991; Chinn and Kaiser 1996).

It is very important to define the riskiest section of the world-system of borders and frontiers. Most likely, the most sensitive are the frontiers between highly industrialized and less developed countries, Muslim and Orthodox countries/regions, and in the Third World (Galtung 1994; Huntington 1996). The frontier between Western and Eastern Europe (the West-Christian and the Orthodox-Christian worlds) can also become dangerous, if the EU and NATO succeed in expanding eastward without appropriate guarantees for the countries of the East and the South-East of the continent, in particular, Russia. A new security arrangement in Europe contrasting NATO-Europe with a Russian-dominated security zone might dampen hostilities within the blocs but magnify the probability of confrontation between them. As we have argued in this paper, the concentration of political geographers on (nation)state borders has limited the options for examining the effects of economic globalization and emerging cultural identities on new territorial delimitations. Central questions in the new limology must be the measurement of cultural and political gradients across new geopolitical, regional and local frontiers.

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#### Notes

1. See the review of the contents of *Political Geography* in Waterman (1998). Two meetings of the International Geographical Union's Commission on the World Political Map have resulted in edited volumes on the subject of borders (Rumley and Minghi 1991; Galluser 1994). A recent special issue of *GeoJournal* (Volume 39, number 4) has been devoted to the relationship of territorialities and borders. Additionally, the IBRU (International Boundary Research Unit) at the University of Durham has published many studies of individual border issues and disputes. An example is Grundy-Warr (1994). It is noteworthy that many of the recent studies have concerned the shared Israeli and Palestinian territories. For examples, see Cohen (1982), Kliot and Mansfield (1997), Falah and Newman (1995), Waterman (1984) and Yiftachel (1992).
2. See, for example, the recent collections Johnston, Knight and Kofman (1988), Denko and Woods (1994) and Schofield (1994) as well as the works of Burghardt (1962), Knight (1982), Kristof (1959), Minghi (1963), Murphy (1990), Prescott (1987), and Tagil (1977).
3. For an evocative and appealing description of the special character of a 'European frontier zone', see Applebaum's (1994) book on her trip from Kaliningrad to the Black Sea.
4. The Schengen countries are the members of the European Union who have agreed to drop all border checks between themselves. All members of the Union, except Ireland, Denmark and the United Kingdom, have signed the agreement which came into force in July 1995.
5. Paradoxically, it is due to the Soviet pre-war annexations that Ukraine now exists within the largest limits in its history and the current border reunites most Ukrainian lands.

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