

Border Regions

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This article discusses the historiography and methods of historical borderlands research, as well as research trends in this area. The first section describes development in this research area to date, as well as the historiography of borders and border regions, and it argues that the political events of 1989 and the significant reorientation in historical studies which followed it –concerning cultural history and microhistory, for example – promoted the emergence of borderlands research in the two decades after 1989. The second section gives an overview of the methodology, focusing on semantic aspects and various types and stages of borders. Discussing various historiographical questions and trends, the final section argues in favour of a transcultural approach to the study of borders in modern European historical research.

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Introduction

We live in a world in which images play such an important role that it is impossible to imagine what the world of today would be like without them. Maps with their borders are also images; they are pictorial representations of space. At least since the dramatic changes in the media landscape around 1840, which saw new methods of reproduction emerging, reductions in printing costs, and the easier and quicker dissemination of printed material, maps became commonplace in a range of media (→ Media Link #ab) (such as newspapers (→ Media Link #ac) and school books) and, through constant reproduction and repeated reading, they assumed the character of a "logo". The space that a map represents becomes a powerful logo by influencing our perception of the world.¹ However, in spite of all academic (→ Media Link #ad) rhetoric to the contrary, maps are also texts, and as such they construct meaning; they are therefore also – partially – fictitious in nature. In order to represent space, maps must homogenize heterogeneous space, thereby constructing the space they represent. This is an intrinsic feature of maps and of the simplification of reality in cartographic representation.²

▲ 1

The map of Europe's states and nations (→ Media Link #ae) is particularly effective as a logo. The most common image that we have of Europe is the cartographic representation of Europe as a continent, in which state entities are delineated from one another by a multitude of linear borders. As this article will show, this is in many respects a fiction (→ Media Link #af), though it is a powerful fiction which itself creates realities. This is due not least to the fact that, ever since history became an established academic discipline in the mid-19th century, the preferred spatial unit of historiography has been the state (and, in particular, the nation-state). This remains the case to a considerable degree up to the present and is also true – and particularly so – for European history.

▲ 2

This historiography, which primarily follows the paradigm of the state (→ Media Link #ag) and the nation-state, views the past primarily from the perspective of the political and administrative centres of the respective states and not from their margins, peripheries and borderlands. However, a transcultural (→ Media Link #ah) perspective can only be obtained using the history of the diverse borders and borderlands, which often overlap and compete with one another.

▲ 3

Due to the dominance of political history which focused on the (nation-) state during large parts of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century, the history of borders and border regions went unnoticed or was ignored until comparatively recently. As a result, when dealing with aspects of European history which crossed state borders, historians concentrated on *inter*-national history

rather than transnational history up to about the 1980s. Their focus was therefore primarily on the interaction between nations, with an emphasis on the state as the primary actor in the areas of politics, diplomacy and the military. However, with the emergence of cultural studies and other new methods and approaches, including *Alltagsgeschichte* ("history of everyday life"), microhistory and local history (→ Media Link #ai), an increasing academic interest in *transcultural* phenomena developed.³ During this change of focus, borders have increasingly become an object of research.

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The first section of this article gives a historiographical overview of historical borderlands research, which has developed rapidly since about 1989. The second section deals with conceptual aspects and methodological questions of historical borderlands research while concentrating on various forms and types of borders and the chronological changes in these. The last section returns to historiographical questions and argues in favour of a transnational (→ Media Link #aj) and transcultural understanding of borders, instead of a view which divides national and state units from one another.⁴

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Border Trends: The Discovery of Borders Around 1989

For a long time, borders have rarely appeared at all as objects of research. However, it would be incorrect to state that historical borderlands research did not exist before 1989. Various academic disciplines, including political science, economics and international relations, discussed the territorial, political and social consequences of decolonisation (→ Media Link #ak) as early as the 1950s and 1960s. They began to operate with concepts such as "border regions" or turned to new topics such as the tension between sovereignty and territoriality.⁵

▲6

In the historical studies discipline, however, historical borderlands research received little attention prior to the *annus mirabilis* of 1989.⁶ Modernist and constructivist interpretations emerged, which no longer viewed states and nations as naturally occurring entities, but as constructs and consequences of processes of modernization such as the emergence of print capitalism and the transition from an agrarian society to a modern industrial society (→ Media Link #al). This must therefore also apply to the borders of states and nations. They, too, have developed over time, and their modern linear form emerged comparatively recently, though maps suggest that linear borders have existed since time immemorial.

▲7

History is a dynamic process, and historical processes, structures and phenomena are mutable and reversible. This also applies to borders and the spaces they delimit: That which is made can also be unmade. The latter occurred in the years around 1989 in east-central Europe and in eastern Europe with the collapse of Communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The "West (→ Media Link #am)" and "East", which had appeared to be static and territorially practically immutable during the approximately 40 years of the Cold War and which were immutable to large degree due to the impermeable border which Winston Churchill (1874–1965) (→ Media Link #an) dubbed the Iron Curtain in 1946, began to dissolve in 1989. This process had many causes and various starting points. Some of these lay along the border of the Soviet Empire (→ Media Link #ao), especially in Hungary and Poland, where the border between "East" and "West" became permeable again in the first instance.

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The events of 1989 are therefore another example of the border or the periphery developing an influential life of its own which affected the centre.⁷ As the border between "East" and "West", which had been linear and very difficult to pass through for decades, declined, becoming increasingly porous and more permeable for people, goods, ideas and attitudes, this transformation also had an effect on the centres in Moscow, Berlin and Prague. The result was – and continues to be – a process of transformation with far-reaching political, social, economic and cultural implications, which was initially accompanied by the appearance of new borders and a series of border revisions, for example the partition of Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

▲9

From the early modern period to the interwar period of the 20th century, central Europe can be described as an "interdependent borderland".⁸ This term describes a zonal borderland in which formal state borders exist but the societies on either side of the border are connected in a symbiotic relationship, with considerable economic and cultural exchange.⁹ However, symbiosis and interconnection did not mean that the space was free of conflict or that there were no attempts of exclusion and differentiation. The division of Prague University into a Czech university and a separate German institution in 1882 is an example of institutional demarcation occurring under ethnic auspices in a region which can be described as an interdependent borderland.¹⁰

▲10

The end of the Second World War and the beginning of the Cold War transformed the central European borderland into an "alienated borderland" in a short period of time. This term refers to a linear border along which regular border crossings hardly ever occur – thereby precluding contact, shared perceptions and cultural transfer – and both sides view each other with hostility.

▲ 11

In 1989, a process began in eastern Europe which resulted in the borderland reverting from an alienated borderland to an interdependent borderland, and in some cases even to an "integrated borderland", that is, to a borderland in which there is a *de jure* border in terms of state sovereignty, administration and law, but in which there is *de facto* no barrier to the free flow of goods and people.¹¹

▲ 12

The area of the Schengen Agreement is an example of an integrated borderland. This agreement created an integrated region for the movement of people in western Europe in 1985. After 1989, the region, which perceived itself as a region of security, freedom and justice, maintained a hard eastern border. This exclusion of eastern Europe was partially revised in 2007 with the accession of a number of east central European countries and the Baltic states to the Schengen area. At the same time – as the dialectic of weaker internal borders and stronger exclusion of that which is outside dictates – the external borders of the EU have been moved to new regions, for example, to the Polish-Ukrainian border.¹² Viewed over a longer time period, the two decades after 1989 have to a certain extent witnessed the rebirth of a central Europe that is much more permeable and transnational. What were previously external borders have been transformed and, in the context of the expanding supranational structure of the European Union (→ Media Link #ap), converted into internal borders. At the same time, the "alienated borderlands" were shifted to the new external borders of the extended EU.

▲ 13

Three aspects are central to a transcultural history of Europe using the example of 1989 and the making and unmaking of borders. Firstly, transcultural and transnational borders are generally not indicated on maps.¹³ The idea of transcultural and transnational borders, which may at first glance appear to be paradoxical, is described in greater detail below.

▲ 14

Secondly, historians tend to interpret the past from a present-centered perspective. Consequently, the political situation in Europe between the end of the Second World War and the fall of the Berlin Wall, which was static compared to earlier periods – at least along the Iron Curtain – and corresponded to a linear "alienated borderland", was overwhelmingly viewed as the norm against which the past should be interpreted up to 1989. To put it another way, the political situation from around 1961 to 1989 did not entice scholars to investigate borders as the historical result of transcultural and transnational processes.

▲ 15

This brings us to the third, and perhaps most important reason why the question of borders and borderlands plays a central role in a European history which is transnational in conception. While the political and ideological confrontation which occurred during the Cold War in Europe and beyond indeed produced hard linear borders in the sense of "alienated borderlands", this is an exception in European history and in the case of borders generally. If one analyses borders over the *longue durée*, the linear border that prevents exchange and transfer is a very rare occurrence.¹⁴ In the context of their double function of dividing (*coupure*) and connecting (*couture*), borders in most cases perform a connecting function, and serve as a cultural transition zone and a dynamic transfer space, i.e., as a so-called *couture*.¹⁵

▲ 16

The fact that borders and the perception of borders, and life and reality in borderlands are primarily *couture* (and not just in western Europe), once again demonstrates the fictitious nature of maps, which generally represent borders as being linear and as dividers of space, i.e. as *coupure*. Thus, maps suggest the existence of spaces (usually states and nations) which can be separated and isolated from one another.

▲ 17

Among the alternatives to this problematic approach that have emerged is the concept of cultural transfer (→ Media Link #aq), which includes the critique that historical comparisons in the social sciences tend to homogenize (nation-) states in an essentialist way, to draw sharp artificial distinctions between them, and to freeze them at a particular moment in time in an ahistorical manner for the sake of comparing them, in order to analyse their similarities and differences. By contrast, the cultural transfer perspective investigates precisely the processes of exchange between countries, as well as the changing meanings of that which was transferred in both contexts (i.e., in the country of origin and in the country of reception).¹⁶

Historiographically, it is noteworthy that the concept of cultural transfer and the guiding principles of the associated area of research were developed in a Franco-German context in the years immediately before 1989 and then gained increasing currency during the 1990s in a Europe which had been transformed politically. In this context, the concept of cultural transfer was to a degree the obvious and logical perspective for historical studies which were changing and increasingly focusing on processes of exchange, on transfer and perceptions, and which were therefore emphasizing borders.¹⁷

It is an open question whether the large volume of research on borders which has been conducted over the past two decades can be attributed to the political transformation in Europe. It is noticeable, however, that numerous works on borders in the broadest sense of the word have been written in the context of a "spatial turn" and an interest in space which has emerged (or re-emerged) since 1989 in the context of globalization (→ Media Link #ar).¹⁸ Equally, works based on the concept of "mental maps (→ Media Link #as)" could only have occurred in the transformed political context after 1989 and in the context of historical studies which were in a state of flux.¹⁹ These works can be viewed today as milestones in the development of historical borderlands research. While they did not deal explicitly or exclusively with (state) borders in the narrow sense of the word, the focus which these works placed on the imagined and discursively constructed civilizational internal and external borders of Europe in relation to eastern and southeastern Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries has nonetheless heavily influenced research in the period since 1989, enriching it with new perspectives and new questions.

Types, Stages, and Concepts of Borders: Frontier, frontière, Grenze, granica

The primary associations which the term "border" evokes are usually linearity and restriction, a clear dichotomy between "us" and "them".²⁰ These characteristics apply in the case of a generally accepted, clearly symbolically demarcated and administratively controlled border.²¹ If one analyses the emergence and disappearance of borders and their various types and stages, one will find that borders which create a clear division in this way, such that "decision space" and "identity space" are identical,²² are exceptional.

This degree of clarity could only be attained in the period from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century, and even then probably only in a small number of cases. For example, the relatively clearly defined state borders of France in the 18th and 19th centuries, which contrasted with those of the German states and the multi-ethnic empires of the Habsburg Monarchy and Tsarist Russia, were more of an exception than the rule in the European context.²³ An example of a border region which over a long period did not develop congruence between "decision space" and "identity space" is the military border (→ Media Link #at) which the Habsburg Monarchy maintained against the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century. This ambiguity of borders of the Habsburg Monarchy has had long-term consequences which reach into the 21st century, as demonstrated by the territory of the present-day Republic Srpska, or the Krajina in Croatia, which is a remnant of the military border (*vojna krajina* or *vojna granica*).²⁴

The German term *Grenze*, which is etymologically linked with the Slavic term *granica* which has the same meaning, suggests a clarity that does not exist, because borders that are linear in form and have the function of delineating political territories are just one type of border, a very specific type of border. However, a variety of other types of borders must be taken into account, particularly in the context of a transculturally-oriented historiography of Europe in the modern era. Some of these other types of borders are visible in nature, such as the "old" geographical borders along the Alps (→ Media Link #au), the Erzgebirge and the Pyrenees (→ Media Link #av). However, economic, social and religious borders can also be visible borders. For example, Joseph II of Austria-Hungary (1741–1790) (→ Media Link #aw) abolished the law requiring the Jewish population to carry visible markers only in some provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy in the early 1780s. On the other hand, religious borders in particular were often barely discernible in the everyday reality, or were only made visible in a symbolic way on special occasions such as pilgrimages or processions.²⁵

The English and French languages contain a number of terms which permit a more nuanced description of the multi-layered nature of borders than the German language permits. The terms *frontière*, *limite* and *confin* in French, or "frontier", "boundary" and "border" in English, make it easier to describe various types of borders. In spite of the etymological link, *frontière* and "frontier" have different meanings. The English term is closely linked with Frederick Jackson Turner's (1861–1932) (→ Media Link #ax) concept of

the frontier. In the 1890s, he used this term to refer to the westward expansion of the territory occupied by European settlers in North America. The process of confrontation between "savagery and civilization" which this expansion involved was, according to Turner, a dominant characteristic of national identity.²⁶

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The French word *frontière*, on the other hand, refers to a military border zone, such as the one that existed between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. It is therefore different in meaning from the French term *limite* and the English term "border", both of which refer to the linear external border of a state territory.²⁷ "Boundary", on the other hand, refers to a transitional zone – like the term *border region* – and is equivalent in meaning to the term *Grenzraum* in German. The related term *Grenzsaum* has been used to refer to the long period which was often required in European history to implement in reality a territorial border which had been established by agreement within a border zone, often contrary to the wishes and daily reality of the local population.²⁸

▲25

The semantic differences are significant to the extent that the various terms refer to different types of borders and stages in the development of borders, which include "alienated", "coexistent", "interdependent" and "integrated" borderlands.²⁹ However, these types and forms of borders can never be found in their pure form; they are categories and primarily serve interpretative purposes.³⁰

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"Defensive" and "expansive" borders are two other categories of borders. For example, the partitions of Poland in the years 1772, 1793 and 1795 created expansive borders from a Prussian and Habsburg perspective. The repeated shifting of the western border of the Holy Roman Empire since the beginning of the Revolutionary Wars (→ Media Link #az) in 1792 and as a result of the annexation of the territories west of the Rhine by French Revolutionary troops constituted a defensive border from the German perspective.

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However, a transcultural history of Europe must not be limited to the internal and external borders of the European continent. It is particularly important to investigate the transcultural significance of borders in the context of overseas expansion and continental imperial expansion, as in the case of the Russian Empire.³¹ Whether within or outside the European continent, the essential aspect of all these types of borders is that they resulted in different kinds of perceptions and that they contribute to voluntary or coerced transfers across borders.³²

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Beyond interpretative purposes, it is important to highlight that borders are fundamentally variable, dynamic and mutable. Such a change can be initiated, implemented or driven forward by the political centre, but it can also emanate from local actors when they engage in certain actions and practices at the border.³³ Historicism and an awareness of change are also central to the stage model, which is intended to point out the dynamic nature and temporality of borders and which identifies five different stages of a border.

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The authors use the term "embryonic borderland" primarily to describe pre-modern and early modern societies, in which the processes of state formation had either not begun yet or were still in an early phase. Due to the absence of linear territorial borders, various types of borders ("frontiers") overlie one another, such as religious and social borders.³⁴ Particularly in the context of the early modern period (→ Media Link #b0), there were often invisible borders between social and religious groups which only became visible through certain symbols or practices, for example at markets, in marriage trends or through pilgrimages.³⁵

▲30

The first stage of a genuinely "visible" border can be referred to as an "infant" borderland. This refers to a situation in which a territorial border has just been established but is not (yet) accepted, and its existence has little effect on daily reality.³⁶ This border therefore exists simultaneously with cross-border social and economic networks (→ Media Link #b1), which continue to function as before. The residents of such a region (→ Media Link #b2) can opt for a future on either side of the border, and national identities are therefore vague at best.³⁷ In this stage, the border exists as potential, not as a social reality, and it is therefore not a "räumliche Tatsache mit soziologischen Wirkungen", "sondern eine soziologische Tatsache, die sich räumlich formt."³⁸

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The subsequent two stages can be referred to as "adolescent" and "adult" borderlands. In the case of the former, the actual political, administrative or juridical act which established the border occurred in the relatively recent past. The residents thus remember

the time before the border, but the territorial border increasingly becomes a reality as it starts to transform social and economic relationships in a spatial manner, though older forms of cross-border networks may continue to exist.³⁹

▲32

In the "adult" stage of the borderland, the "making" process is complete, as the border has become a territorial and social reality and relationships between people follow the path of the border, i.e. are restricted by the border. Processes of perception and transfer which cross the border may still exist, but they are less prevalent compared to earlier phases and to stages with weaker borders. In this stage, a border may come to be viewed as static, as "eternal" or as natural, since memories of the past before the border existed have disappeared. The residents of the border region no longer, or hardly ever, question the legitimacy of the border.⁴⁰ Consequently, there is usually no longer any ambiguity regarding national identity. Additionally, practices and activities which are conducted across the border, such as smuggling, recognize the existence of the border even though – and precisely through the fact that – they attempt to circumvent it.⁴¹ This form of territoriality, which results in "identity space" and "decision space" corresponding with one another, was only achieved in Europe in the period between approximately 1850 and 1960. It was only during this period that states – at least potentially – had the administrative, technological and infrastructural capabilities to maintain a state entity which was relatively homogenous from the centre to the border.⁴²

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However, any linear territorial border can also lose its political significance. A border region which is undergoing a process similar to that which has occurred during the various stages of the political integration of Europe since the Treaty of Rome of 1957 (→ Media Link #b3) can be referred to as a "declining" borderland.⁴³ As a result of such a process, new networks can form across the declining border. In the case of the internal European borders, this process can lead to the stage of a "defunct" borderland or "relict boundary", where all physical symbols of the former border have been removed.⁴⁴

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Border Perspectives – A Transnational Understanding of Borders

The above division of borders into types and stages is a somewhat coarse categorization and therefore only reflects the complexity of reality to a certain extent. However, this categorization can assist in analysing different rhythms and layers of time in the history of borders. This in turn allows us to place the central focus on Europe's borders in the context of a transnational history which pays greater attention to the aspects of transfer and perceptions across borders.

▲35

Within historical border research, borders have in most cases been analysed primarily from the centre;⁴⁵ that is, from the political and administrative perspective. Thus, the *international* perspective was often given precedence over the *transnational* perspective,⁴⁶ as reflected in the following premise: "Nicht von der Grenze, der frontiere, muß man ausgehen, um sie zu erforschen, sondern vom Staat."⁴⁷ This view of the border from the centre includes, among others, studies that reduce the border to passport controls, law and nationality because they only focus on the political centre.⁴⁸ However, the view from the centre usually tells us comparatively little about how the borders defined the state and how the measures prescribed by the state affected the lived reality and the perceptions of the population in the border region.

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To a certain extent, the preference for the *international* perspective in relation to borders is logical in the context of modern European history. The seminal dates of modern European history – 1618–1648, 1772/1795, 1792–1815, 1914/1918 and 1939/1945 – relate to events in political, military and diplomatic history. Transnational events, on the other hand, are rare. The revolutionary year of 1848 and the beginning of the global financial and economic crisis in 1929 are examples of the latter, but it is difficult to identify other historical events which had a transnational dimension.⁴⁹

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The events referred to above are the dates which are most commonly used to periodize the history of Europe. However, as the description of the stages and types of borders above indicates, borders and borderlands are governed by their own phases and historical trends, which do not necessarily correlate with important political dates,⁵⁰ even though territorial and nation-state borders frequently shifted during the events referred to.⁵¹ These shifts in territorial borders – whether as a result of war or diplomacy – can be illustrated on maps, though maps always represent a simplification of reality. The simplification of borderlines on maps, the production of maps and the circulation of the information contained in maps is specifically intended to aid the establishment, enforcement and control of territorial borders.⁵² A map can therefore become a "logo" of a Europe of (nation-) states.⁵³

▲38

However, the redrawing of a territorial or nation-state border simply involves a spatial change in the demarcation line between two – often similarly – organized political and social entities. State borders therefore constitute "Maximalpunkte durchsetzbarer Jurisdiktions- und Souveränitätsansprüche" that are marked by means of "Hoheitssymbole und Organe staatlicher Machtpräsenz".⁵⁴ However, the official act of establishing a border by means of a legal agreement between states may say little about the border as it is experienced in the border region, about the perception of the border, about the identities which form along the border, or about transfer across the border.⁵⁵ Different types of borders with different functions – for example, territorial, economic, confessional, ethnic, social and cultural borders – are, after all, governed by their own different phases and rhythms.⁵⁶

▲39

This is particularly true of the early modern period. Again, the partitions of Poland (→ Media Link #b5) are a good example of this. From the perspective of state centres, these occurred exactly in 1772, 1793 and 1795. Nevertheless, years and even decades passed before these new borders were established, recognized and their existence was perceived in everyday life. It was not until the 1840s that the new borders had affected the interior to the degree that, for example, the city of Krakow was perceived as "Austrian" and Warsaw was perceived as "Russian".⁵⁷

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However, this changed after about 1800 because the redrawing of territorial borders usually had a profound effect on spatial organization and on competing types of borders within a delimited territory from the 19th century onward. The concept of a temporal sequence of "regimes of territoriality" is useful in this context, though the French Revolution (→ Media Link #b6) constitutes a break.⁵⁸ Indeed, Revolutionary France is an unusual, but pertinent, example of how states became much more effective at establishing new borders because it established practices which greatly increased the capacity of the state to establish and enforce new borders. From 1792/1793 onward, the external borders were expanded following the advance of the Revolutionary Army, while the government simultaneously smoothed over historical borders in the interior and created new internal administrative divisions in the form of the *départements*.

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The dimensions of this process around 1800 were unprecedented. This was the first indication of the new administrative capabilities for establishing new borders and how new technology, communications and – not least – force could be used to enforce new borders in the modern era. In the aftermath of the First World War and the Second World War, it was primarily territories in eastern Europe which were subject to border changes of this kind, for example Moldova and Bessarabia, which were intermediate spaces between Rumania, Ukraine and Russia or the Soviet Union.⁵⁹

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Following the concept of the three speeds of history, the *histoire immobile*, *histoire conjoncturelle* and *histoire événementielle*, different levels of mobility can also be identified for borders.⁶⁰ Natural, geographical – also referred to as "old" – borders, such as the Alps, the Urals, the Danube, the Pyrenees (→ Media Link #b7), the Erzgebirge and the Rhine can be described as immobile borders. Economic, confessional and social borders are example of borders that wax and wane over a period of intermediate duration,⁶¹ while territorial borders – which are redrawn by means of war and diplomacy, such as during the Napoleonic Wars and the partitions of Poland – are the most eventful borders.⁶² Another example of the establishment of a (comparatively) new border occurred when Denmark-Norway, Russia and Sweden-Finland established territorial state borders in 1826 in what had previously been a trilateral joint taxation area.

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In general, the establishment of a new border involves a geographical region experiencing a transfer of law (→ Media Link #b8) and administration from the centre of one administrative entity to the centre of another such entity. However, the fact that the redrawing of a border also resulted in the introduction of new legal and administrative systems, as in the case of the annexation of the territory west of the Rhine during the French Revolution (→ Media Link #b9), does not give any indication of the general acceptance and perception of the new legal and administrative border. A period of time often elapses after the introduction of legal and administrative reforms before these reforms actually become effective, which may result in tensions between territories as a result of the different speeds and rhythms of the various types of borders.

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These tensions are of particular interest to research into borders and borderlands which is conducted from a transcultural perspective, taking account of international aspects, but also going beyond them. Whereas the French-German state border (→ Media Link #ba) became so impermeable during the French Revolution that far fewer people travelled or emigrated to France – due in part to the war and the Terror, but also due to a solidifying of the border by means of controls and the regulation of migration by means of passports and nationality⁶³ –, the significance of the border in the area of culture declined. This is indicated by research on the

"französisch-deutsche Übersetzungsbibliothek" (French-German translation library) (→ Media Link #bb) which demonstrates that the volume of translations from French into German rose considerably in spite of – or perhaps because of – the increasing enmity and the almost permanent state of war, resulting in an increased circulation of knowledge (→ Media Link #bc) and a growing cultural transfer across the border.⁶⁴ To put it another way: While the state border became harder as tensions grew as a result of the Terror and the wars (before becoming more permeable again after 1815), the cultural border opened up to a degree. However, this opening was unidirectional, as the flow of cultural transfer and translations (→ Media Link #bd) from France to Germany was much larger than in the opposite direction.

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Conclusion

Europe is a small continent, the smallest in the world in fact. It is also more fragmented – by territorial borders, but also by overlapping, multi-layered other forms of borders – than any other region. Besides, Europe is unique among the continents in that its internal borders are constantly moving.⁶⁵ If, finally, transnational history is defined as the "movement of people, ideas, technologies and institutions across national boundaries",⁶⁶ then the importance of borders in the context of a transnational and transcultural historiography of Europe becomes obvious.

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Borders and borderlands are the central spaces of transfer and communication in European history. It is necessary to investigate the importance of that which is transferred in the different regional and national contexts on both sides of the border in order to avoid an essentialization according to national categories (such as "German" or "French"). However, borders are central to the formation and assignation of identities, as identities are always relational. One often only becomes aware of belonging to a social, religious or national group when one crosses a border. To be aristocratic, German, or European, is abstract and even irrelevant in the context of a person's everyday life, and these identities often only become significant when one is confronted by a border or crosses one.

▲47

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Appendix

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Notes

1. ^ See: Anderson, *Imagined Communities* 1991, p. 175.
2. ^ On this approach, see: Harley, *New Nature* 2001; idem, *Deconstructing the Maps* 1989, pp. 1–20.
3. ^ See: Ulbrich, *Grenze als Chance* 1993, Blask / Kaschuba, *Europa an der Grenze* 2003.
4. ^ This overview article discusses both transcultural and transnational processes in relation to borders. These terms are closely related, but they are not synonymous. While the relatively new field of transnational history certainly requires further definition, it assumes the existence of cross-border processes that help to explain the emergence and development of (nation-) states, along with internal processes. The term transcultural (as it is used in this article), on the other hand, is based on the concept of cultural transfer, which was first developed by Michel Espagne (*1952) and Michael Werner (*1946). Cultural transfer means exactly what the term implies: the transfer of cultural content and values across national borders. Authors like Espagne and Werner initially intended to challenge the assumption of the existence of national cultures. Consequently, the cultural transfer approach undoubtedly played a role in the emergence and development of transnational research interests, though it is limited to cultural processes. On the approaches and definition of transnational history, see: Clavin, *Defining Transnationalism* 2005; idem, *Time, Manner, Place* 2010; Patel, *Transnational History* 2010.
5. ^ See: Barth, *Ethnic Groups* 1969; Luhmann, *Territorial Borders* 1982; Anderson, *Frontier Regions* 1982; Migdal, *Boundaries and Belongings* 2004; Salvatici, *Confini* 2005.
6. ^ In the same year as the Berlin Wall fell and Communism in eastern Europe came to an end, Peter Sahlins' (*1957) book *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* was published (see: Sahlins, *Boundaries* 1989). It may be a coincidence that this book, which can be viewed today as a classic of historical studies and a milestone in historical border research, was published in this year, but the word "making" in the title in particular reflects various trends and reorientations in historical studies during the years around 1989. It demonstrated that states like France and Spain were not only made in and by the centres – Paris und Madrid – on the political and diplomatic level, but also in the peripheral border regions, in local contexts, and often against the will of these.
To a certain degree, Sahlins' book can be viewed as a historiographical turning point and revision point, as it took up various trends which had already appeared and combined them methodologically in an innovative way. (See: Spiegel, *Revisiting* 2007.) Among other things, Sahlins used microhistory, which had established itself in the late-1980s, to investigate the effect of the centre on the border regions and the practices in local milieus, as well as to analyse the interplay between the centre and the periphery. (See: Sahlins, *Nation* 1988; on microhistory, see for example: Brooks, *Worlds* 2008; Ginzburg, *Things* 1993.) Additionally, he observed the process of state formation, of which the construction and activation of linear territorial borders is a part, on various levels. By combining several levels of analysis – national, regional and local – he achieves something which was described a few years later among others by Jacques Revel (*1942) as "jeu d'échelle" ("game of Snakes and Ladders", see: Revel, *Jeu* 1996.) By the inclusion of the idea of "making", Sahlins also drew on constructivist interpretations of nation and state building as propounded by Benedict Anderson (*1936), Ernest Gellner (1925–1995) and Eric Hobsbawm (*1917). (See: Gellner, *Nations* 1983; Hobsbawm, *Nation* 1991; Anderson, *Communities* 1983. See also: Salvatici, *Confini* 2005.)
7. ^ This is based on: Sahlins, *Boundaries* 1989.
8. ^ See: Martínez, *Border People* 1994, pp. 5–10.
9. ^ Philipp Ther described these transnational processes of exchange, perception and transfer in a vivid manner, taking the example of opera in central Europe; see: Ther, *Mitte* 2006.
10. ^ Monika Baár recently described this process of the establishment of mental borders and distinctions using the works of historians in central Europe in the 19th century; see: Baár, *Historians* 2010; Haslinger, *Nation* 2010.
11. ^ See: Martínez, *Border People* 1994, pp. 5–10.
12. ^ See: Jandl, *Irregular Migration* 2007.
13. ^ See: Struck, *Farben, Sprachen, Territorien* 2006.
14. ^ See: Braudel, *History and the Social Sciences* 2002.
15. ^ See: Febvre, *Le Rhin* 1935, pp. 16f., 72, 170; Struck, *Nicht West nicht Ost* 2006, pp. 197–212; Ulbrich, *Transferprozesse in Grenzräumen* 1997; Ther, *Deutsche Geschichte als transnationale Geschichte* 2004.
16. ^ See: Espagne / Werner, *Kulturtransfer* 1988; Espagne, *Limites du Comparatisme* 1994; Espagne, *Au delà du comparatisme* 1999. On the further debate, see: Paulmann, *Internationaler Vergleich* 1998; Middell, *Kulturtransfer* 2000; Cohen / O'Connor, *Comparative History* 2004; Werner / Zimmermann, *Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung* 2002; Haupt / Kocka, *Historischer Vergleich* 1996; Kaelble, *Der historische Vergleich* 1999. Without referring to it explicitly, Espagne and Werner – as well as other authors such as Matthias Middell (*1961) – raised a central research question of transnational history.

- (See: Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation* 2007, pp. 6–9; idem, *Reflections* 2009, pp. 253f.; Budde / Janz / Conrad, *Transnationale Geschichte* 2006; Clavin, *Defining Transnationalism* 2005; Iriye / Saunier, *Dictionary* 2009.)
17. ^ From the perspective of geography, see: Hamilton, *Transformation and Space* 1999. See also: Schmale, *Wahrnehmungsmuster* 2001.
 18. ^ See: Läßle, *Essay über den Raum* 1991; Osterhammel, *Wiederkehr des Raumes* 1998; Brenner, *State-Centrism* 1999; Schlögel, *Wiederkehr des Raums* 2005; idem, *Im Raume* 2003; idem, *Grenzen und Grenzerfahrungen* 2007, p. 15; Warf / Arias, *Spatial Turn* 2009; Middell / Naumann, *Global History* 2010; Schenk, *Paradigma des Raumes* 2007.
 19. ^ See: Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe* 1994; Todorova, *Erfindung des Balkans* 1999; Schenk, *Mental Maps* 2002.
 20. ^ See: Luhmann, *Territorial Borders* 1982.
 21. ^ See: Cohen, *Symbolic Construction* 1985.
 22. ^ This analogy is from Charles Maier (*1939), who argued in favour of a global concept and a periodization of territoriality in his study. See: Maier, *Transformations* 2006.
 23. ^ See *ibid.*, pp. 46–51. On the potential of comparing nation-state and imperial borders, see the introduction in: Duhamelle / Kossert / Struck, *Grenzräume* 2007, pp. 9–21.
 24. ^ See: Fine, *When Ethnicity Did Not Matter* 2006.
 25. ^ On religious borders, see: François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze* 1991; Duhamelle, *Territoriale Grenze* 2007, pp. 33–52.
 26. ^ See: Turner, *Significance of the Frontier* 1986, pp. 13f. On the European context, see: Nolte, *Deutsche Ostgrenze* 2004.
 27. ^ See: Nordman, *Frontières de France* 1998; Febvre, *Frontière* 1988.
 28. ^ See: Ratzel, *Politische Geographie* 1897, pp. 457–468. On the stubbornness of borders, see also: Duhamelle, *Territoriale Grenze* 2007.
 29. ^ See: Martínez, *Border People* 1994, pp. 5–10.
 30. ^ See: Rieber, *Frontiers in History* 2001, p. 5813; Becker / Komlosy, *Grenzen und Räume* 2004, pp. 21–54.
 31. ^ For example, Jürgen Osterhammel (*1952) pointed to various types of cultural encounters in the context of European expansion at an early stage. Developing Urs Bitterli's (*1935) taxonomy of different forms of cultural encounters, he differentiates between situations such as "cultural interconnection" and "cultural collision" along the border of European civilization. See: Bitterli, *Die "Wilden"* 1976, pp. 95–160; Osterhammel, *Kulturelle Grenzen* 1995, pp. 106f.
 32. ^ On this, see for example: Kortländer, *Begrenzung – Entgrenzung* 1995, pp. 1–19; Anderson, *Regions* 1996, p. 12; Struck, *West* 2006, pp. 199, 220.
 33. ^ For example, see: King, *Budweisers* 2005; Judson, *Guardians of the Nation* 2006; Motsch, *Grenzgesellschaft* 2001; Riederer, *Feiern im Reichsland* 2004.
 34. ^ See: Baud / Schendel, *Comparative History of Borderlands* 1997, p. 221.
 35. ^ See: François, *Die unsichtbare Grenze* 1991; Duhamelle, *Territoriale Grenze* 2007.
 36. ^ On the habits at the border, see, for example, the contributions of Hirschhausen, Riederer and Krzoska in: Duhamelle / Kossert / Struck, *Grenzräume* 2007.
 37. ^ This is a central argument which runs through Sahlins' study. See: Sahlins, *Boundaries* 1989. See also: Heise, *Tangible Sign* 1998, pp. 171–186; Judson, *Frontier Germans* 2001, pp. 85–99; Migdal, *Boundaries and Belongings* 2004.
 38. ^ Simmel, *Soziologische Untersuchungen* 1983 [1908], p. 467 ("spatial fact with sociological effects", "but a sociological fact, which manifests itself spatially" transl. by N.W.).
 39. ^ On the aspect of border and memory: Mayeur, *Mémoire-frontière* 1997.
 40. ^ See: Baud / Schendel, *Comparative History of Borderlands* 1997, p. 224.
 41. ^ See: Donnan / Wilson, *Borders* 1999; Migdal, *Boundaries and Belongings* 2004; Saurer, *Straße, Schmuggel, Lottospiel* 1989.
 42. ^ See: Maier, *Transformations* 2006, pp. 46-51; Brenner, *Beyond State-Centrism* 1999.
 43. ^ See: Baud / Schendel, *Comparative History of Borderlands* 1997, pp. 224, 230; Kreis, *Europa und seine Grenzen* 2004.
 44. ^ See: Baud / Schendel, *Comparative History of Borderlands* 1997, p. 225.
 45. ^ On the critique, see: *ibid.*, p. 212.
 46. ^ See: Demandt, *Deutschlands Grenzen* 1990; Mieck, *Deutschlands Westgrenze* 1990; Migdal, *Boundaries and Belongings* 2004; Anderson, *Frontiers* 1996. For the Polish perspective, see: Labuda, *Polska Granica Zachodnia* 1971.
 47. ^ Febvre, *Frontière* 1988, pp. 27–38 ("One must not start with the border, the *frontière*, in order to research it, but with the state", transl. by N.W.).
 48. ^ On this, see: Wahnich, *L'impossible citoyen* 1997; Gosewinkel, *Einbürgern und Ausschließen* 2001, Reinecke, *Grenzen der Freizügigkeit* 2010. However, this centrist view is not universal, as for example in the contributions in Heindl, *Grenzen* 2000, which also focus on the perspective of agency from "below" and actors along the border.
 49. ^ Padraic Kenney (*1963) and Gerd-Rainer Horn (*1955) identify the years 1945, 1968 and 1989 as transnational moments in the 20th century. See: Kenney / Horn, *Transnational Moments* 2004.
 50. ^ This section is closely based on the introduction in: François / Seifarth / Struck, *Grenze* 2007, pp. 20–22. See also: Struck, *1918 – Bruch oder Kontinuität?* 2010.
 51. ^ See: Pomian, *L'Europe* 1992, p. 34.
 52. ^ See: Baud / Schendel, *Comparative History of Borderlands* 1997, p. 215.
 53. ^ See: Labbé, *Grenzen* 2007, pp. 297–322.
 54. ^ Osterhammel, *Kulturelle Grenzen* 1995, p. 110 ("maximum points of enforceable claims to jurisdiction and sovereignty",

"symbols of sovereignty and organs of state power", transl. by N.W.).

55. ^ For example, see: Sahlins, *Boundaries* 1998; Motsch, *Grenzgesellschaft* 2001; Riederer, *Feiern* 2004; King, *Budweisers* 2005.
56. ^ On the polyvalence of borders, see: Kreis, *Europa* 2004.
57. ^ See: Struck, *West* 2006, p. 189.
58. ^ Maier, *Transformations* 2006.
59. ^ Prusien, *Lands* 2010; Schulz, *Grenzziehung* 2007, pp. 333–359.
60. ^ The three speeds of history correspond to the three volumes by Braudel, *Mittelmeer* 1998.
61. ^ On confessional borders, see: François, *Grenze* 1991.
62. ^ On this, see: Struck, *1918 – Bruch oder Kontinuität?* 2010.
63. ^ On this, see: Wahnich, *L'impossible citoyen* 1997; Sahlins, *Unnaturally French* 2004.
64. ^ See: Lüsebrink / Nohr / Reichardt, *Kulturtransfer* 1997.
65. ^ See: Pomian, *L'Europe et ses frontières* 1992, p. 34.
66. ^ See: Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation* 2009, p. 1. See also: idem, *Reflections* 2009; Clavin, *Defining Transnationalism* 2005.

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Eingeordnet unter:

Crossroads › Border Regions

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