EDITORIAL:

SEARCHING FOR COMMON GROUND: URBAN BORDERLANDS IN A WORLD OF BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

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Cities are often debated as agglomerations of clearly bounded spaces where everyday interactions with others supposedly diminish and public encounters occur exclusively within homogenous groups. Inequality becomes explicit 'where endemic poverty [...] persist alongside visible signs of wealth, creating risks of local tensions, social and political fracturing, forms of violent redistribution of property and widespread social explosion of unpredictable consequences'; the physical manifestation of inequality is said to 'have more serious consequences than income inequality, as the poor and the rich are physically separated in enclaves that generate mistrust and alienation, eventually triggering various forms of social discontent' (United Nations Human Settlements Programme, 2008, pp. 56-57). In the face of countless debates around cities as agglomerations of 'insular cells and walls, obsessed with maintaining boundaries' (Soja, 2005, p. 43), of cities as agglomerations of 'fortified enclaves' (Caldeira, 1996), and of descriptions of contemporary urbanism as fragmenting, segregating and splintering (see, for instance, Dear & Flusty, 1998; Graham & Marvin, 2001; Wissink, van Kempen, Fang, & Li, 2012), the purpose of this special issue is to help to expand the discussion on and to examine if there is room for alternative readings of the present urban condition. Thus, the focus here is shifted from the study of presumably self-contained urban enclaves to the urban spaces in-between such bounded entities and the processes that govern borders, boundaries and borderlands within cities.

The study of borders has a long history in the social sciences. Scholars in political geography, for instance, were concerned with the borders between nation-states: Lyde (1915) and Holdich (1916) debated the function of borders as elements of assimilation (bonds) or defence (barriers); Hartshorne (1936) coined the notions of 'antecedent' (preceding human settlement and – in effect – the giving of meaning to space), 'subsequent' (emerging from post-settlement cultural divisions), and 'superimposed' (not conforming to cultural divisions) boundaries and asserted that regardless of their genesis, spatial boundaries become 'intrenched' in the cultural structures of the regions surrounding them. Contemporary border scholars recognise that because they are 'territorial markers and functional-fluid vectors of demarcation' (Brunet-Jailly, 2011, p. 1), we cannot think of them simply as territorial lines; borders are about 'the continual interactions and intersections between the actions of people (agency) within the constraints and limits placed by contextual and structural factors (structure)' (Brunet-Jailly, 2011, p. 3). Borders are socially constructed and often serve the purpose of minimising ambiguity with regards to the ownership of space and of introducing order (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002). They have the ability to

'trap as well as liberate socio-spatial identities' and to contribute to simultaneous processes of inclusion and exclusion (van Houtum, Kramsch, & Zierhofer, 2005). They are 'geopolitical spaces of contentions where asymmetrical economic, social, and political forces are either serving or in conflict with the agenda of central governments' (Brunet-Jailly, 2011, p. 4). Territory – across scales – is 'a major form of societal organization and ordering' (Newman, 2006, p. 183), and van Houtum (2005, p. 674) asserted that 'the philosophy and practices of b/ordering and othering, of fixing of territorial (id)entities, of purification of access as well as of scale transgressions, need not be restricted to the entity of states alone, but are valuable for theorizing and studying in their own right'. This was proposed earlier by noted political geographer Julian MInghe, who asserted that 'despite the concentration of effort at the international level [...] the pattern of spatial distribution of phenomena can be affected by boundaries separating political units at any level' (1963, p. 424). The social world is 'filled with *semipermeable* boundaries' (Mol & Law, 2005, p. 641).

Research on the notion of borderlands along the US -Mexican border shaped border studies and paved the way for the fine-tuning of various related concepts, such as culture, community and identity. Borderlands are the areas in 'closest geographic proximity to the state border within which spatial development is affected by the existence of the boundary'; boundaries can be closed and rigid, or they can be open and permeable, facilitating the emergence of 'trans-boundary regions' that reflect a sociospatial transition between core areas (Newman, 2003, p. 18). Alvarez Jr (1995, pp. 448-449) defines borderlands less pragmatically as 'a region and set of practices defined and determined by [a] border that are characterized by conflict and contradiction, material and ideational'. The 'borderlands of a society' are often associated with spaces 'at the edges of a city or a country' and imagined as 'bounded spaces [...] of disorder, loss, tiredness and tardiness', as a 'gathering of the powerless, the marginalized and politically contested, architecturally symbolized by the inhabitation of out of use places and buildings or tents' (van Houtum & van Naerssen, 2002, p. 131). Of course, such a definition is charged with the image of a society that includes and excludes; those excluded are contained within the borderlands. Borderlands are not the in-between spaces of transition, but spaces of exclusion. The margins are *the other*; they are not *the in-between*.

This special issue is devoted to the diverse facets of borders, boundaries and borderlands – be they spatial, social, temporal, or cultural – including, but not limited to, those between old and new, modern and traditional, rich and poor, planned and organic, formal and informal, permanent and temporary, local and migrant. Contributions are concerned with borderlands across different or multiple scales, ranging from borders between nation states to borderlands in the city; they examine borderland conditions through diverse disciplinary lenses, revealing how borderlands emerge, are consolidated, tolerated, accepted or eradicated. Conceptually rooted in my own work on urban borderlands in Shanghai (see, for instance, Iossifova, 2009, 2012) the idea for this special issue began to take shape in 2008 with a session entitled 'Searching for Common Ground – Intraurban Borderlands from a Global Perspective' at the ISA-RC21 Conference on 'Landscapes of Global Urbanism: Power, Marginality, and Creativity'. The session included papers

on the spatial border between Kolkata and its gated satellite cities; the social constructions of borders in Dutch city centres; the material and immaterial public-private borderlands in Geneva; the real and imagined immigrant borderlands in Hong Kong; and the ways in which the cultural borderlands between Indianness and Australianess are negotiated in Sydney. In early 2009, editors David Newman and Simon Dalby agreed to publish the collection of papers in a special issue of the journal *Geopolitics*; however, it soon appeared that the journal's scope was not broad enough to accommodate the variety of disciplinary and methodological approaches. *Cities*, decisively interdisciplinary, emerged as the journal of choice, and I am grateful to Ali Modarres for his enthusiasm, support and enormous patience throughout the review and publishing process.

BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

Boundaries, borders and borderlands have been at the centre of research in anthropology, political science, social psychology and sociology, to name just a few. But different disciplines assign different meanings to them. In one of the most interesting recent disquisitions on boundaries, Mol and Law (2005) are simultaneously concerned with the social and the physical world; they argue that geographical boundary-crossing is always linked with changes in identity, and that geographical boundaries are never fixed – like boundaries on all scales, they shift and change form. In nature, they contend, there *is* no difference, and thus we make difference in defence. Cadenasso, Pickett, Weathers, and Jones (2003) propose an analytical framework for the study of heterogeneity at any spatial scale in ecology. The framework builds on the presence of patches, boundaries and flows and defines patches as the 'volumes that can be distinguished compositionally, structurally, or functionally from adjacent volumes at a given scale', and boundaries as 'the zones of contact that arise whenever [spatially heterogeneous] areas are partitioned into patches' (Cadenasso, et al., 2003, pp. 750–751). Strayer, Power, Fagan, Pickett, and Belnap (2003) identify classes of boundary characteristics: with regards to their origin, boundaries may be investigative (constructed) or tangible (i.e., existing independent of the human construct); they may be consequential or causal; natural or anthropogenic; exogenous or endogenous (Strayer, et al., 2003, p. 724). Their spatial structure 'may be defined or studied using different grain sizes'; that is, owing to the wide range of possible physical extent, an element defined as a boundary at one scale may be invisible at another. Adjacent patches may impact on the spatial structure of a boundary: they may be overlapping, disjoint, or highly contrasting. Boundaries may be interactive or non-interactive; unbroken or permeable; simple or convoluted; single (defined by only one property) or multiple. With regards to their function, boundaries can be transmissive or impermeable; they can be reflective; or they can be neutral – that is, they 'may have no effect on the phenomenon under study' (Strayer, et al., 2003, p. 274). Articulating the spatial and temporal scales of flow across boundaries appears crucial for the study of boundaries in ecology and elsewhere (Cadenasso, et al., 2003).

A border in anthropology 'stands for a line demarcated in space,' and 'a boundary generally means the socio-spatially constructed differences between cultures/categories' (van Houtum, 2005, p. 672) – just as in sociology, where a boundary refers to difference between social

categories, groups or classes. Here, Lamont and Molnár (2002, p. 168) distinguish between symbolic boundaries ('conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space') and social boundaries ('objectified forms of social differences manifested in unequal access to and unequal distribution of resources') and suggest to differentiate between boundary properties (permeability, salience, durability, etc...) and the mechanisms of boundary processes (activation, maintenance, transposition and others). They argue that the theme of cultural membership – how 'individuals think of themselves as equivalent and similar to' others, could be used as an analytical principle (Lamont & Molnár, 2002, p. 188). This is closely linked to theories in social and environmental psychology, where individuals and groups are thought to identify with and to be identified by their environment.

For instance, Graumann (1983) poses that the person is always both subject and object of identification, and that unity between the way we identify from the inside and are identified from the outside has to be attained (the process of identification) and maintained (the process of identity). The multiple identity model he proposes builds on the understanding that first, upon birth, we are assigned the group to which we belong (male or female, black or white, etc.) and associated with stereotypical traits and actions. Importantly, being identified is an on-going process and hence 'historicity is an integral feature of sociality' (Graumann, 1983, p. 312). Second, the repeated encounter with an environment, an object, an individual or group leads to recognition, and in order to know what a thing is, we need to know what it is called; this is the process of naming or category-formation. Thus, 'identification implies classification, which logically means the construction of classes' (Graumann, 1983, p. 311), and naming becomes a basic function of identity giving. Third, 'identification with' is the process of identifying 'models' and attempting to achieve a likeness to them; this can happen on the level of the individual or group, symbolising the aspirations of the identifying person or group. Identifying with a particular environment can mean cherishing and defending the parts of our 'material self [...] against loss and decay' (Graumann, 1983, p. 314) – sometimes associated with territorial behaviour or territoriality. In anthropology, Barth (1969) asserts that ethnic groups use boundaries to maintain identity and that the act of giving priority to some aspects of identity is of critical importance for identity formation; he argues that interaction between different groups reduces difference because it is based on and 'generates a congruence of codes and values', resulting in a 'common culture' – the result of processes of categorical ascription, namely of 'self-ascription and ascription by others' (p. 13). The boundaries between categories such as culture, gender and scale are always in the making – 'only partially formed and incomplete' (Jones, 2009, p. 174). The boundaries that mark inchoate identity are always multiple and shifting.

In cities, borders, boundaries and borderlands are inevitable; they are zones of contact between the different – be it voluntary or involuntary, desired or not. Valentine (2008) warns that 'micro-scale everyday public encounters' may breed defensiveness and self-segregation and not necessarily meaningful contact. Amin and Graham (1997) suggest that the co-presence of multiple spaces, multiple times, and multiple relational webs is necessary for the establishment of an 'open city,' where everyday social interaction and cultural confrontation in shared public space

act as sources of social renewal, economic innovation and creativity. Such shared public space, Sennett (2006) insists, can be found at the 'borders, or edges, between any two communities – whether differentiated racially, in terms of wealth or in terms of their programmatic focus'; and Sassen (2011) calls this the phenomenon of the 'global street'. Newman (2003, p. 19) conceives of inner city areas as representing a form of borderland or transition zone (a zone of borderless transition from one space to another) in that they mirror the opening and closing of borders between different social groups 'desiring to maintain their cultural difference (exclusion)' or seeking 'to succeed in a new ecumene (inclusion)'. Given the universality of the border phenomenon across time, space, and scale, it seems timely to re-examine and re-think the structure and functions of borders, boundaries and borderlands, of fluid and shifting in-between spaces, with a special focus on their existence related to, around and within cities.

THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE

Initially – as suggested in the title of the conference session on intraurban borderlands in 2008 – contributions to this special issue were to focus exclusively on borders within cities. Later, in the hope of bringing together research on a range of related phenomena and blurring disciplinary boundaries, the scope was broadened to include the study of borderlands at various spatial scales. And although some of the contributions included in the initial proposal have been published elsewhere in the meantime – due to the lengthy period of transition from *Geopolitics* to *Cities* – they remain, of course, relevant. Schulzke (2012), for instance, explores how revolutionaries create symbolic, intraurban borders around enclaves of resistance in cities and how these revolutionary borders function to challenge the power of the state. He compares the role of borderlands between states with that of borderlands in cities to speculate that 'the culture of intraurban borderlands will take on a similar character' (Schulzke, 2012, p. 186), and asserts that territorial claims – from above or from below – result in multiscale borders that are worthy of consideration in the field of border studies because they are political in essence. On the example of St. Petersburg, Marin (2012) looks at one typical characteristic of regime change, namely the less violent practice of renaming cities and streets as an act of symbolic bordering between the past and the present, of 'opposing and removing the past in order to build a brighter future' (Marin, 2012, p. 210). 'In erecting time boundaries and putting whole eras in between brackets,' she writes (p. 211), 'typographic changes [...] *destroyed* as much as they produced meaning: the original sin of "purging" the past actually resulted in erasing meaningful landmarks for identification in both time (collective memory) and space (the public arena)'. Karaman and Islam (2012) use their case study of Sulukule, home to a Roma community in Istanbul, to examine the notions of the 'right to the city' and the 'group right to difference,' and to trace how borders are dismantled in the name of urban redevelopment and under the pretext of integration. They conclude for planning practice that it should recognise 'residents' *right* to assimilation, but [...] not impose it as an *obligation*' (Karaman & Islam, 2012).

On the following pages, Boano and Martén (this issue) discuss the 'possibility of framing an urbanism of exception' in the case of Jerusalem and the West Bank according to Agamben's

spatial ontology and his work on exceptionality and seek to extract an analytical framework which can be applied to the study of other border contexts. Borders are here defined as 'multiple, parallel, crosscutting and relentless' spaces of exception that contain those who are not part of the population and unworthy of protection. Here, the Jerusalem Wall is not just a line, a geographical border, but rather a measure of selection – a tool for systematic exclusion. The authors derive five urban 'tensions' that can be used to understand urban border dynamics beyond the studied context: authority, production, exclusion, iconicity and identity. They contend that the theme of inclusion/exclusion can be applied on conflict and contestation at all scales.

Banerjee and Chen (this issue), in their contribution, seek to understand how structure and agency interact on the borderlands between India and China and India and Bangladesh and offer valuable initial insights on the structure-agency model (Brunet-Jailly, 2005) and its application to multiscalar borderland regions. Examining macro-forces through the historical, cultural and political context of the chosen borderlands as well as relating micro-processes, perceptions and personal narratives at the scale of the individual, they reveal complicated processes of borderland dynamics and negotiation that begin to facilitate an in-between and in-parallel to simplistic views on structure and agency. The authors define nation-state borderlands as the in-between spaces where 'social relations, economic exchanges, cultural ties, and political negotiations intersect and mediate across the global-local divide in shaping the material and social lives of borderland residents' (Banerjee & Chen, this issue). Kilburn, San Miguel, and Kwak (this issue), too, use a multidimensional framework of analysis to look at the Mexico-United States border and the relationship between the sister cities of Laredo (US) and Nuevo Laredo (Mexico) in order to reveal that informal relationships between the two cities are being undermined by decisions made at higher levels of governance and that the fear of crime has contributed to the disintegration of a once unified borderland region.

On the case of Bangkok, Maneepong and Walsh (this issue) explore urban borderlands as the spaces of collision between public space and private business operation; they provide a detailed account on the practice of street vending and detect a division between two generations of street vendors: the old generation, who sell to lower income customers and often operate because of genuine poverty; and the new generation, who cater to a sophisticated middle and upper class and often choose street vending as a lucrative occupation. Both generations operate at varying degrees of informality but are highly spatially sensitive. The authors call for city planners to consider street vending as an independent sector and a viable part of the transitional economy – rather than a practice to be regularised, formalised or eradicated. In a case study on urban redevelopment in a developed country, the Netherlands, Spierings (this issue) explores how local authorities, property developers, architects and retailers collaborate on fixing missing links and improving the economic performance of city centres. He combines the literature on city competitiveness and commercialisation with the literature on international borders and borderlands and conceptualises these as objective barriers that are purposefully established or dismantled with the aim to improve the flow of capital, calling on future research to focus on the qualitative exploration of the sensorial experience of shopping spaces. Clare (this issue) looks at a

different type of urban borderland and reveals the importance of geographical clustering for the establishment of a shared identity among workers in the creative industries in London. She explores the 'spatial and geographical dimensions of the social milieu associated with the advertising sector' and finds proximity crucial because of the importance of face-to-face networking. Capital, she argues, is rather 'entrenched in specific territorial localities', and thus policy will have to provide special privileges to small businesses if the creative industries are to foster.

Imai (this issue) looks at the impact of urban redevelopment on urban life at the scale of the individual and defines urban borderlands as the 'voids and scars', the 'essential spaces of temporary and informal use' that emerge with the evolution of cities. She examines this understanding from the intimate perspective of local residents in Tokyo on the example of the Japanese alleyway which symbolises the disappearance of traditional elements of urban life due to progressive gentrification; as it disappears, however, this urban borderland continues to have a 'shared or social presence' as an alternative landscape of reminiscence. The alleyways become 'fictional boundaries [...] between past and present [...] shaped at the global and local level' (Imai, this issue).

In the Viewpoints section, Sassen proposes to look at cities as frontier spaces, as complex assemblages of diverse elements that include conflict as a precondition: nation states are bound to respond to conflict with violence and militarisation, whilst the 'capacity of the city also implies the possibility of making new subjects and identities'. The city can be interpreted as the strategic site where power systems, divisions and borderings can be contested and negotiated. Global logics and struggles find their articulation in urban space, where political claims are made by citizens and foreigners alike. Till (this issue), in his essay on the broken middle and the London riots, interprets the riots against their urban location – later challenged by Hillier (this issue) for his interpretation of space syntax's efforts to relate the design of housing estates to the events as 'spatial determinism'. Till argues that the London riots were not located in the urban centres or at the urban margins (like in Cairo or Paris, respectively), but rather, that they were situated in the in-between spaces of the everyday; in this reading, the riots were not 'an outburst of the extraordinary' – but rather, a 'magnification of the ordinary'.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS IN URBAN STUDIES: URBAN BORDERLANDS

Borders and boundaries are being studied on almost all scales, ranging from borders between nation-states to boundaries between cells. They have drawn the attention of scholars in many different disciplines – except, it seems, for those in urban studies. Borders and boundaries on the scale of the city and especially the neighbourhood have been neglected in favour of the study of urban splinters and enclaves, ethnic communities and social classes, or other more or less clearly defined and seemingly self-contained urban entities. Research has centred on the study of urban patches, to borrow from ecology (Cadenasso, et al., 2003), seemingly forgetting about other essential elements that structure and determine the urban landscape: a variety of flows and, most importantly, a multitude of borders, boundaries and borderlands. In order to gain a better

understanding of the urban condition, it is essential to shift the focus to the spaces in-between urban enclaves and to examine urban borderlands as intricate urban phenomena shaped by complex transcalar processes.

Borderlands exist in every city. Studying them involves taking into account key questions around a number of related concepts, such as, among many others, that of culture, community and identity, as well as our more 'urban' notions of development, gentrification and the right to the city. It requires the combined effort of scholars in different disciplines, so as to draw a coherent picture of the variety of forces, conditions and influences that shape the contemporary city. One of the aims of this special issue is to help dismantle some of the persisting barriers between currently disjointed bodies of knowledge and to pave the way for a debate across related disciplines and fields within and beyond urban studies. Thus, the following pages bring together a number of methodologically, topically and geographically distinct inquiries around boundaries, borders and borderlands at a variety of scales.

At the heart of this special issue lies the hope to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of cities as complex and evolving, their parts – like the boundaries around them – only partially formed and always incomplete. Physical borders appear and disappear with shifting social boundaries; just as symbolically as they are sometimes erected by the powerful, they are often patiently and persistently undone by those who live them in their everyday. Borderlands are spatial manifestations of inclusion and exclusion and they can be examined at all scales. Some of the (urban) borderlands discussed on the following pages are sketched, indeed, as spaces of exclusion, as the bounded milieu of marginalised groups; others, however, are presented as in-between and on the margins, as spaces of contestation, of genesis and change. Of particular significance for a better understanding of the contemporary urban condition appears the analysis of the interplay between the macro and micro scale forces that, as they intersect, give rise to and shape urban borderlands. The human experience of borderlands at different scales, as several contributors to this special issue point out, has been consistently neglected by research in the past but certainly deserves more attention in the future. Borderlands are essential for the people who are present within and along them and for the formation of hybrid (or multiple) identities within the urban context; they are multidimensional and transcalar entities that have the potential to contribute to the amplification or obliteration of sociomaterial difference in the city. As such, urban borderlands ought to be prioritised as part of future research agendas in urban studies. The contributions to this special issue indicate a valuable shift in this direction.

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